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Wolf Trap Institute for Early Learning Through the Arts Receives National Endowment for the Arts Grant to Enhance Pre-school Arts Education

Pilot Program to Launch this Fall in 60 Classrooms Across D.C. Metropolitan Region

Vienna, VA—Early childhood organizations throughout the District of Columbia, Maryland and Virginia will participate in a pilot program, spearheaded by the Wolf Trap Institute for Early Learning Through the Arts. This new initiative, funded by a National Endowment for the Arts grant will provide an integrated, multi-faceted program to enhance professional development in arts education for an estimated 100 teachers at schools across the region. The training will be delivered by Wolf Trap’s Teaching Artists, with the goal of supporting children’s arts learning related to newly released pre-K arts standards.

The components of this new first-of-its-kind initiative include:

- **Classroom Residencies:** conducted over the course of eight weeks, during which time Wolf Trap Teaching Artists support teachers’ professional development and engage children in arts learning, in the classroom.
- **Field Trip Performances:** provide an opportunity for teachers to bring their classes to Wolf Trap to experience quality, multi-disciplinary performances, including the Wolf Trap Jazz Trio and *Junkyard Pirates*, a recycling-themed puppet theater work for young children, commissioned by Wolf Trap.
- **Professional Development Workshops for Teachers:** led by professional Master Teaching Artists specializing in puppetry, music, dance, and drama. All Master Teaching Artists have developed their workshops based on their extensive experience working with children and teachers in the early childhood classroom.

“Through this new program, preschool children will have greater opportunities to learn specific music, dance and drama skills as targeted in local standards,” said Miriam Flaherty Willis, Senior Director of Education at Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts. “Together, Wolf Trap’s Teaching Artists and classroom teachers will devise and refine instructional strategies that will have impact on children’s learning in the arts and across all areas of the curriculum. This grant from the National Endowment for the Arts and the leadership of our regional early childhood partners make a powerful statement placing the arts firmly within our communities’ priorities supporting young children’s development and school readiness.”

Wolf Trap will partner with the following early childhood organizations for the pilot program: Baltimore City Head Start, Baltimore City Public Schools, Brightwood Elementary (DC Public Schools), United Planning Organization, Community Academy Public Charter Schools in DC, Fairfax County Office for Children Head Start Program at Gum Springs Community Center and Higher Horizons Day Care Center and Fairfax County Public Schools.

An independent formative and summative evaluation and assessment of the program will be conducted by Dr. Douglas Klayman of Social Dynamics LLC, to determine the impact on children’s learning as aligned with local, state and national arts education standards. Douglas Klayman, Ph.D. is an expert with nearly two decades of experience in evaluation, performance, measurement and research as it relates to education.

“Early childhood education programs are designed to meet the needs of our young children to ensure school readiness,” said Klayman. “Comprehensive impact and process evaluations provide answers to key questions about child outcomes and the fidelity of program implementation. Without an evaluation, we would have no idea if the program is having the intended effect on children nor would we know if the program is being implemented appropriately. Evaluation is an essential step in the program development process.”

The Wolf Trap Institute’s arts education instruction and professional development for early childhood education have been evaluated and proven highly effective by several highly respected organizations in the field. Past project evaluations have been conducted by Project Zero-Harvard Graduate School of Education, 1991-95, Education Development Center, Inc. 1999, A. Yaffe, Ph. D. and D. Yaffe, 2000, Social Dynamics LLC, 2006, D. Chase, Ph. D., 2007. In addition the Institute has received support from the Head Start Bureau, U.S. Department of Education, the Department of Commerce/Technology Opportunity Project and the National Endowment for the Arts.

[Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts](#), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, headquarters its arts and education programs at The Center for Education at Wolf Trap. The Center is located just twenty miles from Washington, D.C. and adjoins the Dulles Technology Corridor.

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