Teaching Artists selected for Arts and Aging Professional Development Initiative

30 Minnesota professional teaching artists selected to receive prestigious training opportunity

MINNEAPOLIS, MN  (September 21, 2013)  - Thirty teaching artists from Minnesota have been selected to receive year-long arts and aging training led by nationally recognized teaching artists and aging experts to increase their skills in working with older adults. The training is presented by ArtSage, a Minnesota nonprofit who serves as a catalyst for the field of arts and aging and is funded through a grant from the Minnesota State Arts Board.

The artists were selected from a pool of 54 candidates with disciplines in the following fields: visual, film, dance, theater, music and literary arts. The 25 artists from the Twin Cities metro and five artists from Greater Minnesota will participate in four experiential days of workshops (which include a two-day intensive conference at Riverwood Conference Center), and be paired with a mentor to observe, teach and provide feedback on best practices. The training will allow artists to increase their understanding of the qualities, characteristics and dimensions unique to the aging population, develop tools and techniques to work with older adult populations, engage in critical discourse about their artistic work in relation to the aging and learn from and connect to leading local, regional and national presenters and experts.

“Our goal with this training is to develop an "army" of teaching artists who are trained to work with older adults in all levels of care. By doing this, we set the standard for meaningful arts activities that engage senior's minds, hearts and spirits and help them to live creative and vital lives,” says Tammy Hauser, ArtSage interim executive director.

The Training Initiative staff and mentors includes: Jean Bayer (MacPhail Center for Music), Jeannie Brindley Barnett (MacPhail Center for Music), Joey Clark (Hennepin Theatre) Allison DeCamillis (Kairos Alive!), Zoe Bird, (Alzheimer’s Poetry Project), Sandra Menefee-Taylor, (Wilder), Melanie Davis (Lyngblomsten), Andrea Lewandoski (Ebenezer), Angie Renee (Northern Clay Center), Chris Singewald (Northern Clay Center) and Jane Tygesson (Opening Doors to Memory).

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As the American population ages, there has been a national trend to seek ways to engage older adults to help them lead more productive lives. Here in Minnesota, the Department of Health estimates that the population of those ages 65 and over population will double from 2000 and 2050 and the 85 and older population will nearly triple from 90,000 to 250,000. Groundbreaking research documented by Dr. Gene Cohen, author of The Creative Age: Awakening Human Potential in the Second Half of Life, found a direct link between creative expression and healthy aging. Cohen found that older people who are involved in creating art, music, theatre and other artistic forms feel better, remain more independent, and live more meaningful lives.

Since its inception in 2003, ArtSage has been the force behind the arts and aging field in Minnesota. For more information, visit www.artsagemn.org

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