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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
PLEASE CONTACT:

Barbara St. Clair, Barbara.stclair@creativepinellas.org, 727.460.5477
John Collins, john@stpeteartsalliance.org, 727.518.5142
Duggan Cooley, dcooley@pinellascf.org

The Pinellas Arts Community Relief Fund Established

With an indefinite suspension of arts programs throughout our county, the impact on the Pinellas arts community is profound. In response to the sudden and dramatic need for emergency relief among Pinellas County artists and arts organizations. The Pinellas Arts Community Relief Fund has been established and will be distributed through the Pinellas Community Foundation. Grants will provide urgent financial support for Pinellas County artists, arts organizations and creative businesses that face immediate needs in the face of an unprecedented emergency

Creative Pinellas, the Pinellas Community Foundation, and the St. Petersburg Arts Alliance, joined by arts leaders from organizations throughout the County, to assess needs and gain support. The committee recognized that urgent funding is critical to respond to the financial suffering of the artists, arts organizations and arts businesses who have played a leading role in shaping the quality of life in Pinellas County. The goal of this fund is to help ensure that the vibrant arts and cultural landscape of our community remains intact through this emergency.

The Pinellas Arts Community Relief Fund is launching with \$70,000 in seed funding including contributions from the Community Foundation and from Creative Pinellas and the St. Petersburg Arts Alliance. The community is being asked to help grow this relief fund with individual contributions of any size by visiting <https://pinellascf.org/pinellasartsrelief>.

“We were happy provide management and to be an early contributor to this fund,” said Duggan Cooley, CEO of the Pinellas Community Foundation. “Our board of governors is very aware of the need to support the arts in this community, knowing artists contribute greatly to our quality of life but often may be living on the margins.”

“This is an amazing beginning to an important ongoing effort,” says Barbara St. Clair, CEO of Creative Pinellas. “It became very clear, very quickly that the arts community was going to be hit hard economically by the COVID-19 health crisis. We knew we needed to find an immediate way to help this valuable sector of our community.”

In order to qualify for relief funds, the artists, arts organizations and small creative businesses simply need to demonstrate specific, current, and immediate financial need. For individual artists, this may include rent, utilities, food, healthcare and other basic needs. Organization and business needs may take the form of rent, payroll, employee healthcare, or other essential operating expenses.

John Collins, Executive Director of the St. Petersburg Arts Alliance adds, "Our individual artists from all disciplines, our creative businesses, for profit and nonprofit, have established a wonderful arts and cultural ecosystem that now is fragile at best. This fund will provide some emergency relief to those who contribute to the vibrancy and vitality of our community."

The committee recognizes that the need for help is urgent and is striving to get funding distributed as soon as possible. The collaborative team behind The Pinellas Arts Community Relief Fund also is committed to continuing to raise funds to support artists, arts organizations and arts businesses for the duration of this crisis and are seeking support from donors, philanthropists and foundations.

To contribute or apply for the Community Arts Relief Fund please visit <https://pinellascf.org/pinellasartsrelief>.

Committee Members:

George Ann Bissett, Dunedin Fine Ars Center; John Collins, St. Petersburg Arts Alliance; Duggan Cooley, Pinellas Community Foundation; Katie Deits, Florida CraftArt; Helen French, Dance/Beacon; Elizabeth Gelman, Florida Holocaust Museum; Stephanie Gularte, American Stage; Alex Harris Ph.D., Arts Conservatory for Teens; Yvonne Marrullier, The Dali; Carol Mickett, Artist/Mickett Stackhouse; Paula Parrish, Morean Arts Center; Julie Rocco, Foundation for a Healthy St. Pete; Barbara St. Clair, Creative Pinellas.

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