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The Mosaic Network and Fund Grants \$4.5 million to Arts Nonprofits of Color in New York

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A collaborative fund in The New York Community Trust is supporting 27 projects to strengthen the organizational capacity of African, Latinx, Asian, Arab, and Native American arts groups.

(February 4, 2020) NEW YORK – A first-of-its-kind collaborative that aims to provide more equitable funding for African, Latinx, Asian, Arab, and Native American (ALAANA) arts groups in New York City has awarded \$4.5 million in grants.

The Mosaic Network and Fund in The New York Community Trust, a collaboration between 19 foundations, recently committed \$4.5 million to fund 27 arts groups that are led by, created for, and accountable to ALAANA people.

Three-year grants ranging from \$21,000 to \$300,000 will help arts groups commission and develop artists of color, build archives to preserve significant cultural assets, expand training and education programs for young people, and strengthen their operations.

A NEW MODEL OF FUNDER COLLABORATIVE: This new effort—the Mosaic Network and Fund—is guided by both funders and arts practitioners, and both artists and nonprofit leaders in the field. Acknowledging historical underinvestment in ALAANA cultures and communities, it aims to increase philanthropic support to collective grantmaking and facilitate new connections between funders and prospective grantees. In 2019, it created a learning network of 160 leaders of ALAANA arts nonprofits and funders, with hopes of building relationships over time.

ARTIST AND FUNDER LEADERSHIP: An advisory committee of funders and ALAANA arts leaders conceived the Mosaic Network and Fund’s goals and designed its activities, including the three-year grant program. A larger committee of nine funders and

nine practitioners unaffiliated with any of the applicants led the proposal review and selection process.

“The initial impulse for the Mosaic Network & Fund was to increase opportunities for New York City-based ALAANA cultural organizations and funders to work together so that our entire cultural community might thrive,” said Maurine Knighton, program director for the arts at the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation. “We sought to forge connections where none exist, strengthen them where they do, and build meaningful relationships that could lead to more resources for the work of cultural organizations of color.

Kerry McCarthy, vice president of philanthropic initiatives and co-chair of the Mosaic Network and Fund, said, “Mosaic has brought together donors to make decisions in partnership with the very community we seek to serve. Its promising philanthropic practice fosters a spirit of collegiality through its public programs and the inclusion of community representation in the grant program’s design and selection processes. Mosaic doesn’t just talk about equity in the arts, it concretely advances equity in the arts.”

Review committee members included artists and curators such as Aizzah Fatima, Zora Howard, Mario Martinez, Diya Vij, and Betty Yu; independent consultants Sandi Haynes, Hallie Hobson, and Bill Terry; and funder representatives Conrhonda E. Baker, Leah Krauss, Sara Elisa Miller, Alexis Ortiz, Kira Pritchard, Edwin Torres, Salem Tsegaye, and Deborah Velazquez, among others.

The response among arts organizations to the grants shows the incredible need that exists for this type of support.

Though the review committee was aware of the number of organizations eligible for funding, demand surpassed expectations. The Mosaic Fund received more than 200 proposals from City-based organizations varying in budget size, artistic discipline, geographic location, and racial and ethnic representation. Faced with the task of selecting the initial group of grantees, the review committee read and scored proposals and conducted virtual interviews with 44 finalists. Many applicants were worthy of support, and far more applied than the Fund could make grants to, demonstrating the impressive scale, quality, and range of work practiced by communities often neglected in the arts sector.

“Receiving over 200 applications demonstrated the tremendous need for increased funding, and while we understood we wouldn’t be able to support every worthy proposal, we emerged from this initiative with a stellar group of grantees as well as a clear mandate for moving forward,” Knighton said.

The review committee considered a number of factors, including the feasibility and timeliness of the proposed project, the likelihood that a grant would better position the group to thrive in the future, and the demonstration of steadfast commitment to their communities.

“We are grateful for the generous support from the Mosaic Network and Fund, which is truly an investment in the communities and children that we serve. While our organization has been in existence for over thirty years, we join countless nonprofits who struggle because of organizational capacity limitations. With the Mosaic Network and Fund uplifting our important work, we will not only survive, but thrive.” – Antonio Thompson, executive director of BKSteppers, a music and dance education program committed to developing personal excellence in young people through the marching arts.

Another grantee, Kundiman, builds community for Asian-American writers, connecting them with mentors, workshops, and an opportunity to connect across generations. Executive Director Cathy Linh Che says “This grant will enable me to focus on leading our organization full-time and better serve our community of writers. I’m looking forward to devoting more time to helping our board and staff strengthen the organization.”

Mosaic Network and Fund Grantees:

The Bronx

- En Foco
- ID Studio Theater
- Mind-Builders Creative Arts Center
- Pregones/Puerto Rican Traveling Theater
- Young Urban Christians & Artists

Brooklyn

- ArteEast
- The Billie Holiday Theatre

- The Brooklyn Steppers
- Cave Canem Foundation
- STEM From Dance
- Urban Bush Women
- Yaa Samar! Dance Theatre

Manhattan (excluding Upper Manhattan)

- Amerinda
- Asian American Writers' Workshop
- Kundiman
- Loisaida
- Mariachi Academy of New York
- Mencius Society for the Arts
- Noor Theatre
- Performing Arts Mosaic

Upper Manhattan

- Angela's Pulse
- Association of Dominican Classical Artists
- Caribbean Cultural Center African Diaspora Institute
- Harlem Stage

- The Laundromat Project

Queens

- A Better Jamaica
- Pachamama Peruvian Arts

Over time, the Fund hopes to influence a broader shift in the arts funding landscape, and help to create more viable operating conditions for this segment of the City's cultural sector.

Donors to the Mosaic Network and Fund include: Altman Foundation; Bloomberg Philanthropies; Nathan Cummings Foundation; Deutsche Bank Americas Foundation; Doris Duke Charitable Foundation; Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art; Booth Ferris Foundation; Ford Foundation; Howard Gilman Foundation; Mertz Gilmore Foundation; Grantmakers in the Arts; Lambent Foundation; Andrew W. Mellon Foundation; Miranda Family Fund; The New York Community Trust; Stavros Niarchos Foundation; Rockefeller Brothers Fund; Surdna Foundation; and Laurie M. Tisch Illumination Fund.

About The New York Community Trust

The New York Community Trust connects past, present, and future generous New Yorkers with vital nonprofits working to make a healthy, equitable, and thriving community for all. It is a public grantmaking foundation dedicated to improving the lives of residents of New York City, Westchester, and Long Island. It also hosts a number of collaborative funds, bringing foundations together to promote shared learning, pool resources, and collectively make grants that address timely issues.