

# PRESS RELEASE



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## ***UNITED ARTS AWARDS PROJECT GRANTS TO NINE ARTS, SCIENCE AND HISTORY ORGANIZATIONS***

**ORLANDO – APRIL 12, 2022** – United Arts of Central Florida announced that nine organizations were awarded a total of \$27,000 through the March cycle of Project Grants, which are funded by the United Arts -- *Arts for ALL Fund*. This competitive grant program amplifies diverse cultures and voices, acts as a catalyst for change through arts and culture-based community development, and increases access to and participation in arts, science and history programming.

"For 10 years, Dance Theatre of Orlando and ME Dance, Inc. have sought to broaden the opportunities available to the performing artists of Central Florida while providing opportunities for the community to experience art and dance," said Marshall Ellis, founder of ME Dance, Inc., and artistic director of Dance Theatre of Orlando. "We believe that the dedication, talent and passion of performers should be rewarded, and thanks to the support from United Arts, we are able to expand our commitment to furthering professional talent and supporting the arts."

This grant helps increase the variety of cultural experiences available to residents and visitors in Central Florida. United Arts recognizes the high value of arts and culture in our region and believes this grant program is a necessary avenue for grassroots arts and cultural organizations to get their programs off the ground and to increase access for all people to participate and experience the arts in their community.

All applications for this grant were thoroughly reviewed by United Arts for overall organizational eligibility; artistic merit; community outreach, engagement, and education; and the likelihood of success based off prior projects completed. The executive committee of the United Arts board of directors reviewed the recommendations and approved the grants.

This cycle's grant recipients are:

**Caribbean American Association of Lake County** – Awarded \$3,000 for *Clermont Caribbean Jerk Festival*. The annual *Clermont Caribbean Jerk Festival* celebrates Caribbean culture in downtown Clermont's Waterfront Park with a day of food, dance, music, vendors, live entertainment and a performance by the Lake Steel Orchestra. The festival has been on hiatus the past two years due to COVID, but CAALC looks forward to a successful return with the help of these grant dollars.

**Casa de Mexico de la Florida Central, Inc.** – Awarded \$3,000 for multiple events during 2022, including a Cinco de Mayo celebration, an Independence Day Gala, and Day of the Dead celebration. The first will be held at the Dr. Phillips Center for the Performing Arts with performances by local mariachi bands and folkloric dance groups. The Independence Gala is the organization's key educational awareness event.

**D.T.O. Jazz Fest Inc.** – Awarded \$3,000 for *2022 D.T.O. Jazz Fest*, a one-day festival headlined by multi-Grammy award winning Latin Jazz musicians Oscar Hernandez and Alma Libre. Outreach programs will engage students ages 16-19 currently enrolled in school music programs in the region by exposing them to world-class jazz. Free access to the Fest will be provided to other targeted student and senior groups.

**First Presbyterian Church of Orlando – Arts Fellowship Orlando** – Awarded \$3,000 for *Showcase Gallery for Arts Fellowship Orlando*. The Showcase Gallery will be a full-length evening concert open to the public celebrating Orlando-area artists exploring the intersection of art and faith. During the showcase at Dr. Phillips Center for the Performing Arts, the artists will present their original works and educate the audience on their creative processes and inspirational sources and the stories behind their work.

**IDEAS For Us** – Awarded \$3,000 for *Climate Totem*. IDEAS For Us will design, build and install a large piece of functional artwork to communicate climate change as a reality to the citizens of Central Florida. IDEAS For Us will erect a telephone pole decorated by artists, students, youth and IDEAS staff to depict our world and its struggle to be more sustainable. This will include sea animal sculptures, shards of mirror (to emphasize the need for individual responsibility) and other methods of artistic expression. The height of the public art installation will be the projected sea level over Florida once all the ice caps melt in 2100. Atop the structure will be a platform for an osprey to roost, which will have an online web camera on the nest.

**ME Dance d/b/a Dance Theatre of Orlando** – Awarded \$3,000 for *Panorama*, the first production of the 2022 Season for ME Dance, Inc. and Dance Theatre of Orlando. The dance production will continue the video-narrative style of Dance Theatre of Orlando productions, allowing the art of dance to be understood in a storytelling manner. *Panorama* explores the ideas of time travel and the ripple effect, playing with the past, present and future.

**Swamp Sistas La La Foundation, Inc.** – Awarded \$3,000 for *Cosmic Conjunction Function*, a large public showcase at Will's Pub/Lil Indies/Dirty Laundry featuring live performances of music, spoken word, comedy and visual art. Swamp Sistas La La Foundation will also have a "Spotlight" video blog featuring local artists from marginalized populations. LGBTQ+ and BIPOC in the arts not only perform, but are an integral part of the planning, collaboration and networking of this event.

**Tavares Theater** – Awarded \$3,000 for *Live Theater: Haven, Life Hobby, Community Pride*, which will include two live performances for the public by Tavares Theatre. The first will be "Oscar and Felix" by Neil Simon and will take place in April 2022. The second will be "Butterflies are Free" by Leonard Gershe and will run in July 2022.

**Young Star Musical Theatre** – Awarded \$3,000 for *Disney's Beauty and the Beast* presented at Orlando Shakespeare Theater. Young Star Musical Theatre fosters a positive, encouraging environment for children to perform on a professional stage. The organization will offer discounted tickets to invited guests including at-risk youth through Edgewood Ranch, seniors, the Autism Society of Greater Orlando, Boys and Girls Club, Down Syndrome Society of Central Florida and volunteers of The Christian Services Center of Ocoee.

United Arts opened the application process for the next cycle of projects grants on April 11 and all applications are due by May 8. The maximum grant award is \$3,000 per organization per year. Organizations can learn more or apply once applications reopen at [www.UnitedArts.cc/grants](http://www.UnitedArts.cc/grants).

**About United Arts of Central Florida**

United Arts is a collaboration of individuals, businesses, governments and school districts, foundations, arts and cultural organizations, and artists. Its mission is to enrich communities by investing in arts, science and history. United Arts serves residents and visitors in Lake, Orange, Osceola and Seminole counties through the local arts, science and history organizations it supports. It does this by providing direct support through grants and contracts for services, collaborative fundraising, arts education opportunities, advocacy, and technical and administrative assistance. Since 1989, United Arts has invested more than \$170 million in Central Florida's arts and culture.

For more information, visit <http://www.UnitedArts.cc> or call 407.628.0333.