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Virginians for the Arts Announces 2015 Dominion ArtStars Award Winners

Arts organization in Hampton Roads recognized for excellence in arts education

NORFOLK, VA - Virginians for the Arts (VFTA), in partnership with the Dominion Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Dominion Resources, Inc., has announced that Young Audiences-Arts For Learning-Virginia's Dance for Life Program in Norfolk is a winner of this year's Dominion ArtStars Awards.

The organization won a Regional Shining Star award with a cash prize of \$5,000. Young Audience of Virginia's Dance for Life Program is an after-school residency for middle- and elementary-school students with a goal of exposing children to dance and engaging them as they learn the art form and its history and culture.

Ballroom, Salsa, Zumba, Hip Hop and Tap are just some of the dance forms covered over the years. Most recently, Young Audiences partnered with Portsmouth General Hospital and the supervisor of health, physical education, wellness and athletics for Portsmouth Public Schools to emphasize fitness using the Hip Hop and Tap dance forms.

"Two of my children participated in the Dance for Life Program this past school year and they loved it. They talked about the interesting things they were learning through hip hop and tap dance that used mathematical terms. This also improved their grades and their performance in school," said Donnesha Gibbs, a parent in Portsmouth.

The 2015 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."

Through the generosity of Dominion, a longtime supporter of the arts in Virginia, the cash prize of \$5,000 will be presented at Young Audiences of Virginia's 60th Anniversary Gala on Sept. 17.

“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.

