

Dear Cultural Supporter:

As I look back upon this past fiscal year, I wanted to share with you some of the accomplishments of a truly spectacular year. In FY16, United Arts raised more than \$6.4 million across all revenue sources, an increase of \$537,901 versus prior year and 14.3 percent over our budgeted revenue target! The Collaborative Campaign for the past three years has exceeded its goal — and last spring generated more than \$2 million dollars — and for next spring, we are projecting a goal of \$2.2 million.

This was a year of national recognition for the arts in Central Florida with Orlando Mayor Buddy Dyer winning the prestigious 2016 Public Leadership in the Arts Award sponsored by the United States Conference of Mayors and Americans for the Arts, our national service agency. This award is highly competitive and sought after by mayors from around the country. We were pleased to nominate Mayor Dyer, and doubly pleased that he won the award.

Additionally, in June, I was honored with the 2016 Michael Newton Award from Americans for the Arts at their annual conference held in Boston. The award, presented before more than 1,000 cultural leaders from around the country, is for innovation in developing private-sector partnerships for the arts and for long-term achievement in effective and creative fundraising. Two major arts leadership awards in one year have really raised the visibility of Orlando on the national scene.

This was also a year of major grant awards, with a \$350,000 grant from JPMorgan Chase Foundation in June, making possible, over the next two years, the replication of Orange County's Evans High School "Career Pathways" Program within the Osceola School District. The grant will make possible the evolution of a STEM high school planned to open in 2018 and its conversion into a STEAM high school.

For the second year in a row, Walt Disney World Resort made a \$200,000 contribution through United



Flora Maria Garcia

Arts to fund a live theater production of *The Giver*, currently being read by Orange County eighth graders. This performance, which includes curriculum guides, was created by the Orlando Repertory Theatre and performed at the Dr. Phillips Center for the Performing Arts.

The Dr. Phillips Charities awarded United Arts \$100,000 to infuse Osceola School District students with the arts. This grant is being matched by an additional \$100,000, with funding from the Osceola County Commission, the Osceola School District and Tupperware Brands. More than 21,000 students at all grade levels will be exposed to a cultural program, either in school

or out of school.

Also for a second year in a row, Duke Energy awarded United Arts a \$50,000 grant to continue its diversity initiatives within the cultural sector in the form of "incentive grants" for programs that appeal to diverse audiences. Last year, United Arts, hosted seven workshops on target marketing to diverse audiences — which included panel discussions, focus groups and a half-day session with an audience development specialist — all made possible by Duke Energy support.

I am so appreciative that our donor community has been so generous with its funding to United Arts to make such incredible programs available to our community. Now in our 28th year of serving Central Florida, we at United Arts thank ALL of our donors, volunteers and supporters who have made this incredible year possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Flora Maria Garcia".

Flora Maria Garcia
President & CEO
United Arts of Central Florida

Operating Support Grants & How They Work

For 40 United Arts grant-review panelists this fall, making funding recommendations for arts and cultural grants means so much more than reviewing narratives and budget forms. The typical grant panel reads thick binders of hardcopy applications, scores the grants according to criteria, writes comments about the applicant and attends a panel meeting to discuss the grant funding. United Arts' Operating Support Grant panel does all of that and much more throughout the year.

Grant panel terms extend two years to allow panelists to get to know the work of the groups they are reviewing. Year-round, panelists visit arts and cultural institutions across four counties and observe arts programs, events and exhibits. One panelist said, "No amount of reading — application materials or information on websites — can take the place of being immersed in a cultural experience. It's truly a hands-on necessity to get the full picture."

Forty percent of the Operating Support Grant score is based on artistic merit, which is hard to judge from a paper application. Panelists get to know organizations throughout the year as any member of the community does. Applicant organizations appreciate it: One commented, "It was wonderful being able to show them what we do, the art we offer and the patron responses."

In October, panelists receive the paper applications — but that's not all. They also are each assigned two to three intensive site visits in which they meet with an applicant organization's board and staff leadership, and have an in-depth conversation about the organization's programs, management and community service. One applicant said, "For the first time, we felt like we had a real opportunity to 'tell our story.'"

When panelists finally get to the funding discussion in November, they bring a wealth of knowledge of Central Florida cultural institutions, more than they could ever get from a written application. This results in detailed panel comments to help individual organizations improve, as well as capacity-building strategies due to the panels' knowledge of what the cultural organizations need as a whole. And panelists rave about the high quality of arts and culture in Central Florida. Said one panelist: "I loved seeing and knowing all that goes on in our area. The amount of talent blows me away. I am honored to be a panelist."

Are you passionate about arts and culture? Do you have expertise in arts or business? **United Arts is now accepting panel applications for the term starting December 1, 2016.** Panelists cannot have conflicts of interest with applicant organizations during the last two years. Operating Support includes three panels: Large Budget, Mid-size Budget and Small Budget. Each panel evaluates about 12 to 15

organizations. The form to self-nominate is available at www.UnitedArts.cc/grants.

Operating Support Grants provide essential funding for nonprofits, which helps "keep the lights on" by funding a portion of an organization's entire season of programming, allowing them to offer free and low-cost arts and cultural experiences for the public. As organizations grow, the need for funding increases; last year, the available grant pool fulfilled only 40 percent of total requests. Donors who contribute to the *Arts for ALL* Fund during the Collaborative Campaign in the spring are contributing to the Operating Support Grant pool — we encourage you to support this very worthy effort. To donate, go to www.UnitedArts.cc. 



United Arts
 OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

**Your donation to the
Arts for ALL Fund
 helps organizations grow!**
