**Business Consortium announces $730,000 in Grant Support to Arts amid Covid-19 Pandemic**

**For Immediate Release**

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**Norfolk, VA – May 12, 2021 - The Business Consortium for Arts Support (BCAS) announces $690,000 in general operation support to 36 area non-profit arts organizations amid the Covid-19 Pandemic. An additional $40,000 was granted to help smaller arts organizations hire employees and artists or aid with the costs of virtual programming. Accelerated payments and steady funding help organizations maintain employees and pay vital expenses.**

The BCAS currently represents 20 area member businesses and foundations that support the arts from this fund. Major business members include Dollar Tree, Hampton Roads Community Foundation and Norfolk Southern.

Arts organizations are awarded grants based on artistic quality, fiscal responsibility, community outreach and diversity. The BCAS Grantees represent over 1,900 area full time, part time and contract jobs in the arts in South Hampton Roads. Their total budgets account for nearly $60 million annually in the local economy.

Major arts organizations such as the Chrysler Museum, Virginia Arts Festival, Virginia Opera and Virginia Symphony are funded 75% of the grantee allocation with the remaining funding going to smaller or volunteer organizations like Symphonicity, Hurrah Players and Teens with a Purpose.

“Thank you to the BCAS and their donors for our additional funds this year to help during the pandemic crisis. The impact of COVID-19 on The Muse was significant. Having transferred more than 200 classes, 200 events, and all our outreach (to seniors, youth, and the military/veteran population) to online venues, we have been able to continue to reach more than 13,000 people with the literary arts. This kind of pivot has increased our expenses and our need for quality staff. Your funding will help ensure we are able to continue to bring exceptional arts education, literary events, and needed outreach to underserved populations.” Michael Khandelwal, Executive Director, The Muse Writers Center

**About the Business Consortium for Arts Support:**
Through annual grants, the BCAS helps arts and cultural groups meet the costs of running their organizations. One of the greatest strengths of a vibrant arts community is its ability to attract new business. The South Hampton Roads area of Virginia is proud to have an active and growing cultural community. The arts in this area reach audiences of more than 1 million people annually.

The Business Consortium for Arts Support has contributed nearly $25 million in unrestricted operating support to 65 arts and cultural organizations since its establishment in 1987. This investment has guaranteed that arts programs continue to inspire our children with hands-on education, keep our theatres, stages and museums filled with extraordinary art and performances, and make our region attractive to business and industry needed to grow and prosper. Funds for the grants are provided by area businesses and foundations that generously contribute to the BCAS. For more information, visit www.bcartsupport.org, or follow the BCAS on [Facebook](http://www.facebook.com/bcartsupport) and [Twitter](https://twitter.com/BCAS30).

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