

# Dear Cultural Supporter:

United Arts is known for funding Central Florida's cultural sector. This year United Arts is exploring the development of a number of initiatives to strengthen our grassroots cultural groups, expand cultural access to underserved communities and grow millennial audiences. Toward that end we are submitting a concept paper for a multiyear grant to a major national foundation to support diversity and inclusion programs. The program will also address equity and accessibility training.

Throughout its history, United Arts has made professional development opportunities available to cornerstone institutions. Recently, United Arts has started to support grassroots cultural organizations, both through small grants and technical assistance. As Central Florida grows, so do community-based cultural organizations. These organizations require not only funding, but also a well-crafted, thoughtful capacity-building program focused on strengthening management infrastructure so they can grow and become viable. To do this, we are exploring partnerships with agencies such as the Urban League and Prosper (formerly called Hispanic Business Initiative Fund), whose focus is to "grow" small businesses and to provide them with management expertise and mentoring opportunities. Capacity building for grassroots cultural groups is labor-intensive and requires a lot of hands-on support. United Arts will select a small number of cultural organizations that have viable artistic product, the support of their community and committed leadership to participate in such a program. Of course, a program like this is only possible if new funding becomes available from the national foundation.

Another component of this major grant request will be to ensure that our cultural sector is trained to address the needs of Central Florida's disabled



**Flora Maria Garcia**

communities. We have been in conversations with a statewide service provider, Very Special Arts (VSA) of Tampa, whose mission is to provide, support and champion arts education and cultural experiences for and by people with disabilities. Their vision, shared by United Arts, is to create a world in which the arts are universally accessible. In a potential partnership, VSA would provide workshops to Central Florida's cultural groups to ensure that their venues and programs are accessible to the "varied-abled" community. VSA would also work with the many cultural summer camps to confirm that they are accessible to children with varying abilities. A third component, offered by VSA, will be

to annually import an internationally recognized cultural group made up of artists of varying abilities for a series of performances at a local arts venue, coupled with a one- to two-week workshop series offered to the community.

Lastly, United Arts is recognizing the opportunity to create a program targeting increasing arts attendance by the ever-growing millennial population in Central Florida. Many of the local cultural groups are hosting programs of interest to millennials, but there is no comprehensive effort to identify and promote all our cultural programs under one umbrella, which only United Arts can do. Learn more about efforts to incentivize millennials to enjoy the arts on the following page.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Flora Maria Garcia". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a white background.

Flora Maria Garcia  
President & CEO  
United Arts of Central Florida

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