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For immediate release

ArtsKC Honors 18 Individuals and Organizations for Support of the Arts

Kansas City Metro (11/20/15) — ArtsKC - Regional Arts Council has announced the names of six individuals and 12 organizations that will be honored for their contributions to the arts in greater Kansas City during the [13th Annual Awards Luncheon](#) on Thursday, February 25, 2016.

Event Co-Chairs Rachel Hack Merlo and Dale Trott will present the awards alongside Honorary Chairs, Terry and Zulema Bassham. The Awards Luncheon is from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Kansas City Convention Center Grand Ballroom.

The nominees for each award are listed in alphabetical order below.

ADVOCATE AWARD

The Advocate Award recognizes an elected or public official in the metropolitan area for outstanding advocacy for the arts.

- Overland Park, KS Mayor Carl Gerlach
- Lee's Summit, MO City Councilman Allan Gray II
- Kansas City, MO Councilwoman Katheryn Shields

ARTSKC FUND EXCELLENCE AWARD

The ArtsKC Fund Excellence Award recognizes a company that demonstrates distinction in promoting access, community and excellence in the arts by raising money and awareness through workplace giving for the ArtsKC Fund.

- BNIM
- Johnson County, Kansas Government
- Stinson Leonard Street

CREATIVE IMPACT

The Creative Impact Award recognizes a metropolitan area business that fosters an environment of creativity and innovation, supports local artists or arts organizations, and provides exemplary leadership in the arts community.

- El Dorado, Inc.
- Hufft Projects
- Missouri Bank

EDUCATION AWARD

The Arts Education Award recognizes a school or district that utilizes the arts as a tool for achieving educational excellence in a K-12 setting.

- Art Opportunity Train -- Blue Springs R-IV School District
- Fine Arts Department -- Liberty Public School District
- Creative Co/Lab -- Shawnee Mission East High School

INNOVATOR AWARD

The Innovator Award recognizes an arts organization that provides educational opportunities to underserved communities and creates innovative partnerships to build unique programs.

- Afterschool Arts Program -- Mattie Rhodes Art Center
- Thinking Through Art Program -- Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art
- Musical Bridges Program -- UMKC Conservatory of Music and Dance

VIRTUOSO AWARD

The Virtuoso Award recognizes an exceptional individual for their dedicated volunteerism in the arts and contribution to the arts community as a whole.

- Suzie Aron
- John Hoffman
- Marilyn Strauss

One honoree in each category will be announced at the ArtsKC Awards Luncheon on February 25th, 2016.

“The ArtsKC Awards honorees are the standard for leadership in creativity, innovation, partnership, and service. Each of them is a significant part of making Kansas City a vibrant city of great dreams, where everyone can participate in and benefit from a thriving arts scene,” says Becky Blades, ArtsKC Board Chair.

Honoree bios and photos available upon request.

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About the ArtsKC Awards Luncheon

The ArtsKC Awards Luncheon is a celebration of our regional arts community, providing recognition to those who unleash the power of the arts in unique, collaborative ways. Widely known as one of the “must attend” events of the year, the 2016 Awards Luncheon will be in a new location, with new award categories providing a coveted honor to businesses, individuals and organizations.

The mission of ArtsKC is to “unleash the power of the arts.” Please visit our website www.artskc.org for more information and follow us on Twitter at @ArtsKC.