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COCA ANNOUNCES $40 MILLION CREATE OUR FUTURE: A CAMPAIGN FOR COCA
To date, COCA has raised $25 million to expand its historic building in University City and ensure its community building efforts

ST. LOUIS – On the occasion of its 30th anniversary, COCA’s Board of Directors announced today the Create Our Future campaign – a $40 million, multi-year fundraising effort to raise $27 million for the capital renovation and expansion of COCA’s historic building in University City and $13 million to fund its endowment and reserves. The ambitious project positions COCA to meet evolving community needs and serve its growing student base, while also sustaining its long-term commitment to ensuring access.

Launched quietly in early 2015, the campaign is spearheaded by a 12-member Steering Committee chaired by Cheryl Holman, with Honorary Chairs Alison and John Ferring. Lead gifts include $5 million from the Ferrings and a $3 million lead corporate gift from Centene Corporation. To date COCA has raised over $25 million from private sources – with 100 percent of its Board of Directors, Associate Board, and staff contributing – toward the $40 million goal.

“The arts have shown their power as ‘connective tissue,’ creating opportunities to bring people together for conversation, innovation and expression,” said Jesse Hunter, COCA Board President and Executive Vice President at Centene Corporation. “By strengthening COCA’s role as a vital cultural and educational resource, this project is an investment in future generations of all St. Louisans.”

Three decades ago, a group of passionate community leaders conceived of and created COCA, transforming the historic B’nai Amoona Synagogue, built by renowned architect Eric Mendelsohn, into a community arts center. The idea: through the arts, COCA would serve as a bridge to connect people divided by income, race, ideas or geography.

“Each year, we serve thousands of young people and see the life-changing results that an arts education has on them. As demand for COCA’s programs continues to grow, we want to provide these transformative opportunities for even more kids,” said Kelly Pollock, COCA Executive Director. “As we expand and renovate our building, we remain focused on providing equitable access to our programs for everyone.”

The Create Our Future campaign is designed to allow COCA to serve more students in multidisciplinary classrooms and studios and deliver state-of-the-art performances, while nearly quadrupling the organization’s endowment, ensuring COCA will be able to serve the St. Louis community for years to come.

With a planned start date in early 2018 and completion in late 2019, the project includes:

- **A state-of-the-art theater** (450 seats) to both meet COCA’s growing performance needs as well as expand opportunities to host local and touring visiting artists.
- **More than 8,000 square feet of new studio space** for COCA’s growing programs, including its nationally acclaimed Pre-Professional Program and joint MFA in Dance offered in partnership with Washington University in St. Louis.
o A visually stunning and highly functional Performance Lab restoring the original architecture of Mendelsohn's sanctuary and providing a central studio, rehearsal hall and informal presentation/event space.

o New art & design lab and multipurpose instructional space equipped with tools to foster exploration and creativity.

o New community space – located throughout the project – to create a more hospitable, welcoming second home for COCA’s families and visitors.

o A designated, safe, and accessible drop-off and pick-up configuration.

o A new parking garage: COCA’s patrons will be accommodated across the street in a new 200+-space parking garage developed in partnership with Washington University.

COCA has demonstrated results and achieved national recognition for its model. Recently, the organization brought in world-class leadership for its dance department in retired Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater company members, Antonio and Kirven Douthit-Boyd. COCA also recently received national accreditation from the Accrediting Commission for Community and Precollegiate Arts Schools (ACCPAS) – making it one of only 17 schools in the country to hold this distinction.

“The community has embraced our work – helping COCA grow into the fourth largest community arts center in the country and a national model right here in St. Louis,” said Pollock. “Though our work spans the community, taking place everywhere from schools and community centers to large businesses, an expanded central facility will help us to truly become the creative epicenter for St. Louis.”

More information about Create Our Future: A Campaign for COCA and high resolution images are available at [www.cocastl.org/createourfuture](http://www.cocastl.org/createourfuture).

CAMPAIGN STEERING COMMITTEE:
- Cheryl Holman, Chair
- John and Alison Ferring, Honorary Chairs
- Lisa Boyce
- Bill Carson, Co-Chair for Board Giving
- Carolyn Gold, Co-Chair for Board Giving
- Jesse Hunter, Board President
- Kristin Johnson, Chair for Corporate Giving
- Lee Kaplan
- Ned Lemkemeier
- Dave Peacock
- Donald Suggs

DESIGN TEAM:
- Design Architect – Axi:Ome
- Associate Design Architect, Architect of Record – Christner Inc.
- Structural Engineer – OES Inc.
- Mechanical, Electrical, Plumbing Engineer – Buro Happold
- Lighting Design – Buro Happold
- Civil Engineer – Engineering Design Source, Inc.
- Theater Consultant – Schuler Shook
- Acoustic Consultant – Kirkegaard Associates
- Audio Visual Consultant - Kirkegaard Associates
- Construction Manager – Wilson TW Joint Venture

ABOUT COCA
Founded in 1986, COCA is the fourth largest multidisciplinary community arts center in the country and a national leader in innovative arts education. With a mission to enrich lives and build community through the arts, COCA serves 50,000 people from over 200 zip codes, of all ages and skill levels, from enthusiastic amateurs to emerging professionals—all taught by a faculty of distinguished arts educators. We provide meaningful arts experiences in our own studios, gallery and theatres as well as in schools, community centers and corporate settings in order to build a vibrant St. Louis that is creative, connected and inclusive. COCA is one of 17 organizations nationally accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Precollegiate Art Schools.