



Leaders at the Core of Better Communities
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2015 Local Government Excellence Awards Program Program Excellence Awards Nomination Form

(All programs nominated must have been fully operational for a minimum of 12 months, prior to January 31, 2015)

Deadline for Nominations: March 3, 2015

Complete this form (sections 1 and 2) and submit with your descriptive narrative.

SECTION 1: Information About the Nominated Program

Program Excellence Award Category (select only one):

- Community Health and Safety
- Community Partnership
- Community Sustainability**
- Strategic Leadership and Governance

Name of program being nominated: Arts Partners and Theatre Buddies Program

Jurisdiction(s) where program originated: Village of Schaumburg, Illinois

Jurisdiction population(s): 74,227

Please indicate the month and year in which the program you are nominating was fully implemented. (Note: All Program Excellence Award nominations must have been fully implemented for at least 12 months prior to January 31, 2015, to be eligible. The start date [on or before January 31, 2014] should not include the initial planning phase.)

Month: September Year: 2011

Name(s) and title(s) of individual(s) who should receive recognition for this award at the ICMA Annual Conference in Seattle, Washington, September 2015. (Each individual listed MUST be an ICMA member to be recognized.):

Name: Brian Townsend

Title: Village Manager Jurisdiction: Village of Schaumburg

Name: Paula Hewson

Title: Assistant Village Manager Jurisdiction: Village of Schaumburg

VILLAGE OF SCHAUMBURG, ILLINOIS

Arts Partners and Theatre Buddies Program

- **Problem assessment, the challenge or need that prompted the local government to develop the program**

The Arts Partners and Theater Buddies programs were developed to provide free admissions to performance activities at the Village of Schaumburg's Prairie Center for the Arts to those whose access to the arts is limited because of health, age, income or language barriers.

Since opening in 1986, the Prairie Center has been committed to maintaining affordable ticket prices for the public. Despite this effort, there are many whose special needs make access to arts and culture difficult. With a belief that the arts should be experienced by everyone, the Theatre Buddies and Arts Partners programs were developed. Through this program, tickets are made available at no charge to at-risk and under-served audiences.

Theatre Buddies was created in 2002, and since that time, partnerships have been developed with agencies serving senior citizens, low-income families, youth at risk and developmentally challenged individuals. Since its inception, more than 4,000 tickets have been purchased by the Prairie Center's Foundation and distributed at no charge through these agencies.

Arts Partners was created in 2003 to address an equally important need. The geographic region served by the Prairie Center has a large, growing Latino population. Many children immigrate into the local schools without the necessary language skills to fully engage in the educational process. Arts Partners serves bilingual/Spanish classrooms by providing tickets to a pre-selected group of second-graders, allowing them to attend each of three to five performances offered at the Prairie Center during the school year. The opportunity to experience a series of performance in multiple artistic disciplines is a significant element of Arts Partners.

- **Program implementation and costs**

The formation of the Prairie Center Arts Foundation in 1990 as a separate 501 (c) (3) fundraising organization has substantially bolstered and complemented Village of Schaumburg financial support for arts programming. Through the efforts of the Foundation, ongoing corporate relationships have been established with such community partners as Motorola Solutions, LaSalle Bank, IBM, SBC/Ameritech, American Airlines and Woodfield Mall.

The Arts Partner and Theatre Buddies programs were made possible through the Prairie Center Arts Foundation's desire to make arts programming accessible to underserved community members. In a timely – and fortuitous – case of need-meeting-solution, a potential business donor located in Schaumburg, First Penn-Pacific Life Insurance, was approached for general funding for the Foundation. Unlike many other funding sources that provide sponsorship money to the Prairie Center without

restriction, this particular donor was specifically interested in providing grant money in support of a program serving young people, ideally with an educational component attached. Because the amount of the grant was close to \$10,000, the Foundation was able to fully develop the Arts Partners program, providing tickets, transportation and classroom resources for teachers and their students to attend three to five performances at the Prairie Center for the Arts. The number of performances offered each year is directly tied to the annual funding for the program which is grant and donation based.

- **Tangible results or measurable outcomes of the program**

The experience of attending live performance in a theatre space cannot be replicated in the classroom. For most of the students who participate in the Arts Partners programs, the experience represents the first time they have been to a theatre and experienced the arts. The opportunity to attend multiple performances of a variety of art forms provides students with an in-depth experience that enhances their curricular studies and directly addresses goals 2, 4, 25 and 27 of core curriculum/state standards of the State of Illinois. Arts Partners provides bi-lingual elementary school students the opportunity of attending a full season of performances at the Prairie Center for the Arts, at no charge to the students or school. By providing a performance experience encompassing several shows rather than just one or two, it is believed the students will benefit from an in-depth arts experience that they can carry with them into adulthood.

Each year more than 300 students from three School District 54 schools and one non-district elementary school have participated in the program. A sample season for the students might include performances of the Schaumburg Dance Ensemble's *Nutcracker*, the Schaumburg Youth Orchestra's Presto! Holiday Concert for Young Audiences, and one or two storytelling or theatre experiences. Each trip to the Prairie Center also includes an additional learning piece for the students, such as an opportunity to talk to the professional dancers performing in the ballet, a backstage tour of the Prairie Center following a concert, and a walking tour of the Village of Schaumburg's Sculpture Park after the storytelling event. Not only do the students have an opportunity to experience live performance, but they also see art professionals at work in their chosen field, as well as young people actively participating in the arts. This, in turn, allows them to broaden their own worlds and give them an opportunity to consider the possibilities in their own lives.

In 2013-2014, 350 students and teachers from Enders Salk, MacArthur, and Lakeview Schools in School District 54, and Central Road Elementary School in Rolling Meadows participated in Arts Partners. They attended the Schaumburg Youth Orchestra Presto! Holiday Concert, the *Nutcracker* and puppeteer Hobey Ford's presentation, *Migration*. Tickets, transportation to and from the theatre and study guides were provided to each school. In total, 855 tickets were provided.

Since the Theatre Buddies program's inception, the Foundation has developed partnerships with community agencies serving senior citizens, low-income families,

youth at risk, and mentally, emotionally and/or developmentally challenged young children and adults. The tickets are purchased by the Foundation and distributed through community agencies.

In the 2013–2014 Season, 300 tickets were provided to nine community agencies including the Childrens Advocacy Center, Fellowship Housing, Senior Barn, Central Road Elementary, Seguin Services, NAMI, Fisher House, Mt. St. Joseph, and Kenneth Young Center. Receiving the tickets were senior citizens (27%), physically and developmentally challenged individuals (20%), at-risk youth and teens (48%), and veterans (5%). Of the total number of tickets, 24% went to adults, 33% to youth and 43% to senior citizens.

- **Lessons learned during planning, implementation, and analysis of the program.**

Perhaps the most significant lesson reinforced through this program is the tremendous power of partnerships. The formation of the Prairie Center Arts Foundation as a not-for profit organization in 1990 was an important step in helping to ensure an ongoing source of financial support for the Prairie Center for the Arts beyond the Village of Schaumburg. Because of its 501(c) (3) status, the Foundation is able to receive tax deductible gifts from businesses, individuals, government agencies and foundations, which has opened the door for the creation of programs such as Arts Partners and Theatre Buddies, successfully matching donors with arts programs.