



MID-AMERICA ARTS ALLIANCE

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For Immediate Release

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## **Mid-America Arts Alliance, with support from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, Announces Creativity Connects Grantees**

(Kansas City, MO) Mid-America Arts Alliance (M-AAA) is pleased to announce the six recipients of grant awards for *Creativity Connects: National Demonstration Projects*, a special initiative undertaken by the US Regional Arts Organizations (RAOs) through generous support from the Mellon Foundation. This initiative, part of the NEA's 50th anniversary celebration, investigates the ways in which the arts can connect with other sectors, including education, healthcare, social justice, and the like, that want and utilize creativity. The grantees, selected from each of the six US regional arts organizations—Arts Midwest, M-AAA, Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation, New England Foundation for the Arts, South Arts, and Western States Art Federation, promote collaboration, experimentation, and overall growth in their individual communities.

Ella Baff, Senior Program Officer for Arts and Cultural Heritage at The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, says, "The grantees form a national cohort promoting creativity in all aspects of life. Supporting these projects will not only enable distinguished work to be produced, but will also yield potential models that can be replicated in communities across the country. This national effort affirms that the arts and creativity are a meaningful and tangible contribution to society's well being."

"It has been a privilege for Mid-America Arts Alliance to collaborate with our sister Regional Art Organizations and the Mellon Foundation to administer this grant process," says M-AAA interim CEO Todd Stein. "The innovation and good works created inspire strong commitment to cross-sector collaboration. We hope for a widened audience for these grantees, and that these projects will serve as examples to encourage future collaborative creative endeavors."

Showcasing the work of these six exceptional projects will allow the work to reach new audiences, extend beyond its existing sector, and produce models that can inspire similar partnerships in other communities.

### **Fort Wayne Dance Collective, Inc., Fort Wayne, IN**

#### **Program Partner: Parkview Health**

#### **Awarded \$63,000—Arts and Healthcare**

The project *Healing Artist Training Module Development and Implementation* will provide a curriculum and resources to equip and train healing artists to provide quality bedside experiences for patients at hospitals and other health care facilities. The training module will be developed through the Healing Arts Program partnership between Fort Wayne Dance Collective and Parkview Health. The Indiana Arts Commission from Arts Midwest's region nominated Fort Wayne Dance Collective ([www.fwdc.org](http://www.fwdc.org)).

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**Fusebox Austin, Austin, TX**

**Program Partner: Eastside Memorial High School at the Johnston Campus**

**Awarded: \$75,000—Arts and Education**

The Fusebox project connects arts, community, and health and culminates in a community café space in a location where renovation and reinvigoration of a deteriorated part of town are taking place through an ArtPlace grant. Called thinkEAST, the project teaches students about curating, producing, and managing events in cultural spaces, and it will operate a pop-up café during Austin's annual Fusebox Festival. The Texas Commission on the Arts from Mid-America Arts Alliance's region nominated Fusebox Austin ([www.fuseboxfestival.com](http://www.fuseboxfestival.com)).

**The Center for Urban Pedagogy, Inc., Brooklyn, NY**

**Program Partner: The Bronx Defenders**

**Awarded: \$74,915—Arts and Social Justice**

The project *CUP Civil Liberties Educational Toolkit* will include a variety of educational materials in various media on a range of interrelated topics designed to help individuals understand and assert their rights in the legal system. The goal is to illuminate policy using inventive design, empowering community members to advocate for themselves effectively. The Center for Urban Pedagogy's partner, the Bronx Defenders, provides innovative, holistic, and client-centered criminal defense, family defense, civil legal services, social work support, and advocacy to indigent people. New York State Council on the Arts from Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation's region nominated the Center for Urban Pedagogy ([www.welcometocup.org](http://www.welcometocup.org)).

**Judy Dworin Performance Project, Inc., Hartford, CT**

**Program Partner: Community Partners in Action**

**Awarded: \$75,000—Arts and Criminal Justice**

The project *Bridging the Inside and Out: Arts, Prison and Social Service* will involve four residencies and employ video documentary to demonstrate and accentuate transformational impacts from its collective work with incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals, their children and families, prison staff, teaching artists, partnering social work staff, and students (taking a class in human rights studies) at Trinity College. There are plans to show the documentary on local public television. Community Partners in Action focuses on behavioral change and advocates for criminal justice reform for adults and youth in Connecticut. Connecticut Office of the Arts from New England Foundation for the Arts' region nominated Judy Dworin Performance Project ([www.judydworin.org](http://www.judydworin.org)).

**Deep Center, Inc., Savannah, GA**

**Program Partner: Savannah Development and Renewal Authority**

**Awarded: \$75,000—Arts and Community Development**

The project *Block By Block* builds upon the programming Deep Center currently offers and will include writing workshops in two neighborhoods (the East and the West Sides), culminating in public readings, art marches, and block parties. In 2015, the President's Committee on Arts and Humanities honored Deep Center with a National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award. Georgia Council for the Arts from South Arts' region nominated Deep Center ([www.deepkids.com](http://www.deepkids.com)).

**City of Mesa/Mesa Arts Center, Mesa, AZ**

**Program Partners: Oakwood Creative Care, Inc., Banner's Alzheimers' Institute, and The Summit at Sunland**

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## **Springs**

### **Awarded: \$72,450—Arts and Aging**

*Mesa Arts Center Creative Aging: Expanding on a Foundation* will further develop programming the organization has in place for lifelong learning opportunities for senior citizens living independently as well as in various assisted-care facilities. This program partners with Oakwood Creative Care, Inc., Banner's Alzheimers' Institute, and The Summit at Sunland Springs. Arizona Commission on the Arts from Western States Art Federation's region nominated the City of Mesa and the Mesa Arts Center ([mesaartscenter.com](http://mesaartscenter.com)).

### **About Mid-America Arts Alliance**

Mid-America Arts Alliance (M-AAA) strengthens and supports artists, cultural organizations, and communities throughout our region and beyond. We achieve this primarily through our national traveling exhibition programs, innovative leadership development, and strategic grant making. We are especially committed to enriching the cultural life of historically underserved communities by providing high quality, meaningful, and accessible arts and culture programs and services. Each year M-AAA's programs reach one million people. We believe in more art for more people. Additional information about M-AAA is available at [www.maaa.org](http://www.maaa.org).

### **About the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation**

Founded in 1969, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation endeavors to strengthen, promote, and, where necessary, defend the contributions of the humanities and the arts to human flourishing and to the well-being of diverse and democratic societies by supporting exemplary institutions of higher education and culture as they renew and provide access to an invaluable heritage of ambitious, path-breaking work. Additional information is available at [mellon.org](http://mellon.org).

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