



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

August 3, 2020

Jason Schipkowski
jschipkowski@cocastl.org, 314.561.4868

COCA UNVEILS STUNNING CAMPUS EXPANSION

Prepares to welcome students and community into new state-of-the-art facility

Create Our Future Campaign Achieves \$49M towards \$45M Goal

ST. LOUIS, August 3, 2020 – COCA – Center of Creative Arts – is celebrating the successful completion of the *Create Our Future* Campaign, raising \$49 million over its four-year effort to support the construction of an accessible, state-of-the-art expansion, the Ferring East Wing, which includes the incomparable 450-seat Catherine B. Berges Theatre, in addition to supporting endowment funds for scholarships, support services, artistic and educational programming.

The expansion is situated adjacent to the organization’s long-time home in the historic Erich Mendelsohn-designed mid-century building in University City at 6880 Washington Avenue – named the Kuehner West Wing and renovated as part of the project. The new combined campus, affectionately dubbed “the house of the people” is uniquely positioned to welcome diverse, multi-generational audiences for classes, camps, performances, exhibitions, and community gatherings for years to come.

“The Campaign Steering Committee is deeply grateful for the extraordinary way individuals, businesses, and foundations have come together in support of this vital organization’s mission,” said Cheryl Holman, *Create Our Future* Committee Chair. “Those who value creativity in St. Louis and beyond have sent a resounding message that the arts are a part of the fabric of our community and must be nurtured.”

The grand scope of the project, and the resulting construction, is fitting for an accredited, nationally-renowned institution that is the fourth largest multi-disciplinary arts center in the United States. With this milestone, COCA, known for on- and off-site educational opportunities for all ages, is further fulfilling its mission to enrich lives and build community through the arts.

“I’m thrilled beyond measure to have the St. Louis community experience this beautiful new space.” said Kelly Pollock, COCA’s Executive Director. “We want to ensure that this is a welcoming and inclusive space in which we tell the stories that need to be told, develop voices that need to be heard, connect people in more meaningful ways, and make art that feeds our community’s spirit and soul.”

Currently, due to COVID-19, the facility is open with safety measures in place for a limited capacity to summer class students only. Patrons can be among the first to explore the expanded campus through small group, guided tours beginning in September. Information to sign up for a scheduled tour will be available in the coming weeks. Additional information about COCA’s Fall classes and registration will be available beginning on August 14. In-person and virtual class offerings are slated to begin on September 8th.

– MORE –



NEWS RELEASE

The *Create Our Future* campaign was spearheaded by a Steering Committee, chaired by Holman, with Honorary Chairs Alison and John Ferring.

Campaign Steering Committee

Cheryl Holman, Chair
John and Alison Ferring, Honorary Chairs
Lisa Boyce
Bill Carson
Carolyn Gold
Tom Hillman
Jesse Hunter
Kristin Johnson
Lee Kaplan
Newell S. “Jim” Knight*
Ned Lemkemeier
Melissa Merlin
Dave Peacock
Donald Suggs

**deceased*

Project Team

Architect of Record – Christner Inc.
Design Architect – Axi:Ome
Construction Manager – Wilson TW Joint Venture
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
Project Manager – Kent Turner

###

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.