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The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts Announces

Washington, D.C. as Partner City for
Any Given Child

Program Creates a Long-Range Arts Education Plan for Students

Initiative Expands for the First Time to Include Grades 9–12,
in addition to K–8

(WASHINGTON)—The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts has chosen Washington, D.C. as the 25th site for Ensuring the Arts for Any Given Child, a catalyst program that creates community change and improves student outcomes by leveraging the power of strategic, coordinated arts education. Any Given Child Washington, D.C. will also serve as a pilot program for expanding the initiative to include grades 9–12, in addition to K–8.

Now in its ninth year, Any Given Child is based on the premises that 1) arts education is an essential component of a student’s education; 2) any given child, regardless of circumstance, deserves equitable access to quality arts education, and that 3) community stakeholders must work in concert to create long-range arts education plans that benefit students and improve communities. With the addition of Washington, D.C., the program has 25 sites in 20 states and Puerto Rico. Within the 2016–2017 school year, Any Given Child impacted 932,344 students (K–8).

“Here in D.C., we believe that students—regardless of their background or zip code—deserve access to high-quality arts education and programming” said Mayor Muriel Bowser. “The Kennedy Center’s Any Given Child initiative champions equity in
art education. This program shows that when we present students with experiences and opportunities to learn and grow, our young people achieve at the highest levels."

“With our deep roots in the school district and community, the inclusion of Washington, D.C. into the Any Given Child family feels like a homecoming,” 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 as well as future citizens. This program generates a measurable impact in students’ lives both in and out of the classroom. With Chancellor Wilson’s recently announced strategic plan as well as the District’s first-ever Cultural Plan currently in the planning process, the mission of Any Given Child further aligns with their vision of strengthening and investing in the community. The tremendous support to this program from the Chancellor, Mayor Bowser, DC Collaborative, and the local arts community has been inspiring."

Numerous studies point to the value of arts education in improving student outcomes, yet equity in, and access to, a strong, consistent arts education remains an issue for many students across the United States. Any Given Child seeks to help fill that gap by bringing together community stakeholders to create and implement a customized, unified, long-term plan for arts education.

In the nation’s capital, Any Given Child will incorporate existing resources of the D.C. Public Schools (DCPS), local arts and community organizations, the Kennedy Center, and the DC Arts and Humanities Education Collaborative (DC Collaborative). Local educators, D.C. government agencies, and philanthropic and for-profit stakeholders will provide additional resources. The DC Arts and Humanities Education Collaborative will also serve as the lead organization for Any Given Child Washington, D.C.

As the nation’s performing arts center located in the heart of the capital, the Kennedy Center has a deep working relationship with D.C. Public and Public Charter Schools
and community through multiple programs including its D.C. Partnership Schools initiative, which celebrates its 25th anniversary this year, and as a founding member of the DC Arts and Humanities Education Collaborative, also celebrating its 20th anniversary. With the inclusion of Turnaround Arts as part of the Kennedy Center’s portfolio, further programming aligned with the D.C. Partnership Schools initiative is also provided to those schools.

With expert consultation services provided by Kennedy Center staff, 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: a number of schools 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.

These successes extend further into the community as renewed and new partnerships develop among school districts, community arts organizations, universities, communications, business, and philanthropy, bringing a new spirit of collaboration, greater coordination, and alignment of services, to their efforts and a broader vision of what is possible. Organizations that once were working alone, and sometimes at cross-purposes, are seeing how their collaboration and partnerships are achieving a powerful collective impact to reach every child in their educational journey.

By bringing together community stakeholders to envision their arts education goals and coordinate resources, Any Given Child is a sustainable, customized approach to community building. Three phases make up the program: strategic planning (year 1), which includes the community’s comprehensive audit of existing arts education resources and needs assessment facilitated by Kennedy Center staff; implementation (years 2, 3, and 4), where guided by an Implementation Committee, the community
puts the strategic plan into action; and sustaining (year 5 and beyond), with the goal that the community sustains and expands arts education offerings and continues to ensure funding and staffing for program initiatives, communications, and marketing.

“D.C. Public Schools is thrilled to join the Kennedy Center and the DC Arts and Humanities Education Collaborative to help ensure all children in D.C. have a high-quality arts education through the Ensuring the Arts for Any Given Child program,” said Chancellor Antwan Wilson. “As we begin to implement our new strategic plan, educating the whole child will be vital to determining the success of our schools. We are eager to join with all stakeholders in the city, both public and private, to create an equitable and sustainable distribution of arts resources to provide our young people with more joyful learning experiences.”

“There has never been a more significant moment in the history of arts and humanities education and cultural planning here in the District of Columbia, for our government and educational community stakeholders to work together through the Kennedy Center’s Any Given Child model to expand the mission of the DC Collaborative in service to our youngest residents,” said DC Arts and Humanities Education Collaborate Executive Director, Lissa Rosenthal-Yoffe. “The DC Collaborative, representing 100 cultural intuitional members, is proud and appreciative to bring 20 years of backbone support and arts and humanities education advancement to work with our founders and partners to leverage the collective impact learnings of dozens of other Any Given Child communities across the United States. Any Given Child Washington, D.C. in turn shall provide the District the opportunity to nationally showcase what it means to serve students in Washington, D.C., taking full advantage of all of our community’s unique national and local cultural assets in the District of Columbia.”

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.

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 kenedy-center.org/education/.

About DC Arts and Humanities Education Collaborative
The DC Arts and Humanities Education Collaborative (DC Collaborative,) together with its 100+ cultural intuitional members, advocates and advances equitable access to high-quality learning experiences in the arts and humanities for students and teachers in D.C. public and public charter schools. Since its founding as a nonprofit organization in 1998 by the Commission on the Arts and Humanities, the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and D.C. Public Schools, the DC Collaborative has served more than 600,000 public and public charter school students in all eight wards of the District of Columbia through its legacy program Arts and Humanities for Every Student (AHFES). As D.C.’s back-bone support arts and humanities education membership organization, the DC Collaborative leads collective impact and community awareness initiatives, professional development opportunities for educators, advocacy, and convenings and networking for D.C.’s arts and humanities education stakeholders. For information please visit dccollaborative.org

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