

# PRESS RELEASE

FOR RELEASE WEDNESDAY, JUNE 5, 2013



**Contact:**

**Denise C. Bealin**

**Director of Communications and Development**

**407-628-0333 x222**

[Denise@UnitedArts.cc](mailto:Denise@UnitedArts.cc)

## **UNITED ARTS RECEIVES \$35,000 GRANT FROM PNC FOUNDATION TO CREATE EDUCATIONAL ARTS PROGRAMS FOR CENTRAL FLORIDA KIDS**

**ORLANDO, Fla. – June 5, 2013** – United Arts of Central Florida announced today it has received a \$35,000 grant from the PNC Foundation for pre-kindergarten educational arts programs designed to teach, inspire and expose children to cultural opportunities not readily available to them. Beyond the hands-on arts experiences, hundreds of children will benefit from supplemental materials that enhance their academic, cognitive and social development.

United Arts is the one-stop-shop for funding of the arts, sciences and history through more than 100 constituent institutions and artists located in Lake, Orange, Osceola and Seminole counties. Through United Arts, PNC's generous grant will be distributed to the Orlando Repertory Theatre, Orlando Philharmonic Orchestra and MicheLee Puppets to expand the reach of arts programming and educational initiatives for children in underserved communities.

"PNC believes that the arts have great value for children, providing a source of beauty, wonder and creativity, as well as tools to promote learning and development," said Joe Meterchick, regional president, PNC Bank Florida West. "Studies have proven that an arts-rich environment promotes learning across all curriculum areas and helps children ultimately succeed in school."

The PNC Foundation awarded the grant to United Arts under its landmark *Grow Up Great* initiative, a \$350 million, bilingual program in early childhood education, to help children prepare for success in school and life.

"We are proud to have earned this support from PNC Foundation," said Flora Maria Garcia, United Arts president and CEO. "It is a tremendous boost to United Arts and our efforts to ensure that arts, science and history educational programming, so often on the budgetary chopping block, is first and foremost preserved and ultimately expanded. It is so important for the future of our community."

Each of the three cultural arts programs incorporate essential techniques for early learning in a fun and interactive experience:

- **Orlando Repertory Theatre** established its Access to Theatre Initiative to address the increasing need for children and youth to have access and exposure to theatre and arts education. The initiative allows The Rep's teaching artists to go into pre-school communities to share sequential experiences using theatre as the primary teaching tool to foster creativity, self-awareness, critical thinking and pre-literacy.

- Rhyme Time, **MicheLee Puppets'** newest production, focuses on developing literacy for preschoolers by featuring a pop-up-book stage and puppet show that help children learn essential pre-reading skills through rhyme, rhythm and repetition, all core educational techniques with pre-K students. Each school also receives a Mother Goose book and a music CD that assists teachers in sharing and reinforcing the rhymes with their students in the classroom.
- The goal of the **Orlando Philharmonic Orchestra's** Tiny Tots program is to expose underserved preschoolers to interactive music education experiences before reaching elementary school. Tiny Tots incorporates basic elements of music: rhythm, melody, dynamics, tone color, as well as vocabulary, movement and hands-on instrument activities.

“Grow Up Great is a visionary initiative from the PNC Foundation,” said Scott Bowman, vice president of client services for Sara Brady Public Relations Inc. and chairman of United Arts’ development committee. “Children in underserved communities need these programs as much, if not more, than children in other communities. As a father myself, I am particularly proud that the PNC Foundation has helped United Arts extend the reach of these programs. They will help so many children get a positive start to their educational lives.”

#### **About PNC Foundation**

The PNC Foundation, which receives its principal funding from The PNC Financial Services Group ([www.pnc.com](http://www.pnc.com)), actively supports organizations that provide services for the benefit of communities in which it has a significant presence. The foundation focuses its philanthropic mission on early childhood education and community and economic development, which includes the arts and culture. Through Grow Up Great, its signature cause since 2004, PNC has created a \$350 million, multi-year initiative to help prepare children from birth to age 5 for success in school and life. To learn more about Grow Up Great, go to [www.pncgrowupgreat.com](http://www.pncgrowupgreat.com). Follow PNC at [www.twitter.com/PNCNews](https://www.twitter.com/PNCNews) and [www.youtube.com/PNC](http://www.youtube.com/PNC).

#### **About United Arts of Central Florida**

United Arts is a collaboration of individuals, businesses, governments and school districts, foundations, arts and cultural organizations, and artists. Its mission is to unite, strengthen and enhance the Central Florida community through the arts and culture.

United Arts serves residents and visitors in Lake, Orange, Osceola and Seminole counties through more than 50 local arts, sciences and history organizations. It raises and distributes funds for these cultural groups and provides management, administrative and advisory services.

United Arts has invested more than \$121 million in local organizations and education since its founding in 1989. Visit [www.UnitedArts.cc](http://www.UnitedArts.cc) for more information.

For more information about MicheLee Puppets visit [www.micheleepuppets.org](http://www.micheleepuppets.org), Orlando Philharmonic Orchestra visit [www.OrlandoPhil.org](http://www.OrlandoPhil.org) and Orlando Repertory Theatre visit [www.OrlandoRep.com](http://www.OrlandoRep.com).