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DuPage Foundation Grants \$300,000 to Support Struggling Arts Organizations During Pandemic

Press Release—February 1, 2021—*Downers Grove, IL*: Local arts organizations are among the most severely impacted industries as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and face great economic losses. The shutdown of theaters, concert halls, museums and other areas where the arts are practiced and enjoyed has been devastating to the cultural and economic landscape of DuPage County, not to mention the livelihoods of those who are employed by the sector. When the pandemic hit, however, DuPage Foundation’s Arts DuPage initiative stepped into a leadership role with the local arts community to serve as communicator, advocator, connector and now as a conduit for DuPage Foundation grants to this beleaguered community. Recently, the Foundation was able to secure and grant \$300,000 in Federal *Coronavirus Aid Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act* funds from DuPage County to 24 local arts organizations to help them weather this unprecedented storm.

“Local arts organizations play a vital role in the County’s economy, and they’ve received little relief during the COVID-19 pandemic. We’re pleased to work with DuPage Foundation to ensure these organizations receive the assistance they desperately need so they can continue to provide cultural and economic benefits to DuPage County,” said DuPage County Board member Sheila Rutledge, who requested this funding proposal be considered by the Board.

With Rutledge’s assistance, Arts DuPage appealed to the DuPage County Board, led by Director of Arts DuPage Debbie Venezia, on behalf of the nonprofit arts community for the relief funds which the County approved on December 8 with the stipulation that funds be distributed by December 30.

Through a speedy, but thorough, grant process, a small working group of DuPage Foundation volunteers evaluated grant applications based on specific criteria required for CARES Act funds to meet the deadline. Bob Nieland from [Glen Ellyn-Wheaton Chorale](#) expressed his appreciation for advocacy efforts that resulted in a grant to his organization, “Thank you to everyone at the Foundation for your support for the arts during this very challenging year. We cannot adequately express our appreciation for all of your assistance.”

Prior to securing CARES Act funds for arts organizations, Arts DuPage was serving as chief connector and information conduit for local arts organizations, a role it continues, in addition to that of marketer for the sector through its artsdupage.org website.

David Rice, executive director of [First Folio](#), an Oak Brook-based theater group, expressed his appreciation of Arts DuPage's communications efforts. Rice said, "My thanks again to Arts DuPage on keeping arts organizations informed. It was through one of your e-mails that I learned that Choose DuPage grants were open for a second round. These kinds of broad-reaching grant funds to support general operating costs are precisely the kinds of support which will help keep not-for-profits alive and viable. And I might very well have missed it but for Arts DuPage."

For more information about DuPage Foundation's grant programs, please contact Barb Szczepaniak, vice president for programs at 630.598.5280 or barb@dupagefoundation.org.

About Arts DuPage

Arts DuPage supports, promotes and advocates for the arts in DuPage County. An initiative of DuPage Foundation, Arts DuPage stimulates engagement and investment in the County's vast cultural landscape through artsdupage.org, its comprehensive website for all things art.

About DuPage Foundation

DuPage Foundation, a 501(c)(3) community foundation, is the philanthropic leader in DuPage County, Illinois. DuPage Foundation manages more than \$105 million in assets and has awarded more than \$55 million in grants to not-for-profit organizations serving the residents of DuPage County and beyond since its founding in 1986. Individuals and organizations seeking to provide impactful support in DuPage County to address critical issues can create powerful, customizable gift solutions and partnerships through DuPage Foundation. More at dupagefoundation.org. *Doing a world of good in our own backyard.*TM

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