

# PRESS RELEASE

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## FUNDING ASSISTS CENTRAL FLORIDA CULTURAL GROUPS AFTER HURRICANE IRMA

**ORLANDO, Fla. — November 3, 2017** — The more than \$600,000 in damages to arts and cultural organizations in Central Florida will soon be partially alleviated through relief funds orchestrated by Orange County Arts and Cultural Affairs and United Arts of Central Florida. Arts and cultural groups suffered from lost revenue from cancelled shows as a result of weeks of closings due to power outages, roof leaks, and structural damage to their facilities. The impact of Hurricane Irma coincided with the season openings for many arts groups causing ticket sales to fall flat.

In the weeks following Irma, three surveys were issued - the Edyth Bush Leadership Institute, the Central Florida Foundation, and Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs, which is also conducting a statewide survey for the Florida Council on the Arts - to collect data from nonprofits on the effects of Hurricane Irma. The data collected reports that 37 cultural groups were affected in the four-county area that United Arts of Central Florida serves.

The Center for Contemporary Dance experienced \$19,000 between revenue loss and property damages while Osceola Arts reported \$13,837 in revenue losses, and MicheLee Puppets felt an impact of \$12,000 in revenue losses. Many groups will be hard-pressed to make up revenue losses, as the storm occurred during their most important season-opening month. In addition, most of the organizations reported not having hurricane insurance, and those that do have deductibles, they are so high that it does not cover their losses.

In response to the damages wrought by Irma, United Arts quickly put together a two-week-long email fundraising effort and raised \$11,800 aimed at offsetting Hurricane Irma damages.

“The funds raised by United Arts for Hurricane Irma relief, which were distributed to groups today, will focus mainly on small and mid-size groups that are not eligible for Tourist Development Tax Funds but were still affected by Irma,” stated Flora Maria Garcia, United Arts CEO.

The organizations receiving funding are: Orange County Regional History Center- \$1,000, Orlando Repertory Theatre-\$1,000, Goldsboro West Side Community Historical- \$1,000, The Center for Contemporary Dance- \$1,000, Osceola Arts- \$1,000, MicheLee Puppets- \$750, Tavares Theater- \$750, The Mennello Museum of American Art- \$750, Russian Ballet Alafaya- \$750, Mount Dora Center for the Arts- \$750, Emotions Dance- \$750, The Winter Park Playhouse- \$750, Bach Festival Society- \$518, Orlando Gay Chorus- \$516, and Performing Arts of Maitland- \$516.

In addition, the Orange County Arts and Cultural Affairs Advisory Council, which oversees Cultural Tourism, Cultural Facilities, and Blockbuster Fund grants had recommended the allocation of additional funds to 15 Orange County cultural groups affected by Hurricane Irma.

**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 enrich communities by investing in arts, science and history. United Arts serves residents and visitors in Lake, Orange, Osceola and Seminole counties through more than 70 local arts, science and history organizations. It raises and distributes funds for these cultural groups and provides management, administrative and advisory services. Since 1989, United Arts has invested more than \$145 million in Central Florida's arts and culture.

For more information, visit <http://www.UnitedArts.cc> or call 407.628.0333. Please email [FloraMaria@UnitedArts.cc](mailto:FloraMaria@UnitedArts.cc) for comments or inquiries. You can follow United Arts of Central Florida on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

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