

Arts Action News

THE NEWSLETTER OF
AMERICANS FOR THE ARTS ACTION FUND

Vol. II 2007

A New Day for the Arts on Capitol Hill

You could feel the positive energy from every corner of the room as Americans for the Arts kicked off Arts Advocacy Day 2007 with the Congressional Arts Breakfast on March 13.

Rep. Louise Slaughter (D-NY), Co-Chair of the Congressional Arts Caucus, summed up our purpose well when she said, "I want more than anything for us to put enough money in the arts for it to make the difference we know it can." That spirit continued throughout the morning with messages of support from actors Jane Powell and Chris Klein, philanthropist and Americans for the Arts Board Member Sheila Johnson, National Endowment for the Arts Chairman Dana Goia, and other members of Congress, including Rep. Christopher Shays (R-CT) and Rep. John Lewis (D-GA).

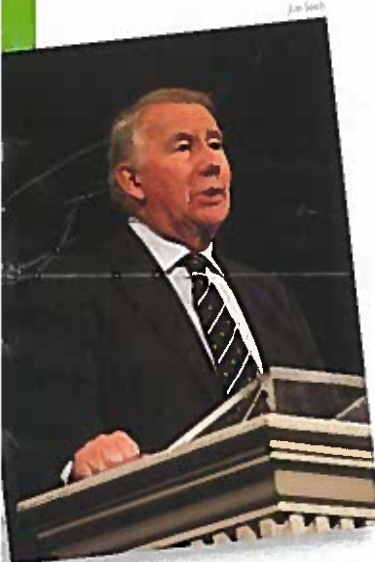
meets in his travels. He remarked that this should be the story we are reading about in the news—the tens of thousands of people in our country who are dedicated to children's arts programs. To hear and see Marsalis's speech, visit www.AmericansForTheArts.org/AAD.

Rep. Betty McCollum (D-MN) was presented with the 2007 National Award for Congressional Arts Leadership. Congresswoman McCollum has shown consistent support for the arts throughout her congressional career, earning an "A+" rating for her work in the 108th and 109th Congress in our recent arts report cards.

Wynton Marsalis, renowned musician and arts advocate, delivered a powerful keynote address. Marsalis highlighted the role art plays in communicating across epics and cultures, and told stories about the many music students and teachers he



Keynote speaker and Artistic Director of Jazz at Lincoln Center Wynton Marsalis joins Rep. Louise Slaughter (D-NY) at the Congressional Arts Breakfast.



Robert MacNeil delivers the Americans for the Arts 2007 Nancy Hanks Lecture on Arts and Public Policy.

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Americans for the Arts Testifies on Arts Education at House Hearing

Ayanna HudsonHiggins, director of arts education at the Los Angeles County Arts Commission, brought the issue of arts education to life before members of Congress on March 28. Speaking on behalf of Americans for the Arts, HudsonHiggins's testimony before the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health, and Education was the only one by an arts educator. In her remarks, HudsonHiggins urged Congress to approve \$53 million in funding for the Arts in Education programs of the U.S. Department of Education.



Arts educator Ayanna HudsonHiggins urges Congress to increase arts education funding.

Message from the President

I've been an arts advocate for many years, but never have I felt the kind of momentum we had at Arts Advocacy Day 2007 in March. New members of Congress, along with staunch arts supporters and long-time friends, welcomed our advocates in record-breaking numbers.

We met with key democratic leaders in House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer's office. We also received an exclusive invitation to organize a panel of six witnesses to testify at the first congressional hearing on the arts in the last 12 years. I want to thank all the

dedicated advocates who traveled to Washington, DC, for this important day. Thanks to our work, there is a dramatic upsurge in momentum for arts funding in the United States. You have helped make this happen through your support of the Arts Action Fund. Working together these past few years, we've turned the tide in Congress. Now we are in a position to take advantage of the relationships we have formed to advance our national arts agenda.

In the coming months, we will work to push forward with our key legislative goals for this year: to restore funding for the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) to its 1992 funding level of \$176 million and to secure \$53 million in funding



for arts education through the U.S. Department of Education. As part of this effort, I wrote an Op-Ed to legislators on the importance of arts education that was published in *The Hill* on Arts Advocacy Day.

We can accomplish all of this and much more for the arts with your continued strong support. Thank you!



Americans for the Arts Action Fund President and CEO Robert Lynch testifies before Congress on Arts Advocacy Day.

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.

Arts Advocates Flood Congress with Messages

As already noted, Arts Advocacy Day 2007 brought more than 450 arts advocates to the Capitol to meet with their senators and representatives. In addition, Arts Action Fund advocates across the country sent more than 2,800 messages to Congress asking for increased funding for arts and arts education programs through the Americans for the Arts E-Advocacy Center.

Rep. John Lewis (D-GA) Introduces Artist Deduction Tax Legislation

As he promised at the Congressional Arts Breakfast on Arts Advocacy Day, Rep. John Lewis (D-GA), with Rep. Jim Ramstad (R-MN), introduced new legislation (H.R. 1524) on March 14, 2007, that would allow artists to claim a fair-market value

tax deduction when they donate their own works to museums and educational institutions. The Senate has approved identical legislation for the past several years, but the House has not followed suit yet.

Congressional Arts Caucus and Senate Cultural Caucus Continue to Grow

We know that stronger grassroots arts advocacy leads to more government support for the arts. The positive climate in the current Congress is a perfect example. The positive trend is evident in the growing number of representatives and senators who have joined their respective arts and cultural caucuses. To date, there are 33 members of the Senate Cultural Caucus and 151 members of the Congressional Arts Caucus.



Rep. Betty McCollum (D-MN) addresses 450 arts advocates on Capitol Hill as she accepts the 2007 Congressional Arts Leadership Award.

Supporting Arts Advocacy in States and Cities

Arts4Nevada Launches New Campaign and E-Advocacy Site

Americans for the Arts worked with Arts4Nevada to help launch a new e-advocacy site in Nevada that will be housed under our national E-Advocacy Center as a state affiliate. The site will be an important part of its campaign to increase the state's per capita spending on the arts from 70¢ to \$1.00. In just the first few weeks of the launch, it had already signed up nearly 1,500 people on its e-mail list and sent more than 600 e-mails to elected officials. You can read more about the Arts4Nevada campaign and support its efforts at www.arts4nevada.org.

Arts Funding Holding or Rising in Most States

In a testament to the power of grassroots advocacy, we're seeing arts budgets in a vast majority of states increase or maintain current

funding levels for the arts. Some of the big news includes New York's 15.3 percent total increase in arts funding and the \$1.9 million increase in New Jersey.

Michigan Arts Funds Frozen

There is bad news this year in Michigan, where a state deficit of \$950 million has led to a moratorium on all grants, including arts grants for FY 2007. This freezes \$7.5 million in funding that arts organizations were counting on. "All of a sudden you find out that instead of a dollar you've got five cents," said Artistic Director Gary Anderson of Detroit's Plowshares Theater. Americans for the Arts President and CEO Bob Lynch spoke on Michigan Public Radio about the ways the arts can actually benefit Michigan's economy. We will continue to provide support to Michigan arts advocates to try to turn this situation around.

Recovering Arts Funding in Missouri

Missouri Governor Matt Blunt has recently stepped up his leadership on the arts and worked to increase state arts funding. The governor's \$7.8 million request for FY 2008 represents the largest appropriation to the Missouri Cultural Trust Fund in the state's history. After many years of zero funding for the Cultural Trust, Missouri Citizens for the Arts and other arts advocates are helping to turn the tide in Missouri.

Philadelphia's Mayoral Election Focuses on the Arts

All five candidates for Mayor of Philadelphia have promised to open a central office for arts and culture. As Nina Ozlu, executive director of the Arts Action Fund, noted in the April 18, 2007, edition of the *Philadelphia City Paper*, this is a good thing because Philadelphia is "among the largest cities without a local arts agency."

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After the breakfast, more than 450 arts advocates from across the country walked the halls of Congress, meeting with more than 300 members of Congress to discuss the arts. Senators and representatives were given copies of our 2007 *Congressional Arts Handbook*, which you can also find online at www.AmericansForTheArts.org/AAD/Handbook.

Later that morning, Rep. Norm Dicks (D-WA) hosted the first congressional hearing on NEA funding in 12 years. Americans for the Arts President and CEO Robert Lynch led a panel of witnesses, featuring Wynton Marsalis, Sheila Johnson, Chris Klein, corporate executive James Raisbeck, and Mayor of Providence (RI) David Cicilline.

Another highlight of our two days of arts advocacy events included a moving speech by Robert MacNeil for the 2007 Nancy Hanks Lecture on Arts and Public Policy at the Kennedy Center. MacNeil is a veteran broadcast journalist and chairman of the board of the MacDowell Colony. You can listen to a podcast of his speech at www.AmericansForTheArts.org/AAD.

Arts Advocacy Day Highlights



(1) Artistic Director of Jazz at Lincoln Center Wynton Marsalis testifies about the importance of arts education, cultural diplomacy, and disaster relief funding for cultural organizations.

(2) Entrepreneur, arts philanthropist, and Americans for the Arts Board Member Sheila Johnson testifies before a congressional subcommittee on Arts Advocacy Day.

(3) Sen. Ben Nelson (D-NE) meets with actor and arts advocate Chris Klein on Arts Advocacy Day.

(4) Rep. Chris Shays (R-CT), Co-Chair of the Congressional Arts Caucus, greets constituents and actress Jane Powell at the Congressional Arts Breakfast.



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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 citizens 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. Executive Director, Nina Ozlu, www.ArtsActionFund.org.

(Top) Representatives David Obey and Ruben Hinojosa at Arts Advocacy Day 2007. Both earned an "A" voting grade from the Arts Action Fund's 2006 Congressional Arts Report Card
(Bottom) Actor Chris Klein discusses the importance of arts education with House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer on Arts Advocacy Day 2007.

Your PAC contributions helped elect some important arts advocates last fall, among them Rep. David Obey (D-WI) and Rep. Steny Hoyer (D-MD). Rep. Hoyer is now the House Majority Leader, while Rep. Obey chairs the House Appropriations Committee. Both showed their support for the arts on Arts Advocacy Day and met an Americans for the Arts Action Fund delegation that included President and CEO Bob Lynch and actor Chris Klein.



PAC-Supported Officials Lead Arts Advocacy Efforts

PAC Update



Upcoming Events

Mark your calendars and come out to support the Arts Action Fund PAC at these upcoming Arts Action Fund Members' Receptions and PAC Fundraisers:

Monday, October 15, 2007

Breakfast Reception (Time TBD)
New York, NY
1 East 53rd Street
(Coincides with the National Arts Awards Gala)

Sunday, November 4, 2007

5:15 p.m.-6:15 p.m.
Miami, FL
Hyatt Regency Miami
(Coincides with the National Arts Marketing Project Conference)
For information on any upcoming events and to R.S.V.P., please contact Arts Action Fund Coordinator Mira Schahiner at mschahiner@artsusa.org or 202.371.2830, ext. 175.