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Virginians for the Arts Announces 2015 Dominion ArtStars Award Winners

*Arts organization in Richmond recognized
for excellence in arts education*

RICHMOND, VA – A Richmond performing arts educational outreach program has been recognized for excellence in the annual Dominion ArtStars Awards presented by Virginians for the Arts (VFTA), in partnership with the Dominion Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Dominion Resources, Inc.

The School of the Performing Arts in the Richmond Community's (SPARC) STAGES In-School Program is the winner of the Statewide Shining Star award, along with a \$5,000 cash prize.

The program provides in-school performing arts education to second- and third-grade students in nine schools in the City of Richmond and Henrico County, many in economically challenged areas. Under the guidance of highly qualified teaching artists, students experience the process of creating and applying their academic themes or personal experiences into writing, resulting in a performance script. Together they select music, song, movement and dance, all of which culminates in a live performance featuring the students. STAGES helps young people become better students, more confident speakers, team players, problem solvers, more active community members and future leaders.

"The STAGES program made an impact on my son and his classmates because it was not a one-time experience for a select group of kids – the SPARC staff worked with all third graders, once a week for most of the school year, and after many hours of learning and rehearsing, the program culminated in a performance the kids were really proud of," said Anne Hoffler, parent of a Mary Munford Elementary School student in Richmond.

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.

