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Significant Work Gets Significant Support *Blooming Art Champions Youth Art Programs in E. Mass*

CAMBRIDGE, MA – On Saturday, September 30, 2006, nearly 30 arts organizations from Eastern Massachusetts joined approximately 300 potential donors in a celebration of youth arts at a festive garden party hosted by Swanee Hunt and Charles Ansbacher and Ann and Graham Gund. At the second annual ***Blooming Art: Cultivating the Future*** showcase, exhibits and live performances by young artists inspired donors to significantly support the organizations working with these young people. Over \$400,000 was pledged at the event (not including the match), and donors still have until the end of the month to give. Last year's event raised \$1.3 million including the match. ***Photos Available!***

The day was filled with creativity and expression as dancers, singers, and poets impressed the crowd of over 300. **Raw Art Works** and **The Revolving Museum** gave families an opportunity to create art with paints, pipes, and colored tape. Young people from **BalletRox** tapped and twirled while **Hyde Square Task Force** taught guests how to salsa and **Express Yourself!** kept the beat alive with interactive drumming. The audience couldn't contain their enthusiasm for **Origination's** Michael Jackson impersonator.

The Blooming Art strategy encourages increased giving to the arts by expanding the pool of individual donors and persuading existing donors to give more. **A small group of arts supporters jointly match contributions between \$1,000 and \$25,000 made at Blooming Art to any of the youth arts organizations represented.** This event provides substantial funding to 28 organizations serving more than 300,000 kids ages three to twenty-two.

The arts can be life-changing for kids, however, arts organizations working with children and youth need more support. A wealth of evidence has consistently proven that a high level of arts involvement narrows the achievement gap between students from low and high socioeconomic backgrounds. Students who take four years or more of arts classes while in high school score 90 to 100 points higher on their SATs than students who take only one-half year or less. And 95 percent of students enrolled in **South Boston's Artists for Humanity** and the **Boston Arts Academy** have gone to four-year colleges, compared to about 47 percent of their public-school peers.

Thriving cultural institutions bring sizable financial and spiritual returns: they build neighborhood identities, lift local economies, boost student achievement, and bridge social divides.

The following organizations participated in Saturday's showcase: Actors' Shakespeare Project, Cambridge; Artists for Humanity, South Boston; BalletRox, Jamaica Plain; Books of Hope, Somerville; Boston Arts Academy, Boston; Boston Children's Chorus, Boston; City of Boston Mayor's Office of Arts, Tourism, and Special Events, Boston; City Stage Company, Boston; Community Art Center, Cambridge; Community Music Center of Boston, Boston; Conservatory Lab Charter School, Brighton; Dot Art, Dorchester; Express Yourself, Peabody; From the Top, Boston; Greater Boston Youth Symphony Orchestras, Boston; Hyde Square Task Force, Jamaica Plain; The Max Warburg Courage Curriculum, Boston; Origination, Roxbury; Raw Art Works, Lynn; Revolving Museum, Lowell; Topf Center for Dance Education, Boston; Troubadour, Chestnut Hill; United South End Settlements, Boston; The University of Massachusetts – Lowell String Project, Lowell; Urban Improv, Jamaica Plain; Young Audiences of Massachusetts, Somerville; Zumix, East Boston.

ARTWorks for Kids, a program of Hunt Alternatives Fund, strives to increase the private and public funding of arts organizations that transform kids' lives in Eastern Massachusetts. We promote the arts in classrooms, after-school programs, and the larger community to encourage young people to stay on track. For more information visit HuntAlternatives.org.

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