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New Publication Describes Strategies for Enhancing Health in Older Adults through Participatory Arts Programs

Creativity Matters: The Arts and Aging Toolkit
Published by NCCA, the National Guild, and NJPAC

January 28, 2008 (New York, NY)—Participatory arts education programs for older adults have been shown to improve participants' health and strengthen engagement. The publication of *Creativity Matters: The Arts and Aging Toolkit*, a first-of-its kind resource for arts, healthcare and/or aging services organizations, was announced today by the National Center for Creative Aging (NCCA), the National Guild of Community Schools of the Arts, and the New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC), to elucidate best practices and describe successful models for such programs.

The *Toolkit's* publication exemplifies a combined commitment—on the part of NCCA, the National Guild, and NJPAC— to lifelong learning in the arts.

Authored by Johanna Misey Boyer, the *Toolkit* describes

- the benefits of participatory arts education programs for older adults;
- the aging services infrastructure as it relates to the intersection between arts and aging;
- the arts infrastructure as it relates to the intersection between arts and aging;
- best practices in designing, funding, implementing, sustaining and evaluating arts education/participation programs for older adults, and

- case studies of exemplary programs.

Susan Perlstein, director of training for the National Center of Creative Aging, said: “The *Toolkit* is a tremendous resource for the new and growing field of positive aging. The materials included encourage arts and aging services providers to better serve older people by offering ways to tap creativity and to connect generations and cultures through the arts.”

“With the coming ‘silver tsunami’ and new research indicating that arts participation can enhance wellness amongst older adults, the arts and aging fields have a historic opportunity to focus on developing and expanding arts programming for this population,” said National Guild Associate Director **Kenneth T. Cole**. “The *Toolkit* prepares both fields to come together to create effective arts and aging programs, and to raise public awareness of the benefits of these programs.”

“We are deeply convinced that the aging population will have richer, happier and even healthier lives when the arts are an important part of those lives,” said NJPAC President and CEO **Lawrence P. Goldman**. “The *Toolkit* will be an invaluable tool to enable older adults to remain active in the arts, whether directly or through an organization or program that uses the *Toolkit*.” The *Toolkit* is derived from the national Arts and Aging: Creativity Matters Conference held last year at NJPAC.

A Spanish language edition of the *Toolkit* and an interactive web version will be launched in March 2008.

The *Toolkit* is available for \$35, and may be purchased through the National Guild office at (212) 268-3337 ext. 16, or online at http://nationalguild.org/publications/publications_catalog.htm. A review copy is available to press upon request. To request a copy, contact Heather Stickeler, marketing and communications manager, at (212) 268-3337 ext. 10, or at heatherstickeler@nationalguild.org.

For information on technical assistance and other educational programs, contact the National Center for Creative Aging at (202) 895-9456, or email info@creativeaging.org.

For information on community arts education, contact the National Guild of Community Schools of the Arts at guildinfo@nationalguild.org or 212-268-3337 ext. 10.

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About the Project Partners

The **National Center for Creative Aging (NCCA)** is dedicated to fostering an understanding of the vital relationship between creative expression and the quality of life of older people. Creative expression is important for older people of all cultures and ethnic backgrounds, regardless of economic status, age, or level of physical, emotional, or cognitive functioning. www.creativeaging.org

The **National Guild of Community Schools of the Arts** is America's service association for community arts education organizations that provide access to high quality arts education so that all people may participate in the arts according to their interests and abilities. The Guild's national network encompasses community schools of the arts, multi-arts centers, community divisions of universities, museums, local arts agencies, theater and dance companies, and others. In concert with this network, the Guild researches and promotes best practices, provides opportunities for professional development and dialogue, and advocates for broad access. www.nationalguild.org

The **New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC)** has garnered national attention in its first 10 seasons, serving as a model for its programming and audience diversity, education initiatives, and the catalytic role it has played in returning nightlife and economic activity to New Jersey's largest urban community. Arts education is at the center of NJPAC's mission, with a continuing commitment to explore new and innovate ways to serve students, educators, and parents in four different areas: performances, residencies, professional development/partnerships, and arts training. www.njpac.org

About the Author

Johanna Misey Boyer is the president of JMB Arts Management, which specializes in helping clients manage programs in arts and healthcare, aging, and accessibility. She is a volunteer ombudsman for assisted living residents in Montgomery County, Maryland, and a board member of and active volunteer for PETS-DC, an organization that enables people living with HIV/AIDS or other disabling conditions to maintain and care for their pets.

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