



Advancing Sacramento Arts
AN INITIATIVE OF THE SACRAMENTO REGION
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION



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Kim Tucker
3fold Communications
916.442.1394
kim@3foldcomm.com

Arts Innovation Prize Awarded to Three Local Arts Organizations

SACRAMENTO, Calif.; (August 13, 2010) — In a unique public-private partnership, the Sacramento Metropolitan Arts Commission (SMAC) and the Sacramento Region Community Foundation (SRCF) have given local arts organizations a reason to celebrate in the midst of this tough economy. Six local arts organizations will receive over \$30,000 in total awards as part of the **Arts Innovation Fund**. The fund promises cash awards to organizations who have most creatively and effectively used innovation to survive reduced funding and audiences.

Twenty-eight applicants submitted their most innovative program or organizational practice and outlined the measurable outcomes. The innovations included changes to programming, grassroots outreach and fundraising, and new and exciting community partnerships. The results included reaching new audiences, attracting new donors, enabling them to stay in business through the very tough performance seasons of 2009 and 2010.

Of the 15 finalists, three winners and three honorable mentions received \$30,000 in total prize awards. They include:

1st Prize – The Sacramento Ballet – awarded \$10,000

2nd Prize – The Sacramento Choral Society – awarded \$8,500

3rd Prize – Capital Stage – awarded \$7,000

Honorable Mention prizes of \$1,500 each went to the Sacramento Philharmonic, La Raza Galeria Posada, and Instituto Mazatlan Bellas Artes.

“We know great places to live, work and visit are built around the presence of a strong arts community; and we know local arts organizations have struggled as Sacramento families lose jobs and stretch their dollars to cover basic necessities. We saw arts organizations rise to the occasion with creative and entrepreneurial responses. We wanted to make it possible for them to sustain these innovations over time with this Fund.” said Rhyena Halpern, Executive Director of SMAC.

Out of the 28 applicants, 15 finalists pitched their innovation and success to a panel of local business, arts and community leaders. “The Foundation and SMAC agree that it is important to support the innovative thinking of our community’s arts organizations through the Arts Innovation Prize,” said Ruth Blank, Executive Director of the Sacramento Region Community

Foundation. “In conjunction with the Foundation’s Advancing Sacramento Arts initiative, this program offered another way to keep arts thriving in this economy. Our work to recognize the people who keep the arts alive – staff, volunteers, donors, and board members alike – is strengthened by the partnership with SMAC.”

Carlin Naify, a panelist and SMAC Commissioner said, “It was fantastic to see how the Ballet found intimate ways to connect with its audience, from small performances in their studio to dancers holding up signs on street corners. The Choral Society’s new program at the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament Church was a wonderful way for them to return to Sacramento. And Capital Stage’s idea to reward early subscribers with 10 tickets donated to the nonprofit organization of their choice simply wowed us.”

SRCF’s Chief Giving Officer Priscilla Enriquez oversaw the application and panel process. “Our panelists were very impressed by all the arts groups through the process. The applicants that rose to the top took the most risks and were daring and dynamic in their approach to innovation. The panel wanted to also acknowledge the significant accomplishments of the Sacramento Philharmonic, La Raza Galeria Posada and Instituto Mazatlan Bellas Artes through honorable mentions.”

Halpern and Blank agree that the Fund furthered the missions of both SMAC and SRCF. By creating an innovative program themselves, they modeled the type of innovation they rewarded. A second round is planned for 2011.

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About Sacramento Region Community Foundation: An effective steward of the region’s charitable assets since 1983, the Foundation’s serves as a leader and trusted partner in expanding philanthropic activity for the betterment of Sacramento communities. To find out more, visit www.sacregcf.com. **Advancing Sacramento Arts** is an initiative of the Sacramento Region Community Foundation made possible by a grant from the James Irvine Foundation, whose mission is to expand opportunity for the people of California to participate in a vibrant, successful and inclusive society.

About Sacramento Metropolitan Arts Commission: The Sacramento Metropolitan Arts Commission (SMAC) is a public agency devoted to advancing community through arts and culture. Through community outreach and service, SMAC is making a difference in the livelihood and quality of life in the Sacramento region. Funded by the City and County of Sacramento, SMAC provides dynamic arts education, public art, grants and cultural programs. For further information, go to www.sacmetroarts.org.