

PRESS RELEASE

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UNITED ARTS OF CENTRAL FLORIDA AWARDS \$2.475 MILLION IN OPERATING SUPPORT GRANTS TO LOCAL ARTS AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS

ORLANDO – December 20, 2022 – On December 14, 2022, the Board of Directors of United Arts of Central Florida (United Arts) approved the recommendations to award \$2,475,400 in Operating Support grants to 42 Central Florida nonprofit cultural organizations.

“The vision of United Arts is to increase access to the arts for all people of Central Florida by 2025. To achieve this vision, United Arts has set strategic goals to grow our grants and outreach programs to be more inclusive, equitable, impactful, and sustainable,” said Jennifer Evins, president and CEO of United Arts. “Thanks to funding from the National Endowment for the Arts, United Arts was able to expand this year’s funding pool by \$100,000 and provide grants to 5 new organizations. Operating dollars are very hard to come by, and we know these dollars will be used to strengthen our entire cultural sector.”

United Arts has increased the funding pool for this grant program by \$1 million, from \$1.4 million in 2019 to \$2.4 million in 2023. It is critical to the mission and vision of United Arts to invest these unrestricted operating dollars to help strengthen and grow local cultural organizations and ensure that residents and visitors have access to excellent and diverse arts and cultural programming. This comprehensive grant program recognizes the value of arts and culture in the community and the nonprofit organizations that provide this programming for the public year-round.

“The Orlando Philharmonic Orchestra is incredibly grateful for the support of United Arts of Central Florida and their recognition of the importance of general operating support,” said Paul Helfrich, executive director of the Orlando Philharmonic Orchestra. “It is at once both the most important support we receive and the most difficult to raise. Our orchestra employs hundreds of artists each year, creates new work from composers around the country, and is now serving our community in the beautiful Steinmetz Hall. None of this growth is possible without operating support from United Arts that we may use where it is most needed and best serves our mission.”

This year, United Arts instituted a \$10,000 minimum award to increase its intentional investment in local arts and cultural organizations. Qualified grantees apply annually in July for these critical operating dollars and must have provided annual programming and established 501(c)(3) for three years or more.

The impact of these grants is clear: In 2021 the United Arts Operating Support Grant Program helped 34 arts organizations mount 1,865 exhibitions and productions with 18,454 creative opportunities to participate, provided arts access and arts education to 676,122 school aged youth, offered 1,039,918 free tickets, and attracted 1,659,909 guests. These grants supported 324 full-time and 322 part-time staff positions, as well as 5,583 artists.

“We are so fortunate to have an organization like United Arts of Central Florida supporting the nonprofits in our region,” said Arisa Kusumi Sullivan, executive and artistic director of the Howey Mansion Music Series. “Not only is this grant crucial to the survival and growth of most of the arts organizations in Central Florida, but they also create relationships with the nonprofits to understand their needs and concerns so they can provide support through trainings, webinars, forums, etc. with community leaders. Howey Mansion Music Series would not be where we are today without their dedicated and personal focus on our development to help lead us to success.”

Applications for the Operating Support Grant Program undergo a multi-level vetting process. First, applicants are screened by overall eligibility requirements set by the United Arts Standards and Allocations Committee (comprised of UA board members). Second the applicant’s financial documents are reviewed to identify trends in stability, sustainability and management.

Third, applications are scored on the criteria of artistic (or historic/scientific) excellence, artistic merit and community impact during a panel review process. Volunteer panelists are vital to the integrity of the grant review process. Panelists reflect Central Florida’s diverse community with 50% being BIPOC/ALAANA. Panelists bring their understanding of the arts, arts education, nonprofit management, and the community to evaluate each application.

“United Arts is part of the life blood for the Central Florida Arts Community. It is extremely important to support and build our arts organizations in Central Florida,” said Ellie Potts Barrett, multi-year panelist and choreographer. “As a panelist, I get to understand the workings behind the scenes and what it takes for our arts organizations to succeed. I am so proud to be a part of this support system as a panelist for the United Arts Operating Support Grant Program.”

Funding for the Operating Support Grant Program is part of the annual operating budget of United Arts which is funded through generous support from corporations, foundations, individuals, the City of Orlando and Orange County. Additional funding for this grant is provided by the National Endowment for the Arts through their American Rescue Plan Grants to Local Arts Agencies for Subgranting.

To donate: <https://unitedarts.cc/support/give-now/>.

2023 Operating Support Grant Recipients and Descriptions

Awards for Calendar Year 2023 Activities

Albin Polasek Museum & Sculpture Gardens (FY23 Award \$37,000) preserves the 200+ piece collection of world-renowned Czech-American sculptor, Albin Polasek. Through rotating gallery exhibitions, the Museum showcases Florida-based artists, diverse cultural themes, open-call shows, unique private collections, sculptures, and Czech artwork honoring Polasek's heritage. The museum offers guided tours of Polasek’s home, studio, gardens, and the 1885 Capen House.

Art & History Museums of Maitland (FY23 Award \$61,400) is comprised of four art and history museums that offer immersive and hands-on experiences. The Maitland Art Center, A&H's most prominent museum and greater Orlando's only National Historic Landmark, was founded as an artists' retreat in 1937 by visionary artist and architect J. André Smith. Today, the center's art and history exhibitions, resident artist programs, and Art School serve the Central Florida community and honor Smith's legacy.

ArtReach Orlando (FY23 Award \$10,000) provides art programs for youth experiencing difficult economic and social situations who may not have access to the arts. Through the creative process, they are exploring the link between art, social justice, and the healing process. By fostering creativity, they are encouraging and empowering young people to imagine the positive changes they wish to see in their own lives, their communities, and the world.

Bach Festival Society of Winter Park (FY23 Award \$88,300) presents a season of choral and orchestral concerts, including the annual three-week Bach Festival, Visiting Artists, Insights & Sounds, Choral Masterworks, and the newly created Bach Vocal Artists series, as well as outreach and educational programs celebrating the legacy of J.S. Bach. Founded in 1935, it remains Central Florida's longest-operating performing arts organization and the third-longest running Bach Festival in the nation.

Bay Street Players (FY23 Award \$15,800) is a community theatre whose home is the historic State Theatre in Eustis, Florida. The 2022-2023 season will celebrate 101 years of the building that was constructed as a vaudeville theatre and the Bay Street Players 48th production season. The mission of the Bay Street Players founders is to provide artists a space to entertain and educate has been well served in this space.

Blue Bamboo Center for the Arts (FY23 Award \$10,000) provides live music concerts, including jazz, classical, Americana, folk, Flamenco, Bossa Nova, spoken word, and other high-performance art. The performers are at a high level of achievement in their craft, providing the audience an opportunity to interact with them via question/answers, sessions, clinics, and other general instruction either individually or in groups. The venue is open to everyone and seats 80 people.

Celebration Theater Company, Inc. (FY23 Award \$10,000) has remained Orlando's only theatre company to focus primarily on contemporary musical theatre and, as of August 2022, stands as Orlando's only community theatre group to present a full season each year. Main Stage Productions are fully produced musicals, usually presented in the Alexis and Jim Pugh Theatre at the Dr. Phillips Center for the Performing Arts, with smaller-scale musicals and cabarets presented at The Abbey.

Central Florida Ballet (FY23 Award \$42,000) aims to entertain, educate, and inspire through the universal art form of dance. Innovative and powerful ballet productions, educational programs, and international partnerships are the keystones of the Central Florida Ballet with glowing recognition from The White House, U.S. House of Representatives, ABC News, CNN Headline News, USA Today, and the Wall Street Journal.

Central Florida Community Arts (FY23 Award \$51,000) exists to build and serve community through both performance-based program areas (Choir, Orchestra, Children & Youth Arts Programs, Dance and Theatre) and the School of Arts and Health, which includes its arts Academy, Arts & Wellness initiative, Arts in Action for older adults, Arts Access programs for children in underserved communities, its Arts & Health Collective, and Music Therapy.

Central Florida Vocal Arts (CFVA) (FY23 Award \$10,000) offers programming with three main focuses: Education, Mainstage and Opera del Sol. Within each of these programmatic categories, CFVA strives to connect with the community and use its platform in the arts to create tangible social good. Educational programs include individual and group classes, institutes and on-site programs for artists of all ages. Mainstage and Opera del Sol productions include performances with orchestra, regional premieres and original works.

Chance 2 Dance, Inc. (FY23 Award \$10,000) is Florida's only nonprofit dance organization exclusively dedicated to bringing genuine, purposeful dance instruction and performance opportunities to children, teens, and adults with varying abilities. Dancers benefit artistically, physically, socially and emotionally from group, ensemble and individual classes in the studio and community. Dancers challenge themselves and audiences by redefining perceptions about what people with varying abilities can achieve in the arts.

Crealdé School of Art (FY23 Award \$74,500) Art is a community-based visual arts organization founded in 1975. Out of its three Central Florida campuses, it features a multidisciplinary curriculum of 125 art classes taught by 50+ professional artists, mentoring opportunities for emerging artists, three free galleries, a sculpture garden, traveling exhibitions and outreach programming that includes the Hannibal Square Heritage Center, established in 2007 as a tribute to Winter Park's historic African American community.

Creative City Project (FY23 Award \$27,500) began in 2012 as a group of artists performing on street corners and in plazas around Downtown Orlando. Now, a decade later Creative City Project is fulfilling its mission to cultivate a thriving arts community in Central Florida through a deeper sense of ownership and care for Orlando amongst its residents while shaping the global perception of The City Beautiful, which is known for its innovation and creativity.

Downtown Arts District (DAD) (FY23 Award \$36,000) is a dedicated nonprofit organization for advancing arts and economic development in the City of Orlando. Established in 2000, DAD represents and serves the arts community by operating CityArts Orlando (CityArts), producing arts engagement events, executing public art projects, and connecting artists to the business community. Offering a little something for everyone, DAD focuses on the visual arts, storytelling, music, film, and diverse cultural experiences.

Emotions Dance (FY23 Award \$10,000) consists of a professional contemporary dance company that focuses on social and environmental awareness through the art of dance, dance education training, and programs that enrich the local community. Emotions Dance's programming emphasizes strong technical training and education combined with passionate artistry.

Enzian (FY23 Award \$91,200) exists to entertain, inspire, educate, and connect the community through film. Alongside first run films, repertory cult classics, family programming, and more, Enzian hosts local showcases and acclaimed festivals, including the Florida Film Festival, providing a platform for all filmmakers. With diverse cinematic programming and innovative educational and collaborative events, Enzian is a window into the stories, cultures and people of the world through the medium of film.

Florida Symphony Youth Orchestras (FSYO) (FY23 Award \$35,500) has offered an opportunity for young musicians of all levels to learn, explore, and excel, not only in their musical disciplines but in all aspects of their lives since its inception in 1953. FSYO's ensembles give each student a place to excel with peers at a similar level and an opportunity to collaborate with seasoned music professionals on local, national, and international levels.

Garden Theatre (FY23 Award \$45,000) originally operated as a single-screen movie theatre in 1935, closed in 1963, and was renovated and re-opened in 2008 in historic downtown Winter Garden, FL. Celebrating the performing arts and theatrical experiences that are innovative, impactful and inclusive, programming includes professional live theatre, concerts, special events, movies and year-round arts programming.

Global Peace Film Festival (GPFF) (FY23 Award \$15,000) is a celebratory event and place to honor those who promote global and community awareness of peace and environmental sustainability through creative media. Programming includes the annual September film festival, both live and virtual, as well as year-round community screenings. GPFF also presents art exhibits, including a K-12 Peace Art Exhibit produced with Orange County Public Schools.

HAPCO Music Foundation Inc (FY23 Award \$10,000) creates educational programs that help the Central Florida community build to better futures. Through these programs, young people are able to further their education through music and the arts. HAPCO assists youth, particularly in low-income communities, who aspire a career in the arts use their talents to fund their higher education. Since 2001, HAPCO has worked to instill a passion for excellence through music, arts, and educational opportunities.

Holocaust Memorial Resource & Education Center of Florida (FY23 Award \$64,000) was founded in 1981 by Tess Wise, a Holocaust Survivor from Poland, who believed that the lessons of the Holocaust could be used to understand contemporary social and human rights issues. The Holocaust Center offers free admission for all visitors and houses two permanent exhibits, a VR experience, and a special exhibition gallery. The Center hosts Holocaust remembrance commemorations, dynamic programs, virtual lunch & learns, and robust education for students and teachers.

Howey Mansion Music Series (HMMS) (FY23 Award \$10,000) is a jazz and classical music series that creates opportunities for people of all walks of life to learn about and hear concerts in the historic Howey Mansion. Due to the waning interest for these genres from lack of education about these art forms, HMMS makes an impact by presenting 5 concerts per season with musicians of the highest caliber who share fun facts about the pieces to grow audiences and foster appreciation for this music now and for the future.

The **Leesburg Center for the Arts (CFA) (FY23 Award \$10,000)** believes that the foundation of art is the creative process. CFA's space is a no judgement zone for art discovery, exploration, and experimentation. Cultivating a creative process friendly environment for artists, creatives and dabblers of all ages living or visiting in the Greater Leesburg area.

Mennello Museum of American Art (FY23 Award \$17,100) endeavors to preserve, exhibit, and interpret its permanent collection of paintings by Earl Cunningham, American Impressionism, Realism, Folk Art, Modern, and Contemporary art. The Museum enriches the public through temporary exhibitions, educational initiatives, and publications that celebrate other outstanding traditional and contemporary American art and artists across disciplines to reflect the rich diversity of American art.

MicheLee Puppets (FY23 Award \$18,000) empowers lives through the art of puppetry. As Florida's only educational puppetry arts organization and nationally awarded by Puppeteers of America, MicheLee Puppets delivers original, issue-based plays, videos and puppetry classes in schools and public venues throughout Florida.

Mount Dora Center for the Arts (MDCA) (FY23 Award \$21,000) supports artists, encourages artistic creativity and diversity, and enriches lives through art education and fine art exhibits. The nationally ranked Mount Dora Arts Festival is a juried event that draws almost 300 fine artists from across the country annually in February and is free to attend. Proceeds from fundraisers and grants support low cost/no cost art education through MDCA's monthly outreach programs.

Opera Orlando (FY23 Award \$36,000) is redefining the operatic experience in the Central Florida area with theatrical works of high artistic quality and innovative integrity. The Opera creatively fuses various genres and mediums to engage the community with original productions and educational programs making opera accessible to everyone.

Orange County Regional History Center (FY23 Award \$43,000), supported by the Historical Society of Central Florida, is a national multi-award-winning, American Alliance of Museums accredited, and Smithsonian affiliated museum. With four floors of exciting exhibitions and a robust schedule of programming for all ages and interests, the museum serves as the gateway for community engagement, education, and inspiration by preserving and sharing Central Florida's continually unfolding story.

Orlando Ballet's (FY23 Award \$271,300) mission is fulfilled through its 3 focus areas: the professional Company, which provides an annual season of full-length ballets, new works, and non-traditional programs; Orlando Ballet School, which attracts more than 1,500 national and international students annually; and Community Enrichment programs that bring the physical and emotional benefits of dance to a wide range of under-resourced individuals throughout Central Florida.

Orlando Fringe (FY23 Award \$51,000) produces the longest running Fringe Festival in the US and one of the largest in North America, drawing over 60K people in 14 days to experience 14 theatrical venues, a free outdoor stage, visual art, and activities for people from all walks of life. Shows are selected via a lottery. Anyone is able to apply, whether an established organization or a new, aspiring artist. Artistic freedom is unrestrained and uncensored, and 100% of ticket sales are returned to the artists.

Orlando Gay Chorus (FY23 Award \$10,000) inspires individuals, the community and the world through excellence in musical entertainment. Entering its 32nd year, Orlando Gay Chorus uses music to bring the community together and make the world a better place.

Orlando Museum of Art (FY23 Award \$159,400) is a center for cultural engagement that inspires creativity, passion, and intellectual curiosity by presenting traditional and contemporary art exhibitions, exciting community-building events, and innovative education and outreach programs. The Orlando Museum of Art earns a significant reputation befitting Orlando as a world-class museum in a global city.

Orlando Philharmonic Orchestra (OPO) (FY23 Award \$276,800) is led by Music Director Eric Jacobsen and presents four major series annually: Classics for timeless works, Pops for a variety of popular music, Focus for a balanced mix of classical composers and diverse contemporary new work, and Symphony Storytime bringing children's stories to life with live music. The OPO also supports music education and community engagement performances for tens of thousands of people each year.

Orlando Repertory Theatre (FY23 Award \$181,400) creates experiences that enlighten, entertain, and enrich the lives of family and young audiences through professional productions, an award-winning Youth Academy, a bevy of community engagement programs, and a partnership with UCF hosting a Masters of Fine Arts program. These theatrical programs support children's mental health and well-being, strengthen literacy and education, and encourage creativity and imagination.

Orlando Science Center (FY23 Award \$271,200) is Central Florida's award-winning, hands-on science museum. For over 66 years, the Science Center's events, exhibits, and programming have brought science to life for residents of Central Florida and visitors from around the world. Through immersive exhibits, innovative educational programs, and a deep commitment to community outreach, Orlando Science Center is an invaluable community resource and a leader in the arts and culture industry.

Orlando Shakes (FY23 Award \$245,700) in partnership with UCF, produces innovative classic, contemporary, and children's theater and offers immersive educational programming in the heart of Orlando's Loch Haven Cultural Park. Over 34 seasons, Orlando Shakes has evolved to include much more than just Shakespeare in order to attract a wider audience, promote diversity, inspire budding artists, and support new playwrights.

Russian Ballet Orlando (RBO) (FY23 Award \$14,000) has a 22-year history of presenting classical and contemporary ballets throughout Orlando and Central Florida. As a professional and pre-professional ballet company and school, RBO applauds diversity for ballet audiences, dancers and students. The RBO Academy teaches classical ballet in the Russian Vaganova method to over 250 students each season, offers multiple adult classes each day, and RBO's Project Relevé offers free ballet classes each month to area children.

Snap! Orlando (FY23 Award \$11,000) is composed of Snap! Downtown, a public photography and contemporary art gallery, and CITY UNSEEN, a public Augmented Reality [AR]t project. Snap! in the heart of downtown Orlando, offers exhibitions and diverse events throughout the year in collaboration with local, national and international artists and partners. CITY UNSEEN, an ongoing citywide public art installation, launches the viewer into [AR] experiences by merging art and cutting-edge technology in a free smartphone app.

Timucua Arts Foundation (FY23 Award \$10,000) is a multi-faceted arts and education institution, presenting concerts and festivals, operating the unique and intimate Timucua venue, and delivering education and wellness programming to people of all ages. Timucua's distinctive integration of the performing and visual arts has carved a niche for high-level, accessibly-priced programming in an intimate venue. Presenting jazz, contemporary classical, and world music, theater, film, poetry, and visual art.

Urban Think Foundation (FY23 Award \$16,300), the parent organization for Page 15, transforms lives through the power of words. Programming focuses on four key areas: Literacy Camps and Workshops, Daily After-School Literacy Enrichment, Student Publishing Opportunities, and Community Collaborations. Page 15 uses creative writing as the medium of self-expression so students of all abilities can find opportunities to express their creativity through journaling, poetry, and other creative writing projects in a supportive, non-judgmental environment.

Winter Garden Heritage Foundation (WGHF) (FY23 Award \$10,000) preserves the heritage of West Orange County. WGHF accomplishes its mission by operating three locations in Winter Garden: the Heritage Museum, which features exhibits on the history of West Orange County; the History Research, Education, and Visitors' Center, which houses an extensive archive documenting the area's past; and the Central Florida Railroad Museum which showcases the influence the railroad has had in the development of Florida.

The Winter Park Playhouse (FY23 Award \$38,000) is Central Florida's professional musical theatre and will celebrate its 21st Anniversary in 2023. The Playhouse produces dynamic and unique musical programming year-round including the Mainstage Series of Musicals, Spotlight Cabaret Series, One-Night-Only Series and the internationally recognized Florida Festival of New Musicals.

Applications for 2024 Operating Support grants will be accepted in the summer of 2023. For a full list of qualifications and requirements to receive this grant, please visit: UnitedArts.cc/grants

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About United Arts of Central Florida

United Arts of Central Florida is the local arts agency uniting the community and fueling the arts. With the help of individual donors, corporations, foundations and public funding, United Arts inspires creativity, builds community and strengthens the economy in Central Florida. United Arts is proud to facilitate arts education programs for all ages and provide critical funding and comprehensive marketing for local art, science, and history organizations and individual artists. Leading the second largest collaborative fundraising campaign in the country and uniting over 30 of the region's cornerstone arts and cultural organizations, United Arts is dedicated to ensuring the arts are for all.

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