

# Arts Action News

THE NEWSLETTER OF  
AMERICANS FOR THE ARTS ACTION FUND

Vol. III 2009

## Rep. Norm Dicks Champions the Arts

When Americans for the Arts Action Fund members voted in March on its key priorities for the year, increased funding for the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) rose to the top. We knew we could count on the support of one of our key congressional champions, Rep. Norm Dicks (D-WA), as we pursued this goal.

As Chairman of the House Appropriations Interior Subcommittee, Rep. Dicks has successfully strategized to ensure that increases for the NEA have been realized for the last three years. This year, he led the campaign in the House to improve upon President Obama's proposed budget increase for the NEA—resulting in a \$15 million

Sydney Calverly



*Rep. Norm Dicks was interviewed at the Americans for the Arts 2009 Annual Convention in Seattle in June: "[Americans for the Arts]... does more to help those of us who are arts advocates on Capitol Hill than any other group. This, by far, is the most effective organization, so keep supporting it."*

increase. But the budget isn't settled yet. Now the House and Senate, which only proposed a funding increase of \$6.3 million, have to negotiate and come to an agreement. We're counting on you to contact your senators via <http://capwiz.com/artsusa>.

Rep. Dicks was also a featured speaker at the Americans for the Arts 2009 Annual Convention in Seattle. Rep. Dicks elaborated on his long-term strategy of supporting incremental increases for arts funding: "The reason I don't go to huge numbers is I don't want to break our consensus with the other side. If we did something huge, then the Republicans would desert us, and we'd be back in trouble. So I want to do it in amounts that I think are politically sustainable, and that's why we've taken it one step at a time." To listen to the full interview with Rep. Dicks, visit [www.AmericansForTheArts.org/Convention](http://www.AmericansForTheArts.org/Convention).

Visit <http://serve.artsusa.org> today!

## Calling the Arts to National Service

President Obama's new national service initiative, United We Serve, is an exciting opportunity for volunteers to get involved and give back to their communities. Americans for the Arts is proud to take on a leadership role in calling on artists and arts organizations to participate in this initiative and ensure that the arts are well represented!

We've built a new state-of-the-art website dedicated to highlighting community service in the arts.

Visit <http://serve.artsusa.org> to upload photos, videos, and stories about how artists, arts organizations, and volunteers are making a difference in

your community. We'll share your experiences with the White House, the media, and the arts community nationwide to inspire others and to drive new public policies in support of community service in the arts.

And make sure to sign our online petition. Add your voice to those who are urging President Obama to deliver on his campaign pledge to create a national Artists Corps that would place young, talented artists in low-income communities to work with children.

Visit <http://serve.artsusa.org> to find all the ways you can participate.





## Message from the President

As you'll read in this issue of *Arts Action News*, we've been hard at work ensuring there are opportunities for all Americans to appreciate and participate in the arts. From advocating for federal funding to supporting arts organizations during these tough economic times to encouraging community service—our recent efforts reach far and wide thanks to your support.

In the midst of such a full legislative agenda, I especially want to highlight two of Americans for the Arts' recent media outreach efforts that promote support for arts education.

First, we're proud to present the newest print advertising campaign, which promotes arts education by using funny take-offs of everyday food products. *The Arts. Ask for More.* public service advertising (PSA)

campaign is produced pro bono by the Leo Burnett advertising agency in partnership with the Ad Council and the International Music Products Association's NAMM Foundation.

Look for the ads in newspapers and magazines over the

Print ads from the Americans for the Arts 2009 public service advertising campaign, *The Arts. Ask for More.*



Americans for the Arts Action Fund President and CEO Robert L. Lynch thanking members at the recent Americans for the Arts Action Fund PAC reception in Seattle, which raised more than \$10,000 to support pro-arts candidates running for federal office.

coming months, or view them now at [www.AmericansForTheArts.org/Public\\_Awareness](http://www.AmericansForTheArts.org/Public_Awareness).

We're also pleased to partner with the Ovation cable arts channel to present a television PSA calling on Americans to "Play Their Part" and join Americans for the Arts Action Fund in support of the arts. You can view video of the ad by visiting <http://vimeo.com/5208680>.

With your help, we are keeping the arts and arts education front and center in both national media and policy debates.

## Research Sounds Alarm for the Arts

Recently released research demonstrates that there is good reason to be concerned about the state of the arts in America.

- According to the National Endowment for the Arts' "Arts Participation 2008" study, there are persistent patterns of decline in participation in every art form, except literature. Only 35 percent of U.S. adults (ages 18 and older)—an estimated 78 million people—attended an art museum or an arts performance in 2008, compared with about 40 percent in 1982, 1992, and 2002.
- *Giving USA* reported that in 2008, private-sector giving to the arts (by individuals, foundations, and corporations) decreased 6.4 percent from last year, from \$13.67 billion to \$12.79 billion. By comparison,

total giving to all charitable sectors as a whole dropped only two percent during the recession (from \$314 to \$307.7 billion in one year).

- The "National Assessment of Education Progress in the Arts,"

a study of eighth-grade students nationwide, revealed mediocre achievement in their knowledge and skills in the visual arts and knowledge of music.

Private Giving to Arts, Culture, and Humanities: 1997–2008  
(Billions of Current Dollars)



Source: The Center on Philanthropy at Indiana University. *Giving USA* 2009.



# Shaping Federal Arts Policy

The Arts Action Fund monitors arts policy at the federal level and helps bring citizens' voices to the table when important arts issues are debated. For detailed legislative updates, please visit [www.AmericansForTheArts.org/LegislativeNews](http://www.AmericansForTheArts.org/LegislativeNews).

## U.S. Secretary of Education Supports Arts Education in Recent Statements

We're happy to report that U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan has been vocal in his support of arts education in several recent appearances. In addressing a question from Rep. Lynn Woolsey (D-CA) during testimony before the House Committee on Education and Labor in May, Secretary Duncan stated that arts and music should not be viewed as extracurricular activities.

22nd Annual Nancy Hanks Lecture on Arts and Public Policy, and urged Secretary Duncan not to "leave [children] behind in terms of their culture." Secretary Duncan agreed and said, "I think our students deeply need art and music and dance and drama. We have to give our students multiple opportunities to develop their unique skills and passions and talents."

Americans for the Arts Action Fund President and CEO Robert L. Lynch followed up with Secretary Duncan at a meeting on July 22, in conjunction with United Voices for Education. Thanks to musician and Americans for the Arts Action Fund Artists Committee member Peter Yarrow—of Peter, Paul and Mary—for spearheading the meeting.



(L-R) Sen. Tom Harkin (D-IA) with Wynton Marsalis and Robert L. Lynch at the Americans for the Arts 22nd Annual Nancy Hanks Lecture on Arts and Public Policy in March. Sen. Harkin later referenced Marsalis's speech during congressional testimony with the U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan.

On June 3, Secretary Duncan testified before the Senate Appropriations Committee, explaining the administration's priorities for the Department of Education. In response, Sen. Tom Harkin (D-IA) referenced Wynton Marsalis's speech at the Americans for the Arts

## Supporting Arts Advocacy in States and Cities

### Battling for the Arts in the States

From coast to coast, states are facing unprecedented budget cuts. As legislatures struggle to balance budgets, arts advocates are fighting hard to protect arts funding. Here are some updates from states across the country:

- **Citizens for the Arts in Pennsylvania** staged a successful rally at the State Capitol to protest legislative efforts to zero out funding for the Pennsylvania State Council on the Arts. The budget bill that eliminated arts funding did not pass in the House. A revised budget is currently being worked out in conference committee. Citizens for the Arts also hopes to convince the legislature to include the \$14 million for arts grants in the new budget proposed by Gov. Ed Rendell.
- The Illinois state budget for FY 2010 includes a 46 percent reduction for the **Illinois Arts Council**, dropping per

capita investment in the arts to 66 cents. According to the Illinois Arts Alliance, the state's investment in the arts has cumulatively dropped 57 percent since FY 2008.

- **ArtServe Michigan** reports that Gov. Jennifer Granholm has officially closed the Department of History, Arts and Libraries, scattering the state's cultural programs into other departments. Advocates are working with the legislature to ensure existing programs don't get lost in the transition.
- The **North Dakota State Council on the Arts** may be among the few state arts agencies to have seen an increase in its funding for FY 2010. Advocates have secured a nearly \$100,000 increase for each of the next two years.



Nearly 400 people who represented arts and culture groups and were organized by Citizens for the Arts in Pennsylvania converged on the steps of the Pennsylvania State Capitol Building in Harrisburg on July 14, 2009, to protest elimination of funding for the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts.

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## PAC Update



### Violinist Midori Speaks at Arts Action Fund PAC Reception

*by Nina Tunceli*

World-renowned violinist and arts education advocate Midori recently spoke at the Arts Action Fund PAC reception at the 2009 Americans for the Arts Annual Convention in Seattle to help raise money for the PAC and to thank members for their work. "I believe it is fundamental that the creative community get involved in the political process," said Midori, "or else our vital interests become overshadowed."

Midori with Arts Action Fund Board Member Ken Ferguson and Board Chair Ann Sheffer at the PAC fundraiser in Seattle in June.

## In the News

### Newsweek

**April 4, 2009**—Wynton Marsalis's speech at the Americans for the Arts 22nd Annual Nancy Hanks Lecture on Arts and Public Policy was featured in a *Newsweek* article entitled "America in Harmony."

### Time

**June 8, 2009**—*Time* magazine turned to Americans for the Arts Action Fund President and CEO Robert L. Lynch for commentary in an article on the recession and the arts entitled "Culture Crunch: The Recession and the Arts." Referencing the resiliency of the arts, Lynch said, "Arts organizations aren't driven by profit. They're driven by mission. And they'll do anything to survive."

### The New York Times

**June 22, 2009**—Lynch published a letter on the OpEd page of *The New York Times* urging stronger federal commitment to funding arts education in response to the "National Assessment of Educational Progress in the Arts" study, which shows that American students lag in the arts.

Americans for the Arts Action Fund is the advocacy arm of Americans for the Arts. We engage citizens in ensuring that all Americans have the opportunity to appreciate, value, and participate in the arts. Arts Action Fund members are citizen activists who are committed to helping make certain that arts-friendly public policies are adopted at every level of government and in the private sector. Arts Action News is delivered four times a year to supporters of the Arts Action Fund. Executive Director, Nina Ozlu Tunceli. [www.ArtsActionFund.org](http://www.ArtsActionFund.org).



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