

# Dear Cultural Supporter:

**H**appy New Year from all of us at United Arts of Central Florida! As we embrace a new year, I want to remind you that Feb. 1 is the official kickoff of the intensive three-month United Arts 2019 *Collaborative Campaign for the Arts*. United Arts is celebrating the start of the campaign with a kick-off event in late January for major donors at the Grand Bohemian Hotel in downtown Orlando.

This year's goal is in excess of \$2 million, in partnership with 15 of the largest-budget cultural organizations in Central Florida, inclusive of one new member, Central Florida Community Arts (CFCArts). CFCArts reached the threshold of three-year average operating revenue of \$900,000 required to participate in the campaign. We are so excited to include them and the new set of donors they bring to the campaign. Your campaign contributions and the 15 percent match United Arts provides on donor designations gives cultural organizations the much needed boost to their revenue that makes it possible for them to offer the highest quality programming.

This year, local arts agencies statewide are making a concerted effort to galvanize their local arts supporters to advocate for the reinstatement of lost funds for the Division of Cultural Affairs for the Florida Council on Arts and Culture's grant programs, after last year's devastating cuts of 94 percent by the state legislature. Over the last four years, state funding has dropped from a high of \$43 million to a low of \$2.6 million. Last November, together with colleagues from Tampa and St. Petersburg, we organized an arts advocacy conference in St. Petersburg of local arts agency directors from around the state, to hone the advocacy messaging, strategies and directives to activate the arts and cultural sector. The "ask" from the Florida Council this



**Flora Maria Garcia**

year will be \$61.7 million in recommended grants for 2019-20, of which \$7.4 million is being recommended to Central Florida cultural groups.

The stakes are high, and I hope that each and every one of you will respond to our advocacy action requests during the legislative session this year. For those of you who want to be active, receive our Advocacy Action Alert emails and help restore the state arts funding, email Trudy Wild at [Trudy@UnitedArts.cc](mailto:Trudy@UnitedArts.cc).

In national arts news, Mary Anne Carter has been appointed by President Trump as the new chair of the National Endowment of the Arts (NEA). Ms. Carter is a former policy adviser to Gov. Rick Scott. *Artnet News* reported that Carter's "commitment to the arts stems from the challenges faced by her child with dyslexia. Finding schools that employ the arts as a teaching method makes the learning process both productive and enjoyable for her daughter." She wants to ensure that all Americans not only have access to the arts but also have access to the NEA. Carter claims that her priorities would include "expanding the NEA's work with the military through programs such as Creative Forces: NEA Military Healing Arts Network."

So much is at stake this year; I urge you to become active donors and advocates for the arts this year!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Flora Maria Garcia". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Flora Maria Garcia  
President & CEO  
United Arts of Central Florida

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