



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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COCA TO RECEIVE \$40,000 GRANT FROM THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS

Funding provides critical support for COCAedu and COCA's Pre-Professional Division scholarship program

ST. LOUIS, Feb. 13, 2019 – National Endowment for the Arts Acting Chairman Mary Anne Carter has approved more than \$27 million in grants as part of the Arts Endowment's first major funding announcement for fiscal year 2019. Included in this announcement is an Art Works grant of \$40,000 to COCA-Center of Creative Arts to support its Pre-Professional Division and COCAedu dance residencies. Art Works is the Arts Endowment's principal grantmaking program. The agency received 1,605 Art Works applications for this round of grantmaking, and will award 972 grants in this category.

"The arts enhance our communities and our lives, and we look forward to seeing these projects take place throughout the country, giving Americans opportunities to learn, to create, to heal, and to celebrate," said Mary Anne Carter, acting chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts.

"We are so grateful to the NEA for its support of COCA," said COCA Executive Director Kelly Pollock. "Accessibility, diversity and inclusion core to our mission, and this critical funding will help us continue to eliminate barriers that might otherwise prevent young people from participating in our programs."

The 2019 NEA funding will be used to provide summer and year-round dance classes at three Boys & Girls Club sites in the Ferguson Florissant and Riverview Gardens School Districts as well as free in-school dance residencies to Mason and Jefferson Elementary Schools, both part of St. Louis Public Schools.

Funding will also support COCA's Pre-Professional Division dance scholarship programs, including Discovery Young Artist, which introduces students to dance in a safe and nurturing environment. COCA's Pre-Professional Division provides students, ages 8-18, with high-quality dance training, performance opportunities, and comprehensive support services – ACT and academic tutoring, career counseling, master classes with renowned artists, financial assistance, dancewear, and transportation.

Of the nearly 200 students enrolled in the program, almost half receive financial assistance. For 17 consecutive years, 100% of Pre-Professional Division seniors have graduated with college/post-secondary education and/or professional training plans. Last year, 36% of senior students were the first to go to college in their families.

For more information on this National Endowment for the Arts grant announcement, visit arts.gov/news.

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About COCA

Founded in 1986, COCA is the fourth largest multidisciplinary community arts center in the country, one of only 16 schools in the nation accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Precollegiate Arts Schools (ACCPAS), 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 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. Visit www.cocastl.org to learn more.