



P R E S S R E L E A S E

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UNITED ARTS CELEBRATES THE ARTS IN EDUCATION

ORLANDO – March 7, 2017 – United Arts of Central Florida hosted more than 250 arts, education and community leaders at the 11th Annual Principals Appreciation Breakfast on Tuesday morning at the Dr. Phillips Center for the Performing Arts. This yearly breakfast celebrates the achievements of Orange County Public Schools principals in retaining certified arts teachers in every school and continually expanding access to arts education for all students.

The highlight of this year’s breakfast was the Arts Principal Award, which recognizes principals who lead the way in supporting and promoting arts education and arts participation in their schools. Three award winners (one each from elementary, middle and high-school levels) were featured in a panel discussion. Attendees were eager to learn how, in an atmosphere of budget cuts and increasing requirements, these principals managed to keep the arts a strong part of their students’ learning experience.

Winners were chosen by a panel of arts education professionals, business representatives and Orange County Public Schools officials. The winning principals each received a \$1,000 cash award for their school's arts program, \$500 in art supplies contributed by Sam Flax, two tickets to a Broadway Series production courtesy of the Dr. Phillips Center for the Performing Arts, and a *United ArtsCard*, a buy-one-ticket-get-one-FREE and discount card to arts performances and exhibits throughout Central Florida. The event also featured a performance by the Ocoee High School band Jazz Knights.

This annual event recognizes that principals are key leaders in incorporating the arts in education. "From budgeting and hiring decisions, to scheduling arts activities within the school day, to personal involvement and encouragement, principals play an essential role in ensuring that all children have access to arts education," said Flora Maria Garcia, President & CEO, United Arts of Central Florida. "Their support facilitates opportunities for children to acquire the creative skills they need to succeed in school and in life."

The 11th Annual Principals Appreciation Breakfast was presented by United Arts of Central Florida and funded through Wells Fargo, Orange County Arts & Cultural Affairs, Dr. Phillips Center for the Performing Arts, Universal Orlando, Sam Flax, City of Orlando and City of Orlando Commissioner Robert F. Stuart.

Here are the descriptions of the award winners:

Arts Principal Award – Elementary Division: *Presented by Commissioner Robert F. Stuart, sponsor.*
Mark Charlton – Durrance Elementary School: Principal Charlton has made the arts inclusive for all students at Durrance Elementary. Mr. Charlton added extra days in music, a music and movement

section in PE class, and adaptive equipment. He pays for the arts teachers to attend professional development and ensures they have the resources needed to teach all students. Mr. Charlton also fosters a collaborative environment, offering a quarterly paid planning day for arts faculty so they can improve instruction and exchange ideas. In addition to the robust arts programming occurring during the curricular day, Mr. Charlton offers a variety of arts enrichment after school.

Arts Principal Award – Middle School Division: Presented by Diane O’Dell from sponsor Universal Orlando.

Ann Hembrook – Odyssey Middle School: Principal Hembrook has been a firm advocate for the arts at Odyssey. Odyssey’s arts program has grown through Mrs. Hembrook’s support to now include three music teachers, two theater teachers and one art teacher. Additionally, Mrs. Hembrook has expanded the visual art program to include students of all grades; it was previously an eighth-grade-only elective. Mrs. Hembrook supports the arts programs in various ways, by displaying student art works in the front office, celebrating student achievements in school-wide announcements, and attending events.

Arts Principal Award – High-School Division: Presented by David Dawkins from sponsor Wells Fargo.

Dr. Anne Carcara – University High School: Principal Carcara is committed to the arts as an integral part of academics at University High; she works with arts teachers when setting the schedule to ensure that students can participate in multiple arts genres, including AP and IB performing arts classes. Dr. Carcara ensures that all students are exposed to the arts, by encouraging in-school performances such as show previews and mini-concerts. Dr. Carcara is always keen to show support by telling students to “break a leg” before performances, buying tickets to fundraisers, displaying student artwork around campus, and inviting community members to performances.

Other Arts Principal Award Nominees Are:

Debra Vereen, Ventura Elementary **Hon. Mention for 18:1 student-teacher ratio in arts classes*
Junella Kreil, Blankner K-8 School
Kimrey Sheehan, Bonnevill Elementary
Robert McCloe, Eagle Creek Elementary
Sheila Burke, Lawton Chiles Elementary
Margarete Talbert-Irving, Orange Center Elementary
Robert Strenth, Prairie Lake Elementary
Diana Greer, Windermere Elementary
Frank Mattuci, Zellwood Elementary
Michael Martucci, Howard Middle
Heather Hilton, East River High

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.