



NEWS AND INFORMATION

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Franklin County, OH, Honored with the 2008 National Award for County Arts Leadership

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Americans for the Arts, the nation's leading nonprofit organization for advancing the arts in America, in conjunction with the National Association of Counties (NACo) today presented the **2008 National Award for County Arts Leadership to the Franklin County Board of Commissioners of Franklin County, Ohio** at NACo's annual meeting in Kansas City, Missouri.

The National Award for County Arts Leadership is part of a series of Public Leadership in the Arts Awards given annually by Americans for the Arts. The award honors an elected county board or individual leader who has significantly advanced the arts in the communities they serve. The Franklin County Board of Commissioners was chosen for their ongoing support of the arts and culture in Columbus and throughout the county.

Robert L. Lynch, president and CEO for Americans for the Arts, stated, "The work of the Franklin County Board of Commissioners on behalf of the arts has established Franklin County as a national advocate for arts education. Their exemplary leadership in the state of Ohio has significantly increased funding in the arts and cultural sector, while notably impacting the lives of local residents."

The Franklin County Board of Commissioners has become a leader in supporting arts education by engaging residents across the county with an array of education and community-building programs in the arts. Local public funding for the arts totals more than \$2.1 million.

For 15 years, Franklin County has helped support the Greater Columbus Arts Council's (GCAC) Community Arts Education Programs. In conjunction with the Franklin County Board of Commissioners, GCAC established the successful Artists-in-Schools program that reaches out to 100,000 students a year and helps generate over \$200,000 in annual revenue for local

teaching artists. Franklin County's support for GCAC's education department has contributed to the development of a strong partnership with Columbus City Schools (CCS), BalletMet Columbus, Opera Columbus, and the Jazz Arts Group to provide professional development in arts integration for over 200 CCS teachers and local professional teaching artists, impacting over 14,000 Columbus City Schools students.

"We can truly count on the Franklin County Board of Commissioners' continued partnership, support, and leadership in supporting the arts and arts education. Our Franklin County Board of Commissioners 'gets it,'" said Tim Katz, Director, Community Arts Education for the GCAC and the person who nominated the county for this award.

This year, the Franklin County Commissioners have expanded their support of educational arts programming by funding a new, comprehensive network of educational arts-based opportunities for youth ages 5-19, and their families, before or after school. The two primary programs, Art in the House, serving up to 500 students ages 5-12, and TRANSIT ARTS, serving up to 300 teens ages 13-19, are progressive initiatives that celebrate the exciting diversity of the surroundings while guiding youth as they discover and expand their creative minds and artistic talents.

Since the launch of GCAC's Franklin County Neighborhood Arts small grants program in 2004, over 200 awards, ranging from \$200 to \$2,000, have been granted.

Americans for the Arts established the National Award for County Arts Leadership in 1999 to recognize the positive role county government leaders play in improving arts programs, increasing funding to the arts, and making the arts accessible in their communities. Past recipients include: Douglas M. Duncan, County Executive in Montgomery County, Maryland; the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors; County Commissioner Park Helms of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina; County Commissioner Betty Lou Ward of Wake County, North Carolina; the Broward County Board of Commissioners of Broward County, Florida; the Jefferson County Commission of Jefferson County, Alabama; the Lackawanna County Commissioners of Lackawanna County, Pennsylvania; and the Howard County Government of Howard County, Maryland.

Americans for the Arts is the leading nonprofit organization for advancing the arts and arts education in America. With offices in Washington, D.C. and New York City, it has a record of more than 50 years of service. Americans for the Arts is dedicated to representing and serving local communities and creating opportunities for every American to participate in and appreciate all forms of the arts. Additional information is available at www.AmericansForTheArts.org.

NACo, the only national organization that represents county governments in the United States, continues to follow the traditions established by those early county officials. With its headquarters on Capitol Hill,

NACo is a full-service organization that provides an extensive line of services including legislative, research, technical, and public affairs assistance, as well as enterprise services to its members. The association acts as a liaison with other levels of government, works to improve public understanding of counties, serves as a national advocate for counties, and provides them with resources to help them find innovative methods to meet the challenges they face. NACo is involved in a number of special projects that deal with such issues as the environment, sustainable communities, volunteerism and intergenerational studies. Additional information is available at www.naco.org.

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