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**Virginians for the Arts Announces
2015 Dominion ArtStars Award Winners
in Northern Virginia**
*Berryville and Fairfax arts organizations recognized
for excellence in arts education*

BERRYVILLE and FAIRFAX, VA – Two arts organizations in Northern Virginia have received Dominion ArtsStars awards from Virginians for the Arts (VFTA) in partnership with the Dominion Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Dominion Resources, Inc.

Bluemont Concert Series Artists-in-Education Program of Berryville and Northern Virginia Youth Winds, located in Fairfax, are some of this year's statewide recipients.

Bluemont Concert Series Artists-in-Education Program is the winner of the Regional Shining Star award, with a cash prize of \$5,000. Bluemont's Artists-in-Education (AIE) program works with schools to help integrate cultural and environmental programs into their curricula.

These interactive and vibrant programs blend music, dance, poetry, drama and other arts with history, social sciences, language, life science, reading, geography and literature in an innovative approach to education. The AIE program teaches students creative thinking, an appreciation of cultural diversity, environmental awareness, conflict resolution and much more. AIE's 60 world-class artists include Billy B, who blends zany humor with solid science while teaching children about the environment, and Sparky and Rhonda Tucker, who present programs focusing on the Civil War and the civil rights movement.

"In the fall we had Billy B. come to our school to teach the children about American Indians and in the spring we had the math puppet show 'Sand Castles.' The kids absolutely loved them both," said Rhea S. Lewis, a PTA volunteer at Mary Walter Elementary School in Fauquier County. They are still singing the songs from the math puppet show."

Fairfax's Northern Virginia Youth Winds is the winner of a Rising Star award, with a cash prize of \$1,000. The Northern Virginia Youth Winds, the youth division of the City of Fairfax Band Association, consists of two audition-based ensembles, the Symphonic Winds (grades 9-12) and Junior Winds (6-8). Participants include advanced brass, woodwind and percussion students

from public, private and parochial schools as well as home school teaching environments. Two music directors lead the program supported by four additional instructors. The Youth Winds typically prepare and perform up to 20 works each season with a repertoire that provides a level of intensity and demand that exceeds the curriculum of most school bands.

“I firmly believe that being a member of Northern Virginia Youth Winds has been one of the best decisions I have made in high school. They have encouraged and trusted me in a way that has propelled me into taking ownership of my life and my responsibilities. Their clear expectations and intentional methods of teaching have taught me to put my best into everything I do,” said Wesley, a student from Fairfax.

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.”

“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.

