



NEWS

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ArtistYear, the First National Organization Dedicated to Service Through the Arts, Receives AmeriCorps Recognition and Funding

Philadelphia-Founded Organization Expands, Training 25 ArtistYear AmeriCorps Members to Serve as Full-Time Teaching-Artists in Underserved Schools in Philadelphia, Rural Colorado and Queens, New York

PHILADELPHIA (September 12, 2016) – [ArtistYear](#), the recently-founded national service organization that enables artists to commit to a year of service to their country, has been awarded \$1.45 million in [AmeriCorps](#) funding over three years. ArtistYear is the first national organization dedicated to service through the arts to receive recognition from the [Corporation for National and Community Service \(CNCS\)](#), the federal agency that oversees AmeriCorps and national volunteering initiatives. The federal investment will support 25 AmeriCorps members serving as teaching-artists in a year of national service. These ArtistYear AmeriCorps members will serve alongside established arts educators in federally-designated Title I schools, as ArtistYear expands beyond its home base of Philadelphia and adds the school districts of **Roaring Fork Valley, Colorado**, and the **Borough of Queens**, in New York City, to its portfolio of schools in **Philadelphia**.

ArtistYear believes that the arts are imperative for the development of critical thinking, self-discipline, empathy, and civic engagement, and that these characteristics are key to an informed and engaged citizenry and a thriving democracy. Research shows that when children are involved in the arts, they reap substantial social, academic, and personal benefits. The positive effects of arts-rich experiences on vulnerable student populations demonstrate improvement in school climate, culture, and academic engagement, an increase in civic-minded and leadership behaviors, and the development of social and non-cognitive skills. Art also leads to significant gains in academic achievement, bolstering success in science, technology, engineering, and math. These subjects cultivate critical thinking, collaboration, and problem solving skills, all vital to the creative economy and global understanding in the 21st century. ArtistYear will formally evaluate its impact on schools and students by tracking key indicators of school engagement and culture, such as attendance and attachment.

“Service binds humans to one another and gives us a stake in our communities and our country,” said ArtistYear founder and CEO Margo Drakos. “AmeriCorps members are an indispensable resource for communities and the individuals they serve, bringing the country together by uniting individuals behind a common goal. At ArtistYear we are honored to join that national effort, to provide artists with the opportunity to harness their skills and give back by devoting a year to youth in underserved communities. Through their service, ArtistYear AmeriCorps members

will help support leadership, academic performance, and the development of future engaged citizens through creative expression.”

THE ARTISTYEAR AMERICORPS MEMBERS AND PROGRAM

ArtistYear AmeriCorps members hold undergraduate or graduate degrees in a performing or visual arts field and are highly skilled in their craft. The service year provides them with an opportunity to use their art to make a difference in the lives of children, schools, and communities, while offering training and development that prepares them to be competitive for jobs following their service year. In the 2017-18 school year 25 ArtistYear AmeriCorps members will serve approximately 5,000 students through 42,500 hours of arts instruction across the United States: 12 in the **School District of Philadelphia**; 8 in the **Queens School District** in partnership with **New York City Service** and the **New York City Department of Education**; and 5 in the **Roaring Fork Valley School District, Colorado**, in partnership with the **Aspen Music Festival and School**. These members will work alongside full-time teachers, helping to expand arts instruction in the selected schools, creating a stable and consistent arts presence with a goal of leading to longer-term support for keeping and expanding arts instruction programs.

To ensure quality and consistency across multiple locations, AmeriCorps members use ArtistYear’s Citizen-Artist Curriculum Framework, which aligns to the National Core Arts Standards, provides the flexibility necessary to engage youth voice and vision, and inspires active youth citizenship. Activities take place either during or after school and may be in collaboration with an existing art or classroom teacher. ArtistYear AmeriCorps members receive weekly on- and off-school service site coaching and professional development, and participate in collaborative meetings with the schools to ensure classes and community arts programs will create a sustainable arts education curriculum for the schools. They also receive a living stipend, educational award, school loan forbearance, health insurance stipend, ongoing professional development, and training.

ArtistYear AmeriCorps members for 2017-18 have been selected from the **Art Institute of San Antonio, Drexel University, Duke University, the Eastman School of Music, Indiana University, James Madison University, the Juilliard School, Ithaca College, Moore College of Art and Design, Peabody Conservatory, New York University’s Tisch School of the Arts, Ohio State University, Suffolk University, University of Alabama at Birmingham, University of Colorado at Boulder, University of Memphis, and University of Southern California**. They are sculptors, designers, musicians, writers, actors, dancers, filmmakers, visual artists, storytellers, composers, recording engineers, screenwriters, and playwrights. [A full list of the ArtistYear AmeriCorps member class of 2018, their bios, and their assignments can be found on the ArtistYear website.](#)

These AmeriCorps members join the more than 80,000 members serving through nonprofit, faith-based, and community organizations at 21,600 locations across the country. Last fall, AmeriCorps celebrated a major milestone when the program surpassed one million members pledging to “Get Things Done” for America.

Since 1994, more than 1 million men and women have served in AmeriCorps, providing more than 1.4 billion hours of service and earning more than \$3.3 billion in scholarships to pay for college, more than \$1 billion of which has been used to pay back student loan debt.

ARTS ACCESS AND TITLE I SCHOOLS IN PHILADELPHIA, QUEENS, AND ROARING FORK VALLEY

Despite the proven benefits of arts learning for vulnerable student populations, the most recent report on the state of arts education in the U.S. from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) shows that economically disadvantaged students are far less likely to access arts instruction when compared to their more affluent peers. According to the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), this “art education gap” disproportionately affects students of color and English Language Learners. ArtistYear is dedicated to filling this arts access gap by placing ArtistYear AmeriCorps members in K-12 schools which serve a high concentration of low-income students (also known as Title I Schools) across Philadelphia, Queens, NYC, and the Roaring Fork Valley.

PHILADELPHIA

ArtistYear was piloted in Philadelphia schools three years ago and has been the beneficiary of a strong relationship with the School District of Philadelphia. For the 2017-2018 academic year, ArtistYear is partnering closely with the District’s Office of Arts and Academic Enrichment and several outstanding school principals recognized as Neubauer Fellows in Educational Leadership. Through this collaboration, ArtistYear AmeriCorps members are strategically placed in select schools for optimal impact. In 2017-18 twelve members will provide extended arts learning opportunities at eleven schools, including Charles W. Henry School, Cook-Wissahickon School, F. Amadee Bregy School, Frankford High School, Franklin Learning Center, Mastery Charter Harrity Upper, Olney School, Samuel Powel Elementary, and William Tilden Middle School.

“We believe that the collaboration of ArtistYear fellows with certified arts educators for the delivery of instruction will result not only in growth of the school's programs and arts implementation, but growth of all of the individuals involved,” said William R. Hite, Jr., Ed.D., Superintendent of The School District of Philadelphia. “ArtistYear's meticulous approach to matching fellows with schools and educators will provide foundations for program growth that can live well beyond the fellows' year of service.”

QUEENS

Eight ArtistYear AmeriCorps members will serve Title I Schools across Queens, New York City, with a focus on English Language Learners and low-income students. Through a partnership with NYC Service, the Office of the Mayor, and the Department of Education’s Office of Arts and Special Projects, eight schools have been carefully selected for the launch of ArtistYear in New York City. Current Title I school partners include: PS 273, JHS 189 Daniel Carter Beard, J.H.S. 185 Edward Bleeker, PS 106Q Lighthouse Elementary, PS 143 Louis Armstrong Elementary, Voyages Preparatory, MS318 Waterside School for Leadership.

“NYC Service supports the expansion of national service programs in NYC to help address our City’s greatest needs,” said NYC Chief Service Officer Paula Gavin. “I want to congratulate ArtistYear and thank them for supporting as well as increasing arts instruction in our schools with their program.”

ROARING FORK VALLEY

In the Roaring Fork Valley of Colorado, five ArtistYear AmeriCorps members will collaborate with the Aspen Music Festival and School and the Roaring Fork Valley School District music teachers and partners to support low-income

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English Language Learners across the region. Schools include Basalt Elementary, Middle and High School; Glenwood Springs Elementary Schools; and others across Carbondale and the Roaring Fork Valley.

“Every day we witness the power of the arts to transform children’s lives and are proud to partner with ArtistYear in extending that experience to more who cannot easily access this experience,” said **Aspen Music Festival and School President and CEO Alan Fletcher**. “The five ArtistYear AmeriCorps members joining us here this fall will bring to this community both the talent and the intention to make children’s lives better through art. We support this for our local families and also for all the communities to come who will benefit as this essential program grows nationally.”

ArtistYear receives additional funding through generous gifts from H. Gerry Lenfest and the Neubauer Family Foundation.

About ArtistYear

ArtistYear is the first national service organization for artists to dedicate themselves to a year of service to their country through AmeriCorps. In 2014, ArtistYear launched a pilot in Philadelphia in partnership with Curtis Institute of Music and the School District of Philadelphia, with a mission is to provide arts education to every underserved youth in America through arts-focused national service. ArtistYear received AmeriCorps funding and recognition in 2017, enabling 25 AmeriCorps members to serve as teaching-artists in Title I schools in Philadelphia, rural Colorado, and Queens NY. Committed to developing engaged citizen-artists who strengthen the fabric of our nation, ArtistYear became an independent 501(c)(3) organization in 2016, in partnership with the Aspen Institute and Service Year Alliance. The organization was founded by now-CEO Margo Drakos, an entrepreneur, U.S. Military spouse, and former professional cellist, and Elizabeth Warshawer, a senior arts consultant and arts executive. To learn more about ArtistYear go to www.artistyear.org.

About The Corporation for National and Community Service

The Corporation for National and Community Service is a federal agency that engages millions of Americans in service through its AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, and Volunteer Generation Fund programs, and leads the nation's volunteering and service efforts. For more information, visit NationalService.gov.

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