The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts Announces
Bethlehem, Pennsylvania as Partner City for
*Any Given Child*

Program Creates a Long-Range Arts Education Plan for Students Grades K–8

(WASHINGTON)—The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts has chosen Bethlehem, Pennsylvania as the 24th site, and first in Pennsylvania, for *Ensuring the Arts for Any Given Child*, a program that creates a long-range arts education plan for students in grades K–8. The program will incorporate existing resources of the Bethlehem Area School District, local arts organizations, and the Kennedy Center to create a customized plan for arts education for the city. The Zoellner Arts Center at Lehigh University will serve as the lead organization for *Any Given Child* Bethlehem.

With equity in, and access to, a strong arts education remaining an issue for many students across the United States, *Any Given Child* seeks to help fill in that gap. For many young people, access to in-school arts education is sporadic and uneven—students may have access during some years and none during others or learning in or through some art forms and not others. Through the assistance of expert consultation services provided by Kennedy Center staff and consultants, community leaders develop a strategy for arts education that is tailor-made for the school district and community. Since the program’s inception, *Any Given Child* sites have reported numerous successes: some school districts have hired additional teachers or added staff positions; new sources of funding for arts education have been established; communities have expanded arts offerings for students; and sites have provided
professional learning for classroom teachers, arts specialists, and local arts organizations to build their capacity to deliver high quality arts education to students.

“Every child deserves access to a high quality arts education—a commitment the Kennedy Center places at the core of its education programs,” said Mario Rossero, Senior Vice President of Education at the Kennedy Center. “The arts engage the whole child in creative thinking, collaboration, cross-cultural understanding, and communication. It inspires and transforms students supporting them in becoming life-long learners. *Any Given Child* generates a measurable impact in students’ lives both in and out of the classroom. The commitment and tremendous support to this program from Superintendent Roy, Mayor Donchez, Lehigh University, and the local arts community has been inspiring. We look forward to seeing the students reap the benefits of increased arts opportunities.”

“The City of Bethlehem has a deep and historic relationship with the arts. We have seen firsthand how artistic expression—in all its forms—has lifted spirits, inspired new ideas and perspectives, brought communities together, employed our citizens and brought new residents, new businesses, and revenue to our great city,” stated Mayor Robert Donchez. “The role that arts and the creative community play in making Bethlehem a first-class city, attractive to prospective residents and employers, suggests a vested interest in building a new generation of innovative, civic-minded, and culturally informed families who grow up with arts as a part of their lives and contribute to a creative community.”

By working with other local arts organizations and using existing resources, the program aims to minimize administrative overhead, thus remaining affordable. The Kennedy Center covers the majority of the cost, and also requires sites to contribute $25,000 toward the first four years of the program. The strategic planning process takes approximately nine months. The first phase of the program is the community’s comprehensive audit of existing arts education resources and needs assessment facilitated by Kennedy Center staff and consultants. Data collection will reveal what arts education resources currently exist and where the gaps are for students. Based on
this information, the community creates a plan to bring greater access to arts education for all K–8 students.

During the second phase of the program, a committee of community members makes recommendations to the school district and local arts groups on how to best implement the recently created plan, focusing on increasing arts opportunities for K–8 students. In addition, educators and artists can take advantage of a wealth of resources available from the Kennedy Center, such as classroom lessons with online interactive learning modules and videos available on the Kennedy Center website, and professional development for teachers and teaching artists. The goal of this second phase is to provide a tapestry of arts education, strategically weaving together existing arts resources within the schools with those available from community providers and the Kennedy Center in order to reach every child.

“The Bethlehem Area School District is honored to be part of the Kennedy Center’s Any Given Child comprehensive arts education program. The arts not only cultivate our students’ creativity, but they also provide authentic opportunities and audiences for our students to share their individual interests and talents,” said Superintendent Dr. Joseph J. Roy. “Any Given Child will bring inspiring performances from Bethlehem’s vibrant arts community into our schools, as well as support collaborative teaching and learning strategies that will touch each child. Any Given Child is a collective impact opportunity to support and grow the arts in BASD schools and the Bethlehem community where the arts are truly foundational. We look forward to many years of partnership!”

“There has never been a more important time in Bethlehem’s history for the arts community to come together with local government, businesses, philanthropists, researchers, and educators and build the next generation of students who have the arts as a part of their lives and how they learn in school.” said Andy Cassano, Administrative Director of the Zoellner Arts Center at Lehigh University. “Our team can’t wait to get started. Ever since we started talking about the idea of being a part of the Any Given Child program, this diverse, dynamic group of leaders has been
thinking about building a collective impact model that will strengthen our community with innovative, civic-minded, and culturally informed students using the arts.”

In February 2015, the Kennedy Center announced a $1 million gift from Newman’s Own Foundation in honor of A. E. Hotchner and his many contributions to the success of Newman’s Own. The grant established an endowment to help underserved communities participate in the Center’s Ensuring the Arts for Any Given Child program.

In 2009, the Kennedy Center and Mayor Kevin Johnson announced the first formal Any Given Child program in Sacramento, California. The following cities joined subsequently:

- Springfield, Missouri, February 2010
- Portland, Oregon, June 2010
- Southern Nevada, December 2010
- Tulsa, Oklahoma, May 2011
- Sarasota, Florida, June 2011
- Austin, Texas, August 2011
- Iowa City, Iowa, August, 2012
- Baltimore, Maryland, September 2012
- Fresno, California, October 2012
- Juneau, Alaska, February 2013
- Madison, Wisconsin, July 2013
- Missoula, Montana and Jacksonville, Florida, August 2013
- New Orleans, Louisiana and Harrisonburg, Virginia, August 2014
- Houston, Texas, August 2015
- Indianapolis, Indiana and Trenton, New Jersey, September 2015
- Warren, Ohio, November 2015
- San Juan, Puerto Rico, Albuquerque, New Mexico, and Meridian, Mississippi, September 2016
- Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, September 2017
The Kennedy Center accepts applications between January 1 and March 31 of each year for a program launch in the fall of the same year.

ABOUT EDUCATION AT THE KENNEDY CENTER
The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts is the national champion for arts learning and creativity. Committed to increasing opportunities for all people to participate in, learn about, and understand the arts, the Center offers programs and events that strive to reflect the nation and its communities, and that are accessible and inclusive for all. From the Center’s stages to classrooms and communities across the country, to online resources accessible nearly anywhere, the Center serves the burgeoning artist, the curious explorer, the student (of any age), the teacher and teaching artist,—any person interested in arts learning and utilizing the arts for positive change.

The breadth of the Center’s national education initiatives amplify community partnerships and support local and national infrastructure with programs including: Ensuring the Arts for Any Given Child, which works with 25 municipalities and their school districts around the country to develop long-range strategic plans for arts education; ARTSEDGE, a digital platform that offers standards-based materials for use in and out of the classroom; Partners in Education which forges relationships between arts organizations and their neighboring school systems to build effective arts education programs for teachers and teaching artists; the Kennedy Center/Stephen Sondheim Inspirational Teacher Awards celebrate teachers whose efforts have made a significant impact on their students; Kennedy Center Theater for Young Audiences on Tour brings original Kennedy Center productions for students and families into communities and performing arts centers around the country; and the Turnaround Arts program which empowers high-need, low-performing schools with innovative arts programming and resources to help address broader school challenges and close the achievement gap.

The Center’s locally-based school and community initiatives serve educators and students with Changing Education Through the Arts, a program that works in partnership with area schools to affect long-term change in school culture through professional learning in arts integration; professional development opportunities for teachers which trains educators to teach the arts or other subject areas through the arts; and a Washington, D.C. schools partnership program, where the Center provides resources and teaching artist residencies to 22 PreK-12 schools.

Culturally responsive programming draws from the Center’s resources as the national performing arts center and a convener of arts and education leaders, as well as the National Symphony Orchestra, The Suzanne Farrell Ballet, VSA (the international arts and disability organization), Washington National Opera, and the Performances for Young Audiences series. Over 100 events and performances throughout the season are offered for more than 100,000 local school-aged children. Additionally, the Explore the Arts series provides learners of all ages insights into the cultural and
historical context of the works presented on stage and sparks connections between audiences and the artists who have created the performances through participatory workshops, demonstrations, panels, master classes, and open rehearsals. The annual spring Arts Summit brings thought leaders from the arts and related fields together for discussion and exploration of the power and impact of the arts on society.

Committed to nurturing young artists’ growth, the Center offers multiple local and national skill and development programs for students and professionals including the National Symphony Orchestra’s Youth Fellowship Program, Summer Music Institute, and High School Competition; the Washington National Opera’s Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist Program, Opera Institute, and Kids Create Opera Partnership; the biennial New Visions/New Voices forum for development of new plays for young people; Exploring Ballet with Suzanne Farrell; Betty Carter’s Jazz Ahead; VSA’s Playwright Discovery Program, Young Soloists, and Visual Arts programs; arts administration internships; and the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival which impacts hundreds of thousands of college-aged theater students across the country and marks its 50th anniversary in 2018.

As an essential component of the living memorial to President Kennedy, the Center’s Education programs utilize the arts to embrace the ideals of service, justice, freedom, courage, and gratitude, and cultivate the Citizen Artists in all the people we serve. For more information, please visit kennedy-center.org/education/.

**FUNDING CREDITS**

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