



Rebuilding the Arts on the Gulf Coast

We dedicate this issue of Arts Action News to the residents of the Gulf Coast whose lives have been upended by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

Following one of the worst natural disasters in our nation's history, Americans have responded with open hearts and open checkbooks. While immediate needs for food and shelter are the primary concern, art and music also play a vital role in lifting broken spirits and restoring lost hope.



New Orleans has a rich history of jazz music, and many musicians are struggling to support themselves in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

In the days following the tragedy, the *New York Times* reported how Samuel Thompson took out his violin and began playing Bach's Sonata No. 1 in G Minor for the other evacuees crowded around him at the New Orleans Superdome. "These people have nothing. I have a violin. And I should play for them," he said.

This is just one of hundreds of stories that exemplify how artists have responded with generous compassion in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. At Americans for the Arts, we set up an online bulletin board to facilitate communication among arts organizations, cultural facilities, and artists. We also launched the **Americans for the Arts Emergency Relief Fund** to provide timely financial assistance to victims of a major disaster to help them rebuild the arts in their community. Americans for the Arts initiated this fund with a \$100,000 contribution from our own reserves. To make a contribution to the Emergency Relief Fund or to apply for financial assistance, visit www.AmericansForTheArts.org/EmergencyRelief, or contact us toll-free at 866.471.2787 and ask for the Americans for the Arts Emergency Relief Fund.

The arts community needs this help to rebuild cultural institutions and programs and to assist displaced artists. The New Orleans Museum of Art was surrounded by water, and Kenneth Snelson's 45-foot metal sculpture that stood outside the museum was destroyed. A beautiful new addition to the Ohr O'Keefe Museum in Biloxi, designed by Frank Gehry, was partially destroyed by an unmoored casino barge that pushed inland.

Amidst the tragedy, there are also stories that inspired us all. At the New Orleans Museum, six museum employees refused to leave, staying behind to protect the fragile artworks in the museum's collection. In Houston, the city's art museums opened their doors free of charge for thousands of Gulf Coast evacuees. And Nick Spitzer pulled together his radio show, *American Routes*, from a studio in Lafayette, LA. He played Fats Domino's "Walking to New Orleans," and Louis Armstrong's "Do You Know What It Means to Miss New Orleans," using the art of radio to bear witness to his city's suffering.

All of us should take a moment to celebrate the outpouring of generosity from members of the arts community following the hurricanes and we should continue to do what we can to help the people of the Gulf Coast rebuild.

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Giving VOICE to the Arts

SHAPING FEDERAL ARTS POLICY

The Arts Action Fund monitors arts policy at the federal level and helps bring citizens' voices to the table when important arts issues are debated. For detailed legislative updates for each of these items, please visit www.AmericansForTheArts.org/LegislativeNews.

\$4.4 Million Increase in NEA Funding for 2006

For the first time in many years, both houses of Congress were eager to increase funding for the National Endowment for the Arts for 2006. A truly bipartisan vote allocated \$4.4 million more for the NEA for the coming year. Americans for the Arts Action Fund reached out to Members of Congress to help influence the vote. We also credit our *Creative Industries Report* for demonstrating to elected officials that the arts play a major role in supporting their districts' economies.

Funds for Public Broadcasting Protected

Members of the Arts Action Fund were instrumental in protecting funding for public television and radio broadcasting this summer. The nationwide outpouring of support for PBS included more than 6,800 messages to Congress sent from our E-Advocacy Center in just one week. Americans for the Arts also submitted Congressional testimony on the potential impact of the proposed cuts on local arts programming. We're pleased to report that the U.S. Senate restored many of the cuts to public broadcasting that the U.S. House had made earlier in the year. The bill will next need to be reconciled in conference.



North Dakota Americans for the Arts member Terri Aldrich meets with Senator Byron Dorgan (D-ND).

Representing Arts Organizations in Charitable Reform Debate

On July 27, more than 60 grassroots advocates visited 40 Senate offices during the Alliance for Charitable Reform's Fly In and Speak Out Lobby Day. Americans

for the Arts sponsored five arts advocates from Arizona, North Dakota, Kentucky, and Mississippi to fly to Washington, DC, and help educate key legislators about the importance of the arts in their communities, especially for at-risk youth. Advocates also stressed that most nonprofit cultural organizations rely on charitable gifts for 50 percent of their budgets.

\$10 Million in Federal Arts Education Grants Announced

Our advocacy efforts to increase funding for arts education last year are beginning to pay dividends. \$10 million in grants were recently awarded in two U.S. Department of Education arts programs. Fourteen new awards were made in the Model Development program, which integrates arts education through collaboration between community organizations and schools. Twenty-three new awards were issued to expand standards-based arts programs or to integrate arts instruction into other subject areas. However, we are still fighting for Congressional appropriations for next year.



Message from the President

Times like these serve to remind us all of the vital importance of the arts in our society. As our nation grapples with the profound despair along the Gulf Coast, we take comfort from the artists...the storytellers, the painters, the musicians, and others who remind us that even amidst the worst destruction, humanity has always found a path to beauty. I want to express my deep thanks to everyone in our community who made contributions and offered assistance after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

At Americans for the Arts Action Fund, we're continuing our mission to promote the arts in America. October marks the annual celebration of National Arts and Humanities Month.

Americans for the Arts is the national coordinator of this campaign to raise awareness for the arts and to help communities across the United States focus attention on the cultural gems in their region. You can learn more about National Arts and Humanities Month at www.AmericansForTheArts.org/nahm.

Lastly, and most importantly, I want to thank you for your ongoing support of Americans for the Arts Action Fund. Your membership provides us with vital resources to speak up for the arts in city halls, in state legislatures, and in Congress. Throughout this newsletter, you will read about how we're putting your contributions to work to promote the arts and arts education.

Thank you for standing up for the arts,

Bob Lynch
President and CEO, Americans for the Arts Action Fund



*National Arts
and Humanities
Month*

SUPPORTING ARTS ADVOCACY IN THE STATES

Americans for the Arts and its Arts Action Fund work closely with statewide arts advocacy and service organizations to promote and defend arts programs and funding in governors' offices and state legislatures alike.

Americans for the Arts Releases Preview of FY 2006 State Arts Funding Report

Months of hard work by our network of state arts advocacy organizations has culminated in an aggregate budget increase of 8 percent for state arts funding. Specifically, 33 state legislatures appropriated more funding for the arts, seven kept level funding, and 10 made budget cuts. Florida almost doubled its funding from \$15.8 million to \$28.5 million. Other states with increases include New Jersey, Montana, Illinois, Massachusetts, and North Carolina. To read the report, please visit www.AmericansForTheArts.org/get_involved/advocacy/saan/state_legislation/001.asp.

Nebraska Legislature Approves Charitable Tax Incentive

Arts organizations in Nebraska were heavily involved in helping to pass a new state law that provides its residents with a state income tax credit of up to \$10,000 for charitable contributions. This tax credit is better than a tax deduction because it will reduce the taxpayer's overall state income tax liability, whereas tax deductions merely reduce taxable income. This is an unprecedented incentive for generous charitable giving in Nebraska that will certainly benefit nonprofit arts and arts education groups.

LOCAL ACTION FOR THE ARTS

Most Americans experience the arts at the local level, through art and music festivals, local theater productions, and youth education programs. Americans for the Arts Action Fund is committed to providing local groups with the tools they need to advance the arts in their communities.

Legal Battle to Protect Seattle's "One Percent for Art" Ordinance

Americans for the Arts filed a 20-page *amicus curiae* brief in August in full support of Seattle's legal struggle to preserve the

city's "One Percent for Art" ordinance as it applies to the public electric utility. Since 1973, the ordinance has required that 1 percent of city capital improvement project funds be spent on artworks. The ordinance is a model that has been emulated by dozens of cities nationwide and has helped make Seattle one of our country's most renowned cities for public art. To read more about this case and our brief, please visit ww3.artsusa.org/information_resources/press/2005/2005_08_17.asp.

U.S. Mayors Advocate for the Arts

The United States Conference of Mayors, one of Americans for the Arts' key partners, unanimously adopted several national arts policy resolutions proposed by Americans for the Arts during the mayors' annual meeting in Chicago this year. More than 300 mayors attended the conference and, through the passage of the resolutions, signaled their support for making the arts a priority at the local level.

Also taking place at the meeting was our joint presentation of two National Arts Vanguard Awards to Chicago's First Lady Maggie Daley and to Lois Weisberg, commissioner of the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs.



(Left to right) Akron Mayor Donald L. Plusquellic; U.S. Conference of Mayors Executive Director Tom Cochran; Chicago First Lady Maggie Daley; Lois Weisberg, Commissioner of the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs, and Miami Mayor Manuel Diaz, U.S. Conference of Mayors Chair of the Tourism, Arts, Parks, Entertainment and Sports Committee at the National Arts Vanguard Awards.

Recognizing County Leadership in the Arts

Americans for the Arts recently awarded Jefferson County, AL, the 2005 National Award for County Arts Leadership. The award, co-sponsored with the National Association of Counties (NACo), honors an elected county government board or commission that has significantly helped advance the arts and arts education at the county level. The Jefferson County Commission was recognized for its vision and leadership in endorsing a local cultural master plan and for raising its annual financial contribution to the arts by more than \$3 million.



"We signed Lilly up for Americans for the Arts Action Fund because she needs to learn that it's very important to support the work she believes in. Advancing arts-friendly policies is not the only cause she'll support in her lifetime, but we wanted it to be the first. So we gave her an advance on her future allowance."



Americans for the Arts Action Fund PAC was founded to provide financial backing to federal candidates whose voting records and leadership positions demonstrate a clear commitment to advancing the arts and arts education. To date, after only two events, Arts Action Fund members have contributed nearly \$20,000. At our most recent fundraising event in Austin, TX, Karen and Normi Goeschiko made their PAC gift and then signed up baby daughter Lilly as the Arts Action Fund's youngest citizen member (and when she turns 18, Lilly will be able to donate to the PAC as well).

The Arts Action Fund PAC will begin making its first contributions to candidates next year in time for the 2006 midterm elections. Our goal is to raise \$50,000 by December 31, 2005. We are holding additional PAC events in New York in October and in Los Angeles in November. To contribute to the Arts Action Fund PAC or learn more about these events, please contact Joan Evans at 202.371.2830 or jevans@artsusa.org.

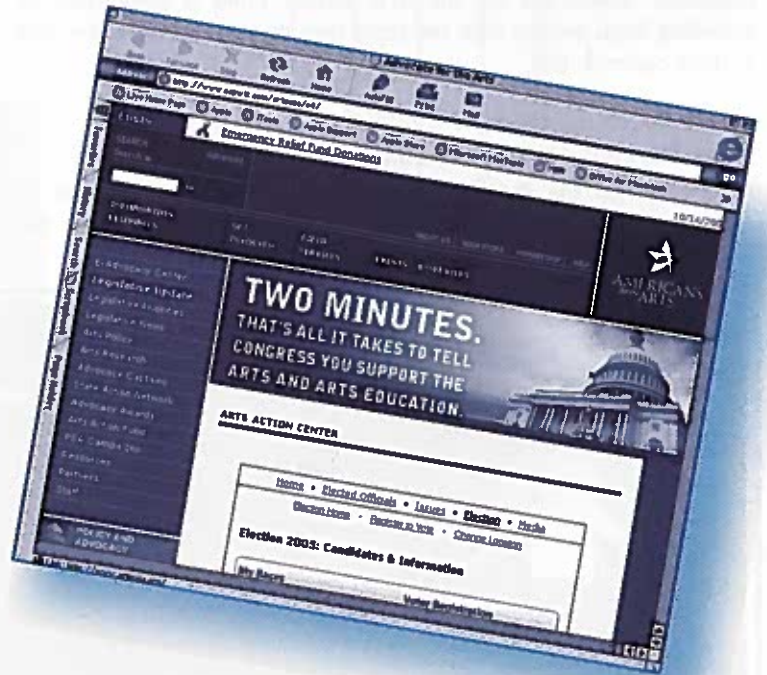
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Don't Forget to Vote!

Most decisions about arts budgets and priorities are made at the state and local levels. That's why even though this is not a federal election year, we encourage Arts Action Fund members to get involved in any state and local elections taking place in your area this November. Both New Jersey and Virginia have gubernatorial and state legislature seats up for election this fall. Several high-profile local mayoral or city council elections, such as New York City, are also up this year.

Attend candidate forums; ask candidates questions about their positions on arts funding; and share information with friends, family, and colleagues. You can also visit our E-Advocacy Center at www.capwiz.com/artsusa/e4/ to register to vote, learn more about candidates, and find your precinct and voting booth locations.



About Us

Americans for the Arts Action Fund is the advocacy arm of Americans for the Arts, engaging citizens in ensuring that all Americans have the opportunity to appreciate, value, and participate in the arts. Arts Action Fund members are citizen activists who are committed to helping make certain that arts-friendly public policies are adopted at every level of government and in the private sector. *Arts Action News* is delivered four times a year exclusively to supporters of the Arts Action Fund.