



KeepArtHappening.org

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Contact: Andie Murphy
Marketing Manager, Arts and Education Council
314.289.4008 or Andie-M@KeepArtHappening.org

**Americans for the Arts Recognizes Arts and Education Council and PNC
for Exceptional Commitment to the Arts**

Arts + Business Partnership Awards To Be Presented Oct. 15, at Virtual Gala

ST. LOUIS, July 1, 2021 – Americans for the Arts announced this week that the **Arts and Education Council** and **PNC** will receive the **David Rockefeller pARTnership Award** for their collaborative work on the stARTup Creative Competition in St. Louis. This award recognizes a company and an arts organization or artist for an exceptional project, program or initiative that represents a true alliance, collaboration or exchange between the two. The award will be presented Oct. 15, at a virtual gala.

The Arts + Business Partnership Award is a national recognition given annually to businesses that have mutually beneficial, innovative and sustained partnerships with the arts. Each year, winners of this award are celebrated in October at the awards gala and become part of a network of like-minded businesses and leaders. These companies set the standard for excellence and serve as role models for others to follow.

The Arts and Education Council and PNC have collaborated extensively since PNC entered the region in 2010, and introduced the stARTup Creative Competition in 2017 to address the needs of small and emerging arts organizations in Greater St. Louis.

The stARTup Creative Competition fuses three pillars of the Greater St. Louis community: a thriving arts scene, a dynamic startup culture, and a commitment to philanthropy. It's a competition that values more than talent, vision and creativity; business strategy, entrepreneurship and community impact factor prominently in the criteria. In addition to a monetary prize to help fund their creative concepts, winners also receive one year of space and incubation support at the Centene Center for the Arts, the Arts and Education Council's arts incubator; free performance and meeting space; access to technology and Wi-Fi; and mentoring, idea-sharing and professional development opportunities.

"Our collaboration with PNC is an excellent example of what happens when companies are attuned to the needs of our community and provide the resources that lift up our region," said Cynthia A. Prost, Arts and Education Council president and CEO. "In 2020, with the support of PNC, Soul Shed University was named the 2020 stARTup Creative Competition winner. Through this program, local musicians are gaining the necessary tools to begin and sustain a music career."

"The arts contribute significantly to the vibrancy and economic activity of the region, and we are fortunate that organizations such as the Arts and Education Council are committed to helping deliver arts and cultural experiences throughout the community," said Michael Scully, PNC regional president for St. Louis.

Other honorees recognized by Americans for the Arts include:

- **Audible (Newark, NJ)**

- **NMG Network (Honolulu, HI)**
- **University of Michigan Credit Union (Ann Arbor, MI)**
- **Underestimated People of Purpose (UPOP) (Denver, CO)**
- **Universal Orlando Resort (Orlando, FL)**
- **Vestar (Phoenix, AZ)**
- **Aziz Hasan, CEO of Kickstarter**

“We are excited to honor these exceptional businesses and individuals for their commitment to ensuring that the arts thrive in their communities,” said Nolen Bivens, president and CEO of Americans for the Arts. “They understand and leverage the power of the arts to encourage creative thinking, build healthy businesses and develop vibrant communities. Through partnering with the arts, these companies and leaders have enriched many lives and for that, set a true example for others to follow.”

The 2021 Arts + Business Partnership Awards gala is generously supported by premium product sponsor, Omaha Steaks, and The George Barrett and Deborah Neimeth Fund; Martha Rivers Ingram Advised Fund at The Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee; PNC; and Universal Orlando Resort.

For more information about Arts + Business Partnership Awards, please contact Danielle Iwata at 212-233-2787 or via e-mail at diwata@artsusa.org.

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About the Arts and Education Council: Keep Art Happening. – The Arts and Education Council ensures the 16-county, bi-state region is rich with arts and cultural experiences for all through programs and services that support more than 70 organizations each year, including: general operating grants, arts incubation at the Centene Center for the Arts, PNC Program Grants, the Creative Impact Fund, the Arts and Education Fund for Teachers, Bayer Fund Rural Community Arts Program grants, Arts and Healing Initiative, the Art Education Fund, the Catalyst Innovation Lab, the Katherine Dunham Fellowship, the stARTup Creative Competition, Leadership Roundtables, Arts Marketers, the St. Louis Suburban Music Educators Association, the Keep Art Happening Scholarship and the St. Louis Arts Awards.

The Arts and Education Council is entirely funded by individual donors, corporations and foundations in the St. Louis region. Since its inception in 1963 as the region’s only privately-supported united arts fund, 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. The Arts and Education Council 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 Gold Participant rating.

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Instagram: [Arts Education Council](https://www.instagram.com/Arts_Education_Council)

About PNC – The PNC Financial Services Group, Inc. (NYSE: PNC) is one of the largest diversified financial services institutions in the United States, organized around its customers and communities for strong relationships and local delivery of retail and business banking including a full range of lending products; specialized services for corporations and government entities, including corporate banking, real estate finance and asset-based lending; wealth management and asset management. For information about PNC, visit www.pnc.com.

Arts and Education Council • 3547 Olive Street • St. Louis, MO 63103-1014

p 314.289.4000 • www.KeepArtHappening.org