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Sent: Wednesday, January 10, 2018 12:59 PM

Cc: publicaffairs (Culture DL for RapidResponse)

Subject: For Immediate Release: Mayor's Grant for Cultural Impact to Support Seven Partnerships Between City Agencies and Cultural Organizations



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MAYOR'S GRANT FOR CULTURAL IMPACT TO SUPPORT SEVEN PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN CITY AGENCIES AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS

Through over \$500,000 in direct and in-kind funding, supported partnerships address a range of pressing civic issues, from public safety to immigration to literacy

The new grant program is an outgrowth of [CreateNYC](#), which found major potential for new and expanded collaborations between City government and arts organizations

New York – Today, Mayor de Blasio and Cultural Affairs Commissioner Tom Finkelpearl announced the selection of seven new and expanded partnerships for funding under the first Mayor's Grant for Cultural Impact (MGCI). An outgrowth of the CreateNYC cultural plan, the collaborations supported by MGCI seek to enhance vital public services through cultural and creative programming, bringing the unique benefits of arts and culture to help address pressing civic issues including public health and safety, domestic violence, literacy, planning, immigration, and criminal justice.

"Our CreateNYC cultural plan called for thoughtful, innovative ways to integrate our City's creative energy into public service. Today, we continue to put that into action," said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. "When City government works hand in hand with community anchors, we can deliver the cultural access and equity which all New Yorkers deserve."

"I often point out that poetry and dance were safe outlets to channel difficult emotions in my teenage years," said **First Lady Chirlane McCray**, who leads the City's mental health and substance misuse efforts. "However, art has many benefits throughout ALL stages of life, and in New York City the arts should be for everyone. With these new grants, New York City is harnessing the power of art to promote literacy, encourage healthy relationships, support immigrant families, and help our youngest New Yorkers learn coping skills. Most importantly, the new funding will support communities that have historically been excluded from fully experiencing the cultural and artistic life of the city."

"Culture is essential to the health of our communities so it's exciting to see that the Mayor's Grant for Cultural Impact, arising directly from the public input we received for

the CreateNYC cultural plan, will have such a profound effect on so many New Yorkers," said **Cultural Affairs Commissioner Tom Finkelpearl**. "These innovative collaborations employ dance, poetry, literature, film, and other disciplines to help address longstanding civic issues, and with such a remarkable and committed group of partners, we hope these projects will become lasting examples of how art can be used to foster real social change."

"The mission of Create NYC is to bring culture and the arts to more New Yorkers and make access to culture more equitable for all," said **Council Member Jimmy Van Bramer**. "Today's announcement demonstrates the power of culture and the arts to connect New Yorkers in all neighborhoods and of all backgrounds to these life changing experiences. I am proud of the work we have done in the City Council's committee on Cultural Affairs to support these values, and I am excited to see this \$500,000 announcement supporting seven innovative partnerships between city government and cultural organizations."

The seven partnerships were selected through an open call and application process. Each collaboration will receive \$50,000 in cash support from the Department of Cultural Affairs (DCLA), and an additional \$25,000 match of either in-kind or cash award from the partnering agency, for a total of over \$500,000 in City support. Programs must conclude by the close of the fiscal year on June 30, 2018.

The seven winning collaborations were announced by Cultural Affairs Commissioner Tom Finkelpearl today at an event at Gibney Dance, which received a grant to expand their work with the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence. Photos from the event are available upon request.

The winning projects are:

- **ARTs East NY** will partner with the **NYC Department of City Planning** to create **CivLab**, a public space activation project in East New York. This pilot program will bring together city planners, local artists, and residents to better integrate the arts into civic life, building on the City's East New York Neighborhood Plan. The project will enliven an underused portion of Success Garden, a community garden surrounded by an area in transformation.
- **Bronx Documentary Center** (BDC) will work with the **Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice** to launch **Claremont Illuminated**, a series of nocturnal artworks and programming seeking to promote community safety and connections in the Claremont Village neighborhood of the South Bronx. Site specific artworks will literally light up underutilized open spaces in the community, including Butler Houses public housing. Artists from BDC's network will hire local young people and collaborate with residents and area organizations to locate, plan, and install media-, light-, and sound-based projects. This initiative will be part of the Mayor's Action Plan for Neighborhood Safety, intended to reduce crime and strengthen neighborhoods citywide.
- **Carnegie Hall** and the **Department of Probation** (DOP) will continue their successful partnership centered on DOP's Neighborhood Opportunity Network

(NeON) arts initiative by expanding the **Free Verse Poetry Apprenticeship Project**, which began in the South Bronx and will now launch in Northern Staten Island and Jamaica, Queens. Free year-round literary arts programming will build connections between people on probation and their neighbors, and will generate new pathways to employment in NYC's arts economy in areas known for high levels of poverty and unemployment.

- **Cool Culture** will continue work with the **Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH)** on **promoting arts engagement in family shelters**, an initiative designed to encourage exploration of art and culture by preschool-aged children living or receiving childcare in 93 shelters across the city. In addition, participating families will be offered free access to 90 cultural institutions citywide.
- **Gibney Dance** will expand **Hands are for Holding (HAFH)** in a continued collaboration with the **Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence (OCDV)**. The interactive school-based program uses dance as a tool for preventing teen dating violence and promoting healthy relationships. The expansion will enable many more students to attend HAFH assemblies, with a particular emphasis on middle school students just beginning to explore dating relationships. Further, one middle school in need will be selected to host an intensive HAFH residency to explore more in-depth strategies for engaging students and increasing dating violence awareness through dance.
- The **National Book Foundation** will collaborate with the **Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD)** to launch **Raising Readers: Books are for Everyone**, an initiative dedicated to cultivating a love of reading in adults around the city and the young people in their lives. The program will reach DYCD provider staff via professional development training; establish "reading circles" for parents served by DYCD-funded agencies; and culminate in a large-scale citywide family reading event. Over 1,000 free books will be distributed to DYCD constituents, who often come from underserved populations.
- **People's Theatre Project** will partner with the **Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs (MOIA)** for **Teatro Inmigrante Comunitario**, an effort to build trust between community and government by amplifying shared experiences and stories. Spanish-speaking youth from Washington Heights and Kingsbridge, including many impacted by the end of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, will come together to create an interactive and bilingual theater event. These young people will be placed in leadership roles within their communities and, through artistic practice they will become connectors between MOIA and the populations it serves, focusing on programs such as IDNYC, ActionNYC and NYCitizenship.

"We are thrilled our partnership with Cool Culture has been selected for the Mayor's Grant for Cultural Impact. This investment in cultural funding will support the Health Department and Cool Culture efforts to bring the arts to young children attending child care programs in the city's family shelter system," said **Health Commissioner Dr. Mary T. Bassett**. "Enriching the lives of these preschoolers through arts programming not

only promotes cognitive and social-emotional development, but brings families together to enjoy the arts and cultural vibrancy the City has to offer.”

“Each year, Cool Culture partners with over 450 schools to provide 50,000 historically marginalized families with free, unlimited access to 90 cultural institutions that people travel the world over to experience. We are extremely honored that Cool Culture is one of seven cultural organizations selected to receive the Mayor's Grant for Cultural Impact. Cool Culture believes that access to arts and culture is a human right, and we are delighted that this initiative will allow us to collaborate with the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene to develop a partnership with families living in family shelters and to provide opportunities for respite, creative expression, exploration of the arts and quality family time,” said **Candice Anderson, Executive Director at Cool Culture**.

“The Free Verse Poetry Apprentice Project will provide paid internships and access to high-quality arts education and programming to people under probation supervision as well as other neighborhood residents in Northern Staten Island and South Jamaica,” stated **Ana M. Bermúdez, Commissioner, New York City Department of Probation (DOP)**. I applaud Mayor de Blasio and Cultural Affairs Commissioner Finkelpearl for their commitment to expanding access to arts and culture.”

Clive Gillinson, Executive and Artistic Director of Carnegie Hall, said “Carnegie Hall applauds the City for recognizing the important role that the arts and culture can play in creating pathways for young people and strengthening our communities. Our partnership with the Department of Probation and the city's NeONs has been very meaningful and productive, and we are excited to expand this work.”

“DYCD's funded programs strive to promote the joy of reading to young people and adults. Studies have connected reading for pleasure to improved academic performance and career success. Raising Readers: Books are for Everyone is a wonderful opportunity for DYCD to enhance our longstanding collaboration with the National Book Foundation on initiatives such as BookUp and STORYTELLERS, which put the gift of literacy in the hands of New York City youth and their families,” said **DYCD Commissioner Bill Chong**.

Lisa Lucas, Executive Director of the National Book Foundation, said "We are thrilled to continue our partnership with the Department of Youth and Community Development, and, with the launch of this new initiative, to further enrich the work we do together. Over the last few years we've been able to encourage a love of reading in young people around New York City, helping provide access to the joys of book ownership through our Book Up Summer Storytellers collaboration with DYCD and Boomwriter. With the help of this grant, we will be able to implement a more holistic approach that offers resources to the parents and service providers whose own reading habits will directly impact the children in their lives."

Elizabeth Glazer, Director of the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice said "Claremont Illuminated represents the kind of innovative strategy this administration is leading to

reduce crime and build strong neighborhoods. This important partnership will connect Bronx artists with young leaders to activate underutilized public spaces with nocturnal art and media projects to celebrate community identity and help counter the invisible boundaries that isolate and fragment young people's experiences and opportunity."

Michael Kamber Executive Director of the Bronx Documentary Center, said "The Bronx Documentary Center is thrilled to collaborate with the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice on this important initiative. Our project, Claremont Illuminated, will change the lives of Claremont Village NYCHA residents by making their central Bronx neighborhood safer while creating cultural experiences for residents."

Marisa Lago, Director of the Department of City Planning, said, "The Department of City Planning looks forward to working with local artists and community members to create a blueprint for the future of this vacant site, turning it into a canvas for creative expression. Support for local arts endeavors like this evidences the City's ongoing commitment to realize the promise of the East New York neighborhood plan."

"We are excited to take part in this extension of the Create NYC Cultural Plan. This initiative will allow us to deepen our work with community members in revitalizing vacant spaces in the East New York community, replacing them with reflective beauty and pride," said **Catherine Green, Founder/Executive Director of ARTs East New York**.

"The theatre is a time-tested platform for sharing stories, reshaping narratives, and breaking through to common understanding. No stories are more important to elevate in this moment than those of young immigrants, who are charting their own path to the future, guided by the trials and successes of their communities' pasts," said **Bitta Mostofi, Acting Commissioner of the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs**.

"Through the Mayor's Grant for Cultural Impact, MOIA will collaborate with the People's Theatre Project to launch Teatro Inmigrante Comunitario, recruiting immigrant youth to engage in creative storytelling about their own experiences, promote critical City services, and transcend difference through theatre. We're proud to work with Commissioner Finkelpearl, our colleagues at DCLA, and the People's Theatre Project to empower future immigrant leaders and strengthen connections to City services for all New Yorkers."

Mino Lora, Co-Executive Director of People's Theatre Project, said "We are honored to receive this award from the Mayor's Office and excited to partner with MOIA as it will allow us to amplify and expand the work we are doing with our immigrant community Uptown by creating Theatre with Dreamers that educates other immigrants communities on our rights and resources as New Yorkers."

"Arts organizations can have tremendous impacts on the lives of families in need," said **Cecile Noel, Commissioner of the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence**. "Through the Mayor's Grant for Cultural Impact, several new collaborations with arts organizations will bring even more supports to New Yorkers in their communities. This is

an exciting opportunity to participate directly with families in the neighborhoods we serve, and OCDV is thrilled to be part of this initiative.”

Gina Gibney, Artistic Director and CEO of Gibney Dance, said “Gibney is honored to be a part of this initiative and to work alongside extraordinary colleagues, artists and change makers utilizing art to enact creative solutions for lasting social impact. We are thrilled to deepen our collaboration with the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence as we work to foster new pathways for conversation and consciousness around healthy, abuse free relationships.”

About NYC Department of Cultural Affairs

The New York City Department of Cultural Affairs (DCLA) is dedicated to supporting and strengthening New York City’s vibrant cultural life. DCLA works to promote and advocate for quality arts programming and to articulate the contribution made by the cultural community to the City’s vitality. The Department represents and serves nonprofit cultural organizations involved in the visual, literary, and performing arts; public-oriented science and humanities institutions including zoos, botanical gardens, and historic and preservation societies; and creative artists at all skill levels who live and work within the City’s five boroughs. DCLA also provides donated materials for arts programs offered by the public schools and cultural and social service groups, and commissions permanent works of public art at City-funded construction projects throughout the five boroughs. For more information visit www.nyc.gov/culture.

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