

# FUND FOR THE ARTS

A JOINT INITIATIVE OF:

Baird Foundation  
The Cameron and Jane Baird Foundation  
Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo  
Davis Family Foundation

The M&T Charitable Foundation  
The John R. Oishei Foundation  
The Margaret L. Wendt Foundation  
Western New York Foundation

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Clotilde Perez-Bode Dedecker 716/852-2857

### 8 WNY FOUNDATIONS PARTNER TO FUND LOCAL ARTS ORGANIZATIONS

*10 Culturals Selected For Pilot Funding Initiative; National Foundation Contributes \$124,000 to Effort*

December 15, 2009, Buffalo, NY – The Fund for the Arts (FFA), a unique funding collaborative made up of eight Western New York foundations, has announced a pilot funding initiative to support mid-sized cultural organizations in the region. Ten organizations, including three collaborative efforts with an additional seven partners, were selected to participate in the pilot during the next 12 months; they represent Erie and Niagara counties and encompass a range of arts programming.

In announcing the pilot program and 10 organizations selected, the FFA also announced that it has received a \$124,000 grant from a national funder, the Kresge Foundation, to support its work.

“The Fund for the Arts is an example of our community at its best—local foundations joining hands to strengthen the region as a center for arts and culture,” said Clotilde Perez-Bode Dedecker, President/CEO of the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo. “By working together and pooling our resources we can do more to support these cultural institutions that are central to the fabric and economic health of our community. Our aim is to strengthen these organizations so that their internal governance, administrative and development activities are dynamic and efficient.”

The FFA is administered by the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo in an effort to affect greater impact by bringing together local foundations to fund cultural organizations collaboratively.

Each of the 10 organizations selected in the FFA pilot will be matched with an expert consultant who will help them identify, prioritize and realize opportunities for growth. The FFA will provide funding and other specialized services as needs are identified by the consultants. The program will aim to achieve measurable improvements in each organization’s governance or operations.

“Our goal for organizations participating in this pilot program is for them to develop strategies for growth that will better position them to attract local, state and national grant support.” said Robert Gioia, President/CEO of The John R. Oishei Foundation. “Working together we can help a group of organizations thereby having a greater impact than if we each funded one or two organizations separately.”

The organizations chosen for the FFA pilot program are:

- African American Cultural Center-The Collective (includes Buffalo Inner City Ballet, Colored Musicians Club, El Museo Francisco Oller-Diego Rivera, Locust Street Art Center, Nash House), Buffalo, NY
- Buffalo Media Resources (Squeaky Wheel), Buffalo, NY
- Explore and More Children’s Museum, East Aurora, NY
- Graycliff Conservancy, Derby, NY
- Hallwalls and Buffalo Arts Studio, Buffalo, NY
- Hull House Foundation, Lancaster, NY
- Just Buffalo Literary Center and WNY Book Arts Center, Buffalo, NY
- Niagara County Historical Society, Lockport, NY
- Road Less Traveled Productions, Buffalo, NY
- Young Audiences, Buffalo, NY

-more-

## **About the Kresge Foundation**

The Kresge Foundation is a \$2.8 billion private, national foundation that seeks to influence the quality of life for future generations through its support of nonprofit organizations in six fields of interest: health, the environment, community development, arts and culture, education and human services. It is headquartered in metropolitan Detroit, in the suburb community of Troy, Michigan.

## **About the Fund for the Arts (FFA)**

Initially convened in 2005 to help cultural institutions that lost funding mid-year as a result of Erie County budget cuts, the Fund for the Arts has invested more than \$750,000 in local arts organizations. This funding is in addition to grants awarded by the individual participating funders through their own grants processes. FFA members include the Baird Foundation, The Cameron and Jane Baird Foundation, Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo, Davis Family Foundation, The John R. Oishei Foundation, The M&T Foundation, The Margaret L. Wendt Foundation and Western New York Foundation. To participate in this initiative, funders committed a minimum of \$10,000.

### **Support Statements from Participating Foundations:**

*“Each of the organizations selected for this pilot have demonstrated needs but also presented opportunities for significant growth. Through the FFA we will enable them to capitalize on these opportunities and take their organizations to the next level.”*

**~Catherine Schweitzer, Executive Director, Baird Foundation**

*“Our region is lucky to have the depth and breadth of arts organizations it does. As funders, the FFA is providing a unique opportunity for us to increase the impact of our support dollars by working collaboratively.”*

**~Brian Baird, The Cameron and Jane Baird Foundation**

*“The Fund for the Arts is an example of our community at its best—local foundations joining hands to strengthen the region as a center for arts and culture. By working together and pooling our resources we can do more to support these cultural institutions that are central to the fabric and economic health of our community. Our aim is to strengthen these organizations so that their internal governance, administrative and development activities are dynamic and efficient.”*

**~Clotilde Perez-Bode Dedecker, President/CEO, Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo**

*“Research has shown that our region’s arts organizations want and need help if they are to take significant steps to improve their internal operations; this pilot will provide each group with that support so that they can increase the strength of their organization and its contributions to our community.”*

**~Nancy Davis, Davis Family Foundation**

*“Our goal for organizations participating in this pilot program is for them to develop strategies for growth that will better position them to attract local, state and national grant support. Working together we can help a group of organizations thereby having a greater impact than if we each funded one or two organizations separately.”*

**~Robert Gioia, President, The John R. Oishei Foundation.**

*“The economic downturn has had a significant impact on Western New York’s cultural institutions—with this pilot program we will invest in strengthening their internal capacity so that they are more sustainable, better able to seize opportunities and to weather challenging times.”*

**~Nancy Brock, The M&T Foundation**

*“These organizations are an important component of the cultural life in our community and do not have the same access to resources as the larger anchor institutions. Our hope is that through this pilot program they will become more sustainable.”*

**~Janet Day, Trustee, The Margaret L. Wendt Foundation.**

**Support Statements from Participating Foundations continued:**

*“We are so pleased that our collaborative funding approach has been recognized nationally and will continue to pursue similar efforts to support the Fund for the Arts’ efforts to improve our region as a center for arts and culture.”*  
~Beth Gosch, Executive Director, Western New York Foundation

*The Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo was established in 1919 to enhance and encourage long-term philanthropy in the Western New York community. Strengthening the region as a center for arts and culture is a key impact area for the Foundation. The Foundation’s mission is: Connecting people, ideas and resources to improve lives in Western New York. [www.cfgb.org](http://www.cfgb.org).*

###