

PRESS RELEASE

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MINI-GRANTS INCREASE ACCESS TO ARTS EDUCATION

ORLANDO – JUNE 1, 2017 – At-risk youth and young adults of varying abilities will benefit from United Arts of Central Florida’s most recently awarded **Arts Learning Mini-Grants**, totaling \$6,550 awarded to three arts and culture organizations.

“Our Arts Learning Mini-Grants make it possible to extend arts education beyond a traditional school setting and reach into the wider community,” United Arts President and CEO **Flora Maria Garcia** says.

The Orange County-specific grants program emphasizes participatory arts education and has been instrumental in implementing new arts-education opportunities for at-risk youth, Spanish-speaking actors, senior citizens and toddlers. Funds for these grants are raised through United Arts’ *Arts for ALL* Fund. The grants of up to \$2,500 each are awarded three times a year – August, February and May.

The May cycle’s three grant recipients are:

MicheLee Puppets, *Puppetry for Youth With Unique Abilities*; \$2,000 – Young adults ages 17 and up of varying abilities explore creative expression through puppetry. Students construct hand and shadow puppets and bring them to life for a final performance for families and friends. The program can increase gross and fine motor skills and provide verbally challenged students with a means of storytelling through movement.

Orlando Museum of Art, *Art With a Purpose*; \$2,300 – Entering its second year, this program delivers art education and art therapy to at-risk LGBT youth ages 13-24 in partnership with the Zebra Coalition. Participants engage in visual journaling exercises, using various art media to illustrate their personal narratives. Participants visit OMA twice for guided tours and a related studio art activity. Participant artwork is displayed in OMA’s Dr. P. Phillips Gallery. A Zebra-licensed mental health counselor attends all sessions and assists with discussions.

Winter Garden Art Association, *ART Encounter*; \$2,250 – In partnership with Edgewood Children’s Ranch, ART Encounter provides art instruction for at-risk youth living at the facility, led by teaching artist Renee Schneider. Teenage students complete introspective self-portraits accompanied by written narratives, while younger students explore a variety of artistic genres and media. Students attend at least one opening reception at SoBo Art Gallery to view their art and the art of professional artists on exhibit. Students can meet and interact with artists and sell their art at SoBo.

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 \$141 million in Central Florida's arts and culture.

For more information, visit www.UnitedArts.cc or call 407.628.0333. Please email 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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