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ARTS AND EDUCATION COUNCIL OF GREATER ST. LOUIS AND PNC LAUNCH

STARTUP COMPETITION FOR ARTS ENTREPRENEURS

Pilot competition looks to nurture breakthrough ideas of arts entrepreneurs seeking to address a community need or challenge

ST. LOUIS (Jan. 25, 2017) -- The Arts and Education Council of Greater St. Louis (A&E) and PNC, through funding provided by The PNC Foundation, announced today the launch of stARTup Competition. This pilot competition and program is designed to foster breakthrough, entrepreneurial ideas that have the potential to enhance the fabric of St. Louis’s cultural life. The competition is open to individuals in the 16-county bi-state region with an idea on how to use the arts to address a community need or challenge. Cumulatively, PNC and A&E have earmarked $20,000 for the pilot program, as well as incubation services.

Taking a page from the burgeoning tech and for-profit startups in St. Louis, A&E’s stARTup Competition will provide winning entries with the opportunities and resources needed to accelerate their ideas. This will include mentorship from entrepreneurial and arts management experts, administrative facilities and infrastructure in A&E’s Centene Center for the Arts, professional development and networking opportunities, and seed funding.

“For nearly six decades, the Arts and Education Council has been a leading funder of new arts and culture ventures,” says A&E President and CEO, Cynthia A. Prost. “Most of our esteemed arts institutions didn’t launch as world-class institutions. They each began with an idea that made the community better and A&E is proud to have been there from the start. This arts stARTup Competition reinforces what A&E has been doing for years, providing funding and resources to help arts organizations thrive and grow, improving the quality of life in our community.”

“We are very fortunate that Greater St. Louis has some really creative organizations that are willing to invest in our entrepreneurs,” said Michael Scully, PNC regional president for St. Louis. “Entrepreneurs serve a critical role in a community’s economic development. By creating new products or services, providing future jobs and wages to residents and contributing to our taxes, these entrepreneurs will become a catalyst for future economic growth.”

Applications for A&E’s stARTup Competition open January 24, 2017 and will be accepted through March 1. Criteria and application can be found at KeepArtHappening.org/stARTup-Competition. Finalists will be announced April 17. Panelists will judge final presentations May 4 and announce winners by June 1. A Q&A session will be held in the Centene Center for the Arts in February.

Organizations that have been in existence for two years or less are also welcome to apply. Panelists for the competition include a diverse group of seasoned entrepreneurs and community development professionals including: Sarah Rouland Bowman, PNC; Sheila Burkett, Spry Digital; Chris Dornfeld, Bonfyre; Jason Hall, Missouri Technology Corporation; Matt
Homann, Filament; Debbie Marshall, PNC; Susan Stith, Express Scripts, Inc.; and Noah Vasquez, Competitive Range Solutions.

For more information about A&E’s stARTup Competition and to apply, visit KeepArtHappening.org/stARTup-Competition.

### About the Arts and Education Council: *When the Arts Thrive, Our City Thrives.* – The Arts and Education Council (A&E), is the St. Louis region’s United Arts Fund providing financial, technical and educational support for arts organizations. A&E’s mission is to build appreciation, participation and support for arts and arts education throughout the St. Louis community. A&E is the only privately funded arts umbrella organization that serves the 16-county, bi-state St. Louis region. Since its inception in 1963, the Arts and Education Council has raised and distributed more than $100 million in private funding for the arts – a significant contribution that directly impacts the quality of life in our region. With funds raised, the Arts and Education Council annually assists approximately 70 nonprofit arts and arts education organizations. Additionally, the Arts and Education Council provides office, rehearsal and performance space for 17 nonprofit arts organizations in the Centene Center for the Arts, a unique arts incubator located in the Grand Center Arts District. A&E meets all 20 Better Business Bureau Charity Standards and has earned the Wise Giving Seal of Approval, a three-star rating from Charity Navigator and a GuideStar Exchange Silver Participant rating.

How to find us – Website: KeepArtHappening.org Phone: 314.289.4000. Facebook: ArtsandEducation Twitter: @ArtEdSTL YouTube: Artsand EducSTL Instagram: Arts_Education_Council

### About PNC – The PNC Foundation, which receives its principal funding from The PNC Financial Services Group (www.pnc.com), actively supports organizations that provide services for the benefit of communities in which it has a significant presence. The foundation focuses its philanthropic mission on early childhood education and community and economic development, which includes the arts and culture. Through Grow Up Great, its signature cause that began in 2004, PNC has created a bilingual $350 million, multi-year initiative to help prepare children from birth to age 5 for success in school and life.