

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**\$35,000 in Grants Awarded Locally in Support of Arts & Culture,
with Oversight from the Cultural Alliance of Fairfield County**

(Norwalk, CT) The Cultural Alliance of Fairfield County is pleased to announce that \$35,000 in grants from the State of Connecticut’s Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD), Connecticut Office of the Arts (COA) have been awarded, under the Alliance’s management, to 8 recipients who work within the 15-town coastal region of Fairfield County, CT.

The Connecticut Office of the Art’s Regional Initiative Grant program (REGI), in partnership with the nine Designated Regional Service Organizations (DRSOs), is the distributor of this season’s grants. There are 9 DRSOs that form a statewide network designed to support the creative economy -- and to provide arts and cultural leadership at a regional level. The Cultural Alliance of Fairfield County, a nonprofit organization, supports Fairfield County in the state’s ongoing commitment to support the arts & culture sector. The REGI grant program, a pilot process utilizing the DRSOs, was constructed for grant seekers interested in the creation of cultural projects. The projects chosen met the mission to support efforts to expand equitable access to creative processes and/or creative experiences, especially those projects that experiment with new ways to apply the arts within its community.

“This pilot program has been an exciting and very positive experience for us and has led to the recognition of some important collaborative projects involving individual artists, cultural nonprofits, school districts, PTAs and others from across the region – most ,” said David Green, Program Director at the Cultural Alliance of Fairfield County.

The FY2016 REGI grant awardees located in the region which the Cultural Alliance of Fairfield County serves are BackCountry Jazz (Greenwich, with a project serving the Bridgeport Public Schools); Connecticut Chamber Choir (Trumbull); James S. Curiale School (Bridgeport); Greenwich Alliance for Education (Greenwich); Jay Misencik (Bridgeport); JIB Productions (Westport); The Kennedy Center’s Maggie Daly Arts Co-op (Bridgeport); and Stratford Academy PTSA (Stratford).

The grants were reviewed by a panel of five individuals, selected by the Cultural Alliance, who represent the geography and cultural activity in the region. The reviewers, who read each proposal and met as a panel for extensive, thorough reviews, were: Angelica Durrell, Executive Director, The Intake Organization, Stamford; David Kooris, Director of the Office of Planning and Economic Development, City of Bridgeport; Debra Mecky, Executive Director, Greenwich Historical Society, Julyen Norman, Arts Consultant, Norwalk; and Jahmane West, artist, Westport.

Stated Kristina Newman-Scott, the Connecticut Office of the Art's Director of Culture, "It's essential that we work with our outstanding regional partners to experiment with and learn new ways to more equitably deliver funding throughout the many municipalities and myriad villages that frame our state's landscape. While these REGI projects represent a relatively small investment, drawn from a combination of our state funds and National Endowment for the Arts federal grant, they can have a very positive impact on the state's wealth of small, grass roots cultural organizations and impressive artists and creative workers. We think these neighborhood projects will add immensely to the rich, cultural life of our communities."

The Connecticut Office of the Arts develops and strengthens the arts in Connecticut and makes artistic experiences widely available to residents and visitors. Through its grant programs, the Office of the Arts invests in Connecticut artists and arts organizations, encourages the public's participation as creators, learners, supporters, and audience members, and connects people to the arts to build vital communities across the state. Please visit www.cultureandtourism.org for more information.

The Cultural Alliance of Fairfield County is dedicated to creating powerful connections among Fairfield County's diverse audiences, artists, organizations, and creative businesses. With a commitment to umbrella marketing for its members, the creation of networks for leadership & organizational development, and advocacy efforts at the state and local level, the Cultural Alliance works to strengthen the delivery of the region's vibrant arts and cultural resources. The Alliance's event website, [FCBuzz](http://FCBuzz.org), has become a key resource for members and audiences alike -- the "go to" spot for arts & cultural happenings across the county.

For more information, please visit www.CulturalAllianceFC.org or call (203) 256-2329. To learn more about what's happening in arts & culture throughout Fairfield County, visit www.FCBuzz.org. The Cultural Alliance of Fairfield County is located in the Gate Lodge at Mathews Park, 301 West Avenue, Norwalk, Connecticut.

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