

PRESS RELEASE

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UNITED ARTS CELEBRATES THE 2ND ANNUAL ARTS APPRECIATION BREAKFAST FOR OSCEOLA COUNTY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

ORLANDO – APRIL 11, 2017 – Last Tuesday morning, April 4, for the second year in a row, United Arts of Central Florida and Tupperware Brands sponsored the 2017 Osceola Principals’ Arts Appreciation Breakfast, hosted by the City of Kissimmee. The breakfast took place at the historic Berlinsky House located near the beautiful Kissimmee lakefront. This event celebrated all Osceola County principals for their support of quality arts programming in their schools.

The breakfast was attended by principals, the Superintendent and her leadership team, the School Board and representatives from businesses and cultural organizations across Central Florida, including Central Florida Community Arts, Cornell Fine Arts Museum, Dr. Phillips Center for the Performing Arts, Florida Alliance for Arts Education, House of Blues, Live Music Tutor, Orlando Philharmonic Orchestra, Orlando Repertory Theatre, Orlando Shakespeare Theater, Osceola Arts, Prodigy Program/Education Foundation Osceola County, The Celebration Foundation and the Valencia College Arts & Entertainment Department. During the breakfast, the various cultural leaders were disbursed among the principals, leading “table talks” centered around arts education and the cultural community. Elected officials, representing the City of Kissimmee, City of St. Cloud and the Osceola Commissioners participated and shared their visions during the table talk time for cultural development within our community.

“It was wonderful to see the interactions, conversations and ideas being discussed between our community’s arts and cultural leaders and Osceola County’s education leaders,” said Flora Maria Garcia, president and CEO of United Arts of Central Florida. “Exposure to the arts is such a critical component to the overall education and development of our children, and the tremendous work Osceola School principals and their staff have been doing to keep valuable arts experiences in the schools for their students deserves to be celebrated and is a cause United Arts proudly supports.”

This year’s theme was “Rodeo,” which reflected an important aspect of Osceola’s history. There was plenty to see, with student entertainment from PreKindergarten fiddlers through to adult learners in the Culinary Arts program at the Technical school. All art forms were represented—music, dance, drama, creative writing, and visual arts—including live painting. Student talent was also showcased in brief arts moments throughout the breakfast, and Mayor Buddy Dyer, graduate of Osceola HS, in videotaped welcoming remarks, described how his time in drama class helped him develop some of the skills needed for his career beyond high school.

Several of the lucky attendees even walked away with one of the original works of art created onsite by student artists. In addition, to represent the wonderful partnerships with Central Florida's cultural organizations, a graduate of Osceola, who is now involved in CFCArts Legacy, performed a country favorite. Dr. Mary Palmer delivered a keynote to inform all attendees about the State of Arts Education in Osceola County, and Ann Reinert, VP, Community Relations Manager – Florida & Georgia – Global Philanthropy for JPMorgan Chase Foundation, described to the attendees how the two-year grant from JPMorgan Chase Foundation has enabled the new Osceola HS to go from a STEM (Science-Technology-Engineering-Mathematics) school to being a STEAM (Science-Technology-Engineering-**Arts**-Mathematics) school and offering coursework that will prepare students for jobs in the creative sector.

The morning was informational as well as entertaining, with several fun rodeo-themed activities. The event culminated with the Administrators Band leading some good ol' country-style sing-along music for everyone to leave on a fun note.

"The breakfast was received with great enthusiasm by all participants," said Debbie Fahmie, Fine and Performing Arts Resource Specialist for the School District of Osceola County, FL. "The student performers were a highlight and generated interest among our principals about their own programs back at their schools. The cultural leaders gave wonderful insight to the school district leaders about partnerships to enrich the arts experiences for our students. After singing and playing cowbells and kazoos, all attendees left the breakfast with greater awareness of what quality arts education can do for our students and how we might continue in our quest to offer all students a high-quality arts education and build an arts-rich community. I am grateful to Tupperware for funding our breakfast, the City of Kissimmee for hosting us and United Arts for making it all possible."

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 60 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.

More information is available at www.UnitedArts.cc or by calling 407.628.0333. Please email FloraMaria@UnitedArts.cc for comments or inquiries.

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