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Virginians for the Arts Announces 2015 Dominion ArtStars Award Winner in Martinsville

Piedmont Arts recognized for excellence in arts education

MARTINSVILLE, VA – Piedmont Arts is the winner of a regional Shining Star award from Virginians for the Arts (VFTA), in partnership with the Dominion Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Dominion Resources, Inc.

Piedmont Arts will receive a cash prize of \$5,000. The organization engages students in Martinsville-Henry County through performing and visual arts programs that enhance and expand the core curriculum, making lessons more relevant than a textbook alone ever could.

Programs are carefully chosen for artistic quality and to challenge students' creativity and critical thinking skills through the arts. There are numerous examples of innovative outreach programs including 13 art Treasure Chests, developed by Piedmont Arts to align with and enhance teaching of the Virginia Standards of Learning, which contain museum replicas, lesson plans, music clothing and other items. Available to teachers free of charge, the chests include Ancient Egypt, Ancient China, Ancient Mali, The Underground Railroad, Jamestown, Shakespeare, Ancient Greece and Rome and others.

"As a parent, I have seen firsthand the value that Piedmont Arts programming provides to youth in our community. From the Treasure Chest programs to the outreach programs which help engage students in art through fun, creative ways, Piedmont Arts is a valuable partner in our local education system," said Tiffani Underwood, Executive Director, United Way of Henry County and Martinsville.

The 2015 statewide awards celebrate arts and education in the community, recognizing arts organizations that best demonstrate and advance the synergy of arts and education. These awards emphasize the contributions of arts organizations through their partnership and collaboration with schools across the Commonwealth.

"This year, we were particularly impressed with the quality of the programs offered throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia," said VFTA President John "Butch" Davies, III. "Every corner

of the state, from the smallest towns to our larger cities, showcased programs dedicated to inspiring and enriching the lives of underserved students."

"We are honored to join VFTA in recognizing the contributions arts organizations in the Commonwealth are making to education," said Hunter Applewhite, president of the Dominion Foundation.

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The Dominion Foundation is dedicated to improving the physical, social and economic well being of the communities served by Dominion companies, including Dominion Virginia Power. Dominion (NYSE:D) and the Foundation support nonprofit causes that meet basic human needs, protect the environment, promote education and promote community vitality. For more information about Dominion, one of the nation's largest producers and transporters of energy, visit www.dom.com.

Virginians for the Arts, a non-profit founded in 1992, works to advance the arts in Virginia by increasing public awareness of the important contributions the arts make to the life, culture, and economy of the state. The organization works to increase the public value of and appreciation for the arts and advocates for public funding for the Virginia Commission for the Arts, which makes operating grants essential to the state's arts organizations. For more information about VFTA, please visit its website at www.VaForArts.org.