VSA arts and MetLife Foundation Announce "Arts Connect All" Grant Opportunity for Inclusive Arts Programs

VSA arts and MetLife Foundation announce their 6th annual "Arts Connect All" grant opportunity for arts organizations to strengthen partnerships with local public schools by creating or enhancing inclusive educational programs. A maximum of ten grants of up to $15,000 each will be awarded to selected programs.

Washington, D.C. (Vocus) September 17, 2009 -- VSA arts and MetLife Foundation announce their 6th annual "Arts Connect All" grant opportunity for arts organizations to strengthen partnerships with local public schools by creating or enhancing inclusive educational programs. A maximum of ten grants of up to $15,000 each will be awarded to selected programs.

"Arts Connect All" has three primary goals: to enable more students with disabilities to experience social, cognitive, and cultural development through arts learning alongside their peers without disabilities; to create educational access and inclusion in the arts for students with disabilities; and to document the contributions that arts organizations make to inclusive education in public schools and communities.

"The goal of inclusive programs is to have students with and without disabilities learn together by doing the same thing, in the same place, at the same time," comments Soula Antoniou, president of VSA arts. "Through our partnership with MetLife Foundation for 'Arts Connect All,' we're able to encourage inclusiveness and increase access and awareness."

"The arts play a vital role in promoting learning, strengthening education, and enriching communities," states Dennis White, president and CEO of MetLife Foundation. "MetLife Foundation is proud to support efforts to bring arts education to all students. Through 'Arts Connects All' we hope to enable more students to participate in and learn through the arts."

VSA arts and MetLife Foundation invite proposals from arts institutions creating or enhancing inclusive educational programs that: incorporate inclusive teaching practices; provide access to students with all types of disabilities; develop social, cognitive, and artistic skills; involve people with disabilities in planning and implementation; build staff, teacher, and/or artist knowledge and skill of inclusive practices; and collaborate with public schools, actively engaging students, parents, and school administrators.

Non-profit performing and exhibiting arts institutions including museums, theaters, and multi-disciplinary arts presenters that are creating or have established educational programs are encouraged to apply. Arts organizations in the following cities are eligible: Phoenix, Arizona; Los Angeles, California; San Diego, California; San Francisco, California; Denver, Colorado; Hartford, Connecticut; Tampa, Florida; Atlanta, Georgia; Baltimore, Maryland; Boston, Massachusetts; Detroit, Michigan; Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minnesota; Kansas City, Missouri; St. Louis, Missouri; Charlotte, North Carolina; Tulsa, Oklahoma; Portland, Oregon; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Providence, Rhode Island; Nashville, Tennessee; Houston, Texas; and Seattle, Washington.

Entries will be reviewed and evaluated by an independent panel of professionals with and without disabilities.
who work in accessible arts programming, arts education, and/or inclusive education. For more information regarding eligibility and selection criteria and to download an application, please visit www.vsarts.org.

About MetLife Foundation
MetLife Foundation was established by MetLife to carry on its long-standing tradition of corporate contributions and community involvement. Grants are made to support health, educational, civic, and cultural organizations and programs throughout the country. Recognizing the vital role the arts play in building communities and educating young people, MetLife Foundation contributes to the arts and culture by focusing on increasing opportunities for young people, reaching broader audiences through inclusive programming and making arts more accessible for all people. For more information about the Foundation, visit www.metlife.org.

About VSA arts
VSA arts is an international nonprofit organization founded 35 years ago by Ambassador Jean Kennedy Smith to create a society where people with disabilities learn through, participate in, and enjoy the arts. VSA arts provides educators, parents, and artists with resources and the tools to support arts programming in schools and communities. VSA arts showcases the accomplishments of artists with disabilities and promotes increased access to the arts for people with disabilities. Each year 7 million people participate in VSA arts programs through a nationwide network of affiliates and in 54 countries around the world. VSA arts is an affiliate of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. For more information about VSA arts, visit www.vsarts.org.

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