



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Young Audiences of Houston to Receive \$50,000 Grant from the National Endowment for the Arts

The Neighborhoods, Identity, and Diversity Project expressing social and cultural identities of life in Houston area neighborhoods and schools is a model for increasing arts access and equity across Houston communities.

Houston, Texas – January 11, 2022 – [Young Audiences of Houston](#) has been approved for a \$50,000 NEA Grants for Arts Projects Award to support the Neighborhoods, Identity, and Diversity project. This project will support free youth and community programs across 10 communities collaboratively created with YAH Teaching Artists, community partners, and schools. The Neighborhood, Identity, and Diversity project is among 1,248 projects across America totaling \$28,840,000 that were selected to receive this first round of fiscal year 2022 funding in the Grants for Arts Projects category.

"The National Endowment for the Arts is proud to support arts projects like this one from Young Audiences of Houston that help support the community's creative economy," said NEA Acting Chair Ann Eilers. *"Young Audiences of Houston is among the arts organizations nationwide that are using the arts as a source of strength, a path to well-being, and providing access and opportunity for people to connect and find joy through the arts."*

Young Audiences of Houston's Executive Director, Mary Mettenbrink shared, *"we are excited to celebrate and connect communities through the arts. We look forward to sharing over the next year the progress of this exciting project, unique to Houston and the communities that create our regions vibrancy. **This project will support Acres Homes, Alief-Westwood, Fort Bend Houston, Gulfton, Kashmere Gardens, Magnolia-Park Manchester, Near Northside, Second Ward, Sunnyside, and Third Ward.**"*

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Neighborhoods, Identity, and Diversity: expressing social and cultural identities of life in Houston area neighborhoods and schools project is a model for increasing arts access and equity across Houston communities. The ten complete communities, identified as a priority and strategic initiative for Houston's Mayor, Sylvester Turner and his office was launched in 2017 to provide economic, health, and social support to our communities.

This project addresses needs collaboratively and through the lens of arts-based learning. The project will include implementation across 10 schools and 10 community organizations to uplift and amplify youth voices.

Each 12-session residency, will identify, reflect, and infuse their local cultures and

traditions into the project to support pride and uplift each child's self-expression through arts-based activities. Residencies will also serve as a catalyst to support educators through a deeper understanding and effective use of arts-integrated lesson planning, providing an important component of systemic and sustainable capacity building to ensure the arts exist beyond the project itself.

Based on input from Young Audiences Teaching Artists who call these complete community neighborhoods home, we've paired artists with schools, and community partners to drive the development and process from a local/community level. Working with translators, an external evaluator, the program team, and YAH teaching artists, this project will center its process on a collaborative process from start to finish. The collaboration team will build quality frameworks and identify additional needs and resources to improve the outcomes of this project.

For more information on other projects and strategic initiatives from Young Audiences of Houston, please visit www.yahouston.org.

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About Young Audiences of Houston

Young Audiences, Inc. of Houston, a Texas nonprofit corporation founded in 1956, is an independent chapter of Young Audiences, Inc., the nation's leading arts-in-education nonprofit organization, and first organization to be awarded the National Medal of Arts.

Now in its 65th year, Young Audiences of Houston implements over 908 programs each year with 176 talented artists that reach over 119,095 students and teachers annually at schools, libraries, community centers, and hospitals with limited programming for college and adult continuing education programs, Young Audiences of Houston primarily serves children Pre-K through the 12th grade within the boundaries of the 51 greater Houston area school districts, including counties of Harris, Montgomery, Liberty, Waller, Brazoria, Matagorda, Fort Bend, Jefferson, Polk, Galveston, Orange, Wharton, Jeff Davis, and Jackson.

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