

MINDS WIDE OPEN

VIRGINIA CELEBRATES WOMEN IN THE ARTS

September 2008
Newsletter 1

Fiscal Agent

VFTA Foundation to Serve as MINDS WIDE OPEN Fiscal Agent

We are pleased to announce that Virginians for the Arts Foundation will be the fiscal agent for MINDS WIDE OPEN, an important strategy in achieving the mission of the Virginians for the Arts Foundation, which is “to work together to advance the arts in the state of Virginia by increasing public awareness of the important contributions the arts made to the life, culture and economy of the state.” The Steering Committee of MINDS WIDE OPEN looks forward to the partnership with the Virginians for the Arts Foundation.

Program Spotlight

Jefferson Center, Roanoke

Each edition of our newsletter will spotlight a different program planned for MINDS WIDE OPEN: Virginia Celebrates Women in the Arts. Organizations across the Commonwealth are planning for the celebration – do you have a program planned for MINDS WIDE OPEN?

Sisters of the Circle

An afterschool performing arts program for teenage girls, produced by Jefferson Center

Sisters of the Circle is an afterschool performing arts program for young women, ages 14-18. Produced by Jefferson Center in partnership with Roanoke City Schools and Roanoke Refugee and Immigration Services, the program provides underserved young women with a sustained experience of arts mentorship, developing creativity, community and performance skills. Although the program is offered free of charge to young women of any cultural or socioeconomic background, Jefferson Center works closely with partner organizations to recruit young women from Roanoke’s refugee and immigrant populations.

Sisters of the Circle addresses the need for refugee and immigrant teen girls to build language skills in English and confidence to succeed within new cultural norms and educational expectations as Americans. Participants in the program meet weekly at Jefferson Center with a team of artist mentors led by Dr. Ann Kilkelly, Professor of

Theatre Arts and Women's Studies at Virginia Tech. Dr. Kilkelly and her team use theatre exercises, story circles, song and dance to foster a sense of community and to generate material from which the final production will be developed. Guest artists spend one to two weeks in residence working with program participants to create original pieces to be included in the final performance. Guest artists planned for 2010 include spoken word poet and hip-hop ambassador Toni Blackman, the Kusun Ensemble (music and dance from Ghana, West Africa), and dance/movement artist Celeste Miller.

The final performance of *Sisters of the Circle* will be held May 16, 2010, 3:00 PM, at Jefferson Center. This event is free and open to the public.

Do you have a program planned for MINDS WIDE OPEN? Send us the details of your Women in the Arts program in Word document format: melindajscott99@gmail.com

Website Update

Media General designs MINDS WIDE OPEN website

One of the objectives of MINDS WIDE OPEN is collaboration – and we are pleased to announce another collaboration made to benefit the arts in Virginia. Media General, in addition to hosting our website, is donating pro bono staff time to design the page. A special thanks to Mair Downing, Christy Sheppard and Michael Fibison for helping *Virginia Celebrate Women in the Arts*.

The preliminary website launches October 1 – visit often, changes and updates will be made regularly. During the remainder of 2008 and most of 2009, this website will be a tool to connect arts organizations and artists across Virginia as we plan and prepare for the MINDS WIDE OPEN celebration. On the website artists, cultural organizations, museums and libraries submit information on their programs and receive MINDS WIDE OPEN and sponsor logos. Closer to the celebration, we will redesign and promote the website to the public and our potential patrons.

Starting October 1, you can visit our website at: www.vamindswideopen.com

Request for Proposal (RFP)

To develop and implement a statewide marketing/communication/public relations campaign for MINDS WIDE OPEN

The steering committee of MINDS WIDE OPEN: *Virginia Celebrates Women in the Arts* is looking for a marketing firm to develop a comprehensive marketing, communications and public relations plan for the statewide promotion of the project. Additional information about the RFP can be found on our website – the deadline for submission is October 10.

We plan to announce our selection in an upcoming newsletter!