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The Healing and Engaging Power of the Arts

Read about Jazz St. Louis' "Beats NF" children's program (pg. 9)
Greetings!

Summer is the time of year that St. Louisans turn their attention to getting outside and staying active to improve their health and reduce stress. But did you know that experiencing and creating art has valuable benefits to physical and mental health as well? Several scientific studies in the past few years have resulted in conclusive evidence of the healing power of the arts to help people cope with and meet myriad challenges in their lives.

A University of Westminster study found that cortisol (the “stress hormone”) levels drop when study participants spent their lunch hour visiting an art gallery. Other studies found that stroke victims learn to speak faster if they first learn to sing. And neuroscientists have also found that music stimulates the same areas of the brain as chocolate. So if you’re an emotional eater, put down the candy bar and reach for your iPod!

Another study found that the act of singing releases a positive chemical in the brain referred to as the “bonding hormone.” This is the hormone that engenders feelings of trust and safety. You can read about the power of the arts to build trust in our feature on Annie Donnell (pg. 3). Annie, a recent high school graduate, has sung with the St. Louis Children’s Choirs for the past seven years and tells a remarkable tale about how the arts have enriched her life. It’s an inspiring story!

Also in this issue, you’ll read about Jazz St. Louis’s ground-breaking program, “Beat NF,” that brings children with Neurofibromatosis (a genetic disorder affecting the nervous system) together with jazz musicians and Maryville University therapists to improve motor skills and coordination (pg. 9). We also feature Circus Flora’s “Sensory Circus” for children with attention deficit or spectrum challenges and “Clowns on Call” who bring laughter and healthy distractions to hospitalized children (pg. 5). And finally, STAGES St. Louis’s “Access the Arts” program (pg. 4) includes theater arts workshops, classes and performance opportunities for youth with physical, cognitive or developmental delays.

This Happenings issue focuses on the far-reaching, positive impact of the arts as a tool that provides resilience in the face of some of life’s challenges. Your generous support for the Arts and Education Council helps ensure these truly remarkable outreach programs continue to bring joy and improve the quality of life for so many young people in our community. Thank you!

Cindy
President, Arts & Education Council

On June 7 “Fun Home,” produced by St. Louis-based Fox Theatricals, took home five Tony awards, including best new musical, best actor in a musical (Michael Cerveris), best score, best book and best director (Sam Gold). Accepting the Tony Award is Mike Isaacson (center), Executive Producer of the MUNY; front row is Mary Strauss (second from the right), Fox Theatricals; and back row is Jack Lane (far right), Executive Producer for STAGES St. Louis (an A&E grantee).
Annie Donnell uses words like “joy” and “peace” and “happiness” to describe what singing with the St. Louis Children’s Choirs (an A&E Operating Grant recipient) has meant to her for the past seven years. The experience has been so rewarding that Annie wrote an essay about it as part of her college application process.

“The second riser, in the Soprano Two section, is a place and experience that has changed my life,” the 18-year-old wrote in her essay. “It has given me a passion for music and an understanding of how music can affect others. Through my participation in choir, I have grown in my ability to work with others to achieve a goal – a great performance. The beauty of the music, the splendor of 70 voices in harmony, the sense of belonging – all have added meaning to my life.”

The choirs also have provided Annie with a sense of independence. The recent Ladue Horton Watkins High School graduate is visually impaired and can see only lightness and darkness. Her impairment is the result of retinopathy of prematurity – an eye disease that can affect premature babies and cause the retina to detach.

During high school, Annie explains she was assisted by a paraeducator, who translated her assignments into braille. At choir practice and performances, her friend Catherine guides Annie on and off stage by holding onto her arm.

“Choir has always been a place where I have made strong friendships. It’s always been a really inclusive environment,” said Annie, who also ran track during high school tethered to another runner. “This is especially true in the highest [choir] group, which I have been a part of for two years.”

Barbara Berner, artistic director of the St. Louis Children’s Choirs, says students often tell her how meaningful participation in the Choirs is to them.

“[They] tell us that in choir they have found a refuge from ridicule and bullying at school, problems at home, the stress of academic pressure,” Berner said. “Students say that the Children’s Choirs becomes a second family.”

Annie couldn’t agree more. “My choir family is an integral part of my life, and there is nothing better than making music with people who truly enjoy it,” she said.

“Choir is the place where I create strong friendships, learn complex songs, and gain confidence in my singing ability. It is a stress-free time, a time when thinking about anything else is nonexistent.”

Now in its 37th year, the Children’s Choirs includes 450 young people ages six to 18 from about 200 St. Louis area schools.

Berner says funding from the Arts and Education Council has made a “tremendous difference” because it has provided more than $192,000 to the Children’s Choirs over the past 12 years. A&E grants have enabled the Choirs to provide programming for 20,000 to 40,000 audience members each season and to reach out to children in 34 schools, many of which are in underserved areas. The choir awarded more than $40,000 in financial aid last season to remove barriers to any child’s participation.

This summer, Annie plans to tour Europe with the Children’s Choirs, singing in Germany, Austria and the Czech Republic. “I think the thing I’m looking forward to most is singing in cathedrals,” she said.

This fall, Annie will attend Belmont University in Nashville, Tennessee, where she plans to major in communications and minor in education. She says her goal is to become an elementary education teacher.

And singing?

“Oh yes,” she says laughing. “I definitely plan on auditioning for their choir. I really can’t imagine my life without singing.”

The St. Louis Children’s Choirs is an A&E Operating Grant recipient. For more information, visit slccsing.org.
Opportunity seems to be the guiding principle behind STAGES St. Louis’ “Access the Arts” programs, which consist of classes, workshops and performances for young people with physical, cognitive or developmental delays, allowing them to fully participate in the performing arts.

“To my knowledge, we are the only professional musical theater company in the region that has programming for students with special needs, as well as having them be members of our Performing Arts Academy,” says Tali Allen, director of education at STAGES St. Louis (an A&E Operating Grant recipient). “We provide opportunities to those with special needs who otherwise might never have the chance to perform before an audience on stage.”

Roughly 350 students, including those with Down syndrome, visual impairments and autism, take part in “Access the Arts” programs annually. Many meet weekly for 90 minutes throughout the academic year to develop skills in acting, singing and dance. Students are divided into classes according to grade level, and while costs range from $450 to $570, no one is turned away due to inability to pay.

Special-needs students ages eight and above can also participate in three-week performance camps during the summer, which, like all of the “Access the Arts” programs, culminates in a talent showcase.

In addition, STAGES’ “Troupe Broadway,” an invitation-only program, gives special needs students the chance to be part of an ensemble and perform on stage in a musical revue at various venues throughout the St. Louis area. “Our ATA students memorize their lines and songs, learn choreography and respond to the material just like all of our students at the Academy,” said Allen. “The great thing about musical theater is that everyone can appreciate and have fun with it.”

Both trained artists and special educators teach the “Access the Arts” classes. Katie Hayes is manager of STAGES’ outreach education, which collaborates with area schools to host inclusive classes on their campuses. These classes combine typically developing and special-needs students in workshops that last anywhere from a few months to an entire school year.

“What I notice in most of our “Access the Arts” programs is how many of these kids go from being shy and unaware of their surroundings to more comfortable and confident,” said Hayes. “It’s amazing to see how far they come from when they started.

“I can’t tell you how many parents are surprised and so impressed to see their child speaking in sentences and singing on pitch because they weren’t able to do that before. These programs strengthen speech and movement skills and help them feel comfortable with their body language.”

Allen points out that teachers and artists who work with these kids also get a lot out of the programs. “It’s incredibly demanding on them. They are not just doing a lesson plan because the class can change from moment to moment,” she said. “But it’s incredibly rewarding. We really do feel we are making a positive impact in these students’ lives.”

STAGES St. Louis is an A&E Council Operating Grant recipient. For more information visit stagesstlouis.org.
THE HEALING AND ENGAGING POWER OF THE ARTS:

Circus Flora

Did you know St. Louis is one of only three cities in the United States with an annual resident circus that offers year-round outreach programs? Circus Flora (an A&E Operating Grant recipient) is St. Louis’ own theatre company that blends traditional European circus with modern theatre techniques.

The 2015 Big Top was only up for May and June but Circus Flora continues its outreach programs throughout the year, including “Clowns on Call” and “Tumbling and Teamwork.”

Since 2011, Circus Flora’s “Clowns on Call” program has been bringing circus performers into hospitals to entertain and interact with hospitalized children and their families.

Claire Wedemeyer is one of six performers who make ‘clown rounds’ at SSM Cardinal Glennon and Mercy Children’s hospitals. “A lot of these kids are put in this room and their choices are taken away and they’re in an area where everyone is trying to fix this problem. We’re not there to do that. We spend a lot of time bumping into walls and getting tangled up in curtains and finding difficult ways to put on a robe. It’s a nice change of focus. It gets them color and sound and bright things flying through the air and live music at their bedside and it changes the whole vibration of the atmosphere. And from the parents, at least once a day I hear ‘I haven’t seen my kid laugh in days’ or ‘that’s the first time I’ve seen him laugh since he’s been in here.’”

The only program of its kind in the bi-state region, “Clowns on Call” has impacted more than 3,000 young patients, providing them laughter, music and help through the healing process.

“Tumbling and Teamwork” is a free program that offers students with learning and socialization challenges a chance to practice a variety of circus skills, including tumbling, balance, juggling, clowning and aerial arts though a two month intensive training program. Students train with professional artists to prepare a performance showcase of individual and ensemble acts. By working as a team, students also develop social skills, build self-confidence and have the chance to express themselves creatively.

In addition to work in the community, Circus Flora offers a Sensory Friendly Circus performance during their Big Top show, welcoming to those with autism and other sensory disorders. Circus Flora removes bothersome stimuli, adjusts noise levels and modifies lighting in the show to create an experience that allows everyone to enjoy the magic of the circus.

Circus Flora launched a power2give.org campaign through A&E to raise funds for their first Sensory Friendly Circus performance in 2014. The show was such a success that they included a sensory friendly performance in their 2015 season.

“The efforts of our acting company to create this specially-modified performance were rewarded by the outpouring of appreciation by parents, several of whom, through barely suppressed tears, expressed what it meant for them to attend a live performance together, as a family, and not have others stare or pass judgment at their child for spinning to express excitement, or clapping too long or needing to exit and return several times,” said Circus Flora’s director of development, Susan Mintz.

Circus Flora, an A&E Operating Grantee and tenant in the Centene Center for Arts and Education, has a variety of shows and programs throughout the year. For more information, visit circusflora.org.
ON-GOING DISCOUNTS WITH THE ARTS CARD

✓ JAZZ ST. LOUIS
Offers 2-for-1 admission to most of its 9:30 pm shows Wed-Thurs at Jazz at the Bistro. For details call 314.571.6000 or go to jazzstl.org

JULY EVENTS

CIRCUS HARMONY
Flying Trapeze Center
WHEN: Through Aug. 31
WHERE: Union Station at 18th and Market, under the train shed
COST: $60-$400
DISCOUNT: Get a 20% discount for individual flights or a pack of 5 flights by using code ARTScard20 when registering online or by phone.

Come soar through the air with the greatest of ease and safety at the Circus Harmony Flying Trapeze Center! This is a place where you can slip the bonds of gravity and see how it feels to fly! 314.504.4298 or circusharmony.org

STAGES ST LOUIS
Anything Goes
WHEN: July 17-Aug. 16, Tues through Sun with matinee and evening performances
WHERE: Robert G. Reim Theatre, 111 South Geyer Rd., Kirkwood
COST: $20-$57
DISCOUNT: 2-for-1 admission with ARTS Card for Tues-Thurs evening performance

The tap sensation! All aboard for an uproarious and tune-filled trip across the Atlantic where “Anything Goes”! 314.821.2407 or StagesStLouis.org

UNION AVENUE OPERA
Mozart’s Don Giovanni
WHEN: July 10, 11, 17, 18, all shows at 8 pm
WHERE: Union Avenue Opera, 733 Union Blvd., St. Louis
COST: $30-$52
DISCOUNT: $5 off regular ticket price (excludes Patron tickets and Student Rush) at the door and by calling the box office (Limited to two tickets per card.)

Long considered one of the greatest operas of all time, Don Giovanni tells the tale of Spanish nobleman Don Giovanni as he travels through Europe seducing women and leaving behind a trail of broken hearts, broken promises and broken lives. (Presented in Italian) 314.361.5664 or stlshakespeare.org

CINEMA ST. LOUIS
St. Louis Filmmaker’s Showcase
WHEN: July 19-23, various times
WHERE: Tivoli Theatre, 6350 Delmar Blvd., University City
COST: $12 adults, $10 students with valid ID and Cinema St. Louis members
DISCOUNT: $10 admission with ARTS Card

The Showcase screens works written, directed, edited or produced by St. Louis natives or films with strong local ties. The films range from full-length fiction features and documentaries to multi-film compilations of fiction and documentary shorts. Many programs include post-screening Q&As with filmmakers. 314.289.4152 or cinemastlouis.org

ST. LOUIS SHAKESPEARE
The Further Adventures of Hedda Gabler
WHEN: July 31-Aug. 9; Thurs, 7:30 pm; Fri-Sat, 8 pm; Sun, 2 pm
WHERE: The Ivory Theatre, 7620 Michigan Ave., St. Louis
COST: $15-$20
DISCOUNT: 2-for-1 admission with ARTS Card

Beginning immediately after Henrik Ibsen’s classic, The Further Adventures of Hedda Gabler is a comical adventure with many of drama’s famous characters. Hedda wakes up to find she must relive her tragic story whenever Ibsen’s play is performed, so she sets out to change her destiny. 314.361.5664 or stlshakespeare.org

UNION AVENUE OPERA
Verdi’s Rigoletto
WHEN: July 31 and Aug. 1, 7, 8, all shows at 8 pm
WHERE: Union Avenue Opera, 733 Union Blvd., St. Louis
COST: $30-$52
DISCOUNT: $5 off regular ticket price (excludes Patron tickets and Student Rush) at the door and by calling the box office (Limited to two tickets per card.)

Rigoletto is Verdi’s tense and brutal tale of a deformed court jester who is caught in a snare of corruption, lechery and vengeance in this action-packed opera filled with a parade of brilliant music including “La donna è mobile.” (Presented in Italian) 314.361.2881 or unionavenueopera.org

2015 ST. LOUIS CABARET FESTIVAL
Jason Robert Brown
WHEN: July 23 at 8 pm
WHERE: The Sheldon Concert Hall, 3648 Washington Boulevard, St. Louis
COST: $40-$100
DISCOUNT: 2-for-1 admission with ARTS Card for $45 tickets only. Purchase online at Metrotix.com and use the code: ArtsEd.

Three-time Tony Award® winner Jason Robert Brown makes his solo St. Louis debut. He is an equally talented composer, lyricist and performer – with sold out performances of his solo concerts around the world.

UNION AVENUE OPERA
Verdi’s Rigoletto
WHEN: July 31 and Aug. 1, 7, 8, all shows at 8 pm
WHERE: Union Avenue Opera, 733 Union Blvd., St. Louis
COST: $30-$52
DISCOUNT: $5 off regular ticket price (excludes Patron tickets and Student Rush) at the door and by calling the box office (Limited to two tickets per card.)

Rigoletto is Verdi’s tense and brutal tale of a deformed court jester who is caught in a snare of corruption, lechery and vengeance in this action-packed opera filled with a parade of brilliant music including “La donna è mobile.” (Presented in Italian) 314.361.2881 or unionavenueopera.org

Events Key

- Cinema
- Classical
- Dance
- Jazz
- Music
- Speaker
- Theater
- Visual Arts
AUGUST EVENTS

UNION AVENUE OPERA
Wagner’s Götterdämmerung

WHEN: Aug. 21, 22, 28, 29, all shows at 8 pm
WHERE: Union Avenue Opera, 733 Union Blvd., St. Louis
COST: $30-$52
DISCOUNT: $5 off regular ticket price (excludes Patron tickets and Student Rush) at the door and by calling the box office (Limited to two tickets per card.)

Wagner’s tale of gods, mortals and giants draws to a close in Götterdämmerung (Twilight of the Gods); watch as the Rhine overflows, Valhalla burns and the kingdom of the gods is destroyed in this epic conclusion to UAO’s four-year Wagner Project. (Presented in German) 314.361.2881 or unionavenueopera.org

ST. LOUIS SHAKESPEARE
Wild Oats

WHEN: Aug. 21-Aug. 30; Thurs, 7:30 pm; Fri-Sat, 8 pm; Sun, 2 pm
WHERE: The Ivory Theatre, 7620 Michigan Ave., St. Louis
COST: $15-$20
DISCOUNT: 2-for-1 admission with ARTS Card

Switching the locale of the action from the drawing room of Restoration England to the saloons and prairies of the Old West, the playwright holds onto the hilariously convoluted structure that has made the original play a timeless delight. 314.361.5664 or stlshakespeare.org

MUSTARD SEED THEATRE
The Amish Project

WHEN: Aug.-Sept. 13, Thurs-Sat, 8 pm; Sun, 2 pm
WHERE: Fontbonne University Fine Arts Theatre, 6800 Wydown Blvd., Clayton
COST: $25-$30
DISCOUNT: $10 off admission with ARTS Card

Reactions to a school shooting in an Amish community lead us to the crossroads of grief and grace. 314.719.8060 or mustardseedtheatre.com

ENJOY FOR FREE

CONTEMPORARY ART MUSEUM
Occupational Therapy

WHEN: Through Aug. 16
WHERE: 3750 Washington Blvd., St. Louis
The exhibition features artwork by 20 renowned artists from the 1960s to the present, encompassing a wide range of media—Occupational Therapy expresses and addresses a variety of psychological conditions, both real and imagined, made manifest by artistic practice. Gallery hours are 10 am-5 pm Wed, 10 am-8 pm Thurs-Fri, 10 am-5 pm Sat-Sun, closed Mon-Tues. 314.535.4660 or camstl.org

LAUMEIER SCULPTURE PARK
Docent Led Tours

WHEN: July 5 and Aug. 2, 2 pm
WHERE: 12580 Rott Rd., Sunset Hills

Enjoy walking tours of the Outdoor Collection on the first Sundays of July and August. Laumeier tours are interactive and designed for participants to come away with an appreciation of the complex relationships among art, nature and humans. Participants are advised to wear comfortable shoes and dress appropriately for the season. 314.615.5278 or laumeier.org.

CRAFT ALLIANCE
Biennial Faculty Exhibition

WHEN: July 17-Aug. 16
WHERE: Craft Alliance, 6640 Delmar Blvd., University City

Every two years the creative work of the artists who instruct in the studios of Craft Alliance Center of Art + Design are exhibited. Gallery hours are 10 am-5 pm Tues-Thurs; 10 am-6 pm Fri-Sat, 11 am-5 pm Sun, closed Mon. 314.725.1177 x325 or craftalliance.org

WORKPLACE GIVING: Ameren Corporation’s 30th Annual Campaign

Ameren Corporation recently completed its 30th annual workplace giving campaign for the Arts and Education Council of Greater St. Louis. During this year’s week-long fundraising effort, Ameren welcomed several A&E grantee organizations that performed for and entertained employees who contributed more than $113,000 to A&E’s “One Gift. A Million Returns!” annual campaign. In addition, Ameren made a corporate gift of $95,000 bringing the firm’s 2015 giving to just over $208,000.

Engaging and encouraging employees to support the arts and arts education since 1986, Ameren has contributed more than $2.9 million to the Arts and Education Council of Greater St. Louis.

Jim Maniaci (center) of Ameren Corporation with clown performers entertaining at Ameren’s workplace giving campaign event. Photo courtesy of Ameren Corporation.
Opera lovers have one more reason to love the summer – Union Avenue Opera’s 21st season opens July 10 with Mozart’s Don Giovanni. Union Avenue Opera, an Arts and Education Council PNC Project Grant recipient, will put on three operas during July and August: Don Giovanni July 10 to 18, Verdi’s Rigoletto July 31 to August 8 and Wagner’s Götterdämmerung August 21 to 29, all performed in the intimate setting of Union Avenue Christian Church.

“I’m looking forward to bringing three new operas into the UAO repertoire. Though all three offerings are standard repertoire – they are all new to our stage,” says Scott Schoonover, Union Avenue Opera artistic director and conductor. “Over the years we have done plenty of Mozart, Verdi and now Wagner, but somehow after twenty years we are just now coming to these three masterpieces. It’s amazing to discover the breadth of the operatic genre – there is so much to explore! I can’t wait to hear our orchestra bring life to these three wonderful scores.”

“Audiences can expect classic productions of all three operas. We have an exciting blend of new singers and many friends from past seasons returning to our stage,” continues Schoonover. “Each of these three stories is powerfully dramatic and takes actors with a certain gravitas to pull them off believably. Similarly we have three wonderful directors (Jon Truitt, Tim Ocel and Karen Coe Miller) at the helm for these productions. We always try to hire directors that are committed to engaged story-telling and the ‘theater’ of opera.”

Union Avenue Opera was founded in 1994 by Schoonover with support from the Arts Group of Union Avenue with the goal of bringing affordable, professional, original-language opera to St. Louis. Union Avenue’s first production was Purcell’s Dido and Aeneas in the summer of 1995.

This year’s production of Götterdämmerung marks the end of a four-year endeavor to present Wagner’s Ring cycle. “I am so glad and grateful that we took it on. It has certainly been a growing experience for me, for our singers, orchestra and our production crew. It has stretched all of us and in the end we are a stronger company for having taken on such a challenge.”

Bringing affordable opera to St. Louis audiences is only part of Union Avenue Opera’s mission. It is also dedicated to providing professional development opportunities to emerging artists. UAO prides itself on hiring based on ability rather than resume to provide promising singers a stepping stone for their professional careers. UAO also offers “Crescendo” – a free, hands-on, performance-based training program designed to further the education of emerging local artists who are preparing to join the St. Louis arts community. The program gives undergraduate voice students the opportunity to work with Union Avenue Opera professionals and compete for scholarships and paid chorus positions in UAO productions.

Union Avenue Opera is an A&E PNC Project Grant recipient. To learn more and purchase tickets visit unionavenueopera.org.

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**TEEN TALENT COMPETITION:**

**Fox Theater Performing Arts Foundation**

The Arts and Education Council presented a trio of teen musicians with a “Keep Art Happening” Scholarship at the Fox Theater Performing Arts Foundation Teen Talent Competition. The winners were: Christian X.M. McGhee, drummer, age 16, junior at Westminster Christian Academy; Race Simmons, vocalist, age 15, sophomore at Maplewood-Richmond Heights High School; and Connor Low, guitarist, age 15, sophomore at Liberty High School.

Emcee Ben Nordstrom (left), with scholarship winners Connor Low, Race Simmons, Christian X.M. McGhee and Cynthia A. Prost, president of the Arts and Education Council (right).
A new program created by Jazz St. Louis (an A&E Sustaining Grant recipient), St. Louis Children’s Hospital and Washington University Neurofibromatosis (NF) Center is addressing frequently delayed skills in children with Neurofibromatosis Type 1 (NF1). The program, called “Beat NF,” combines jazz and physical therapy to promote socialization and improve gross motor skills in youngsters ages two to five with NF1.

“Dr. David Gutmann, who is a season subscriber at Jazz at the Bistro, is also director of the Washington University NF Center. He felt a program that blended the improvisational aspects of jazz with physical therapy would be greatly beneficial for these kids,” said Phil Dunlap, director of education for Jazz St. Louis. “The idea was to use jazz in an interactive way to help children improve their gross motor skills but make it so much fun, they wouldn’t even know they were getting therapy.”

NF1 is a genetic condition that affects one in 2,500 individuals worldwide. It affects almost every organ system, causing a predisposition for tumors to grow throughout the body. Children with NF1 can also struggle with autism, developmental delays, learning problems and attention deficit.

Dunlap explains that with input from a physical therapist at Children’s, he and a Maryville University music therapist wrote most of the jazz for the program. “The music is designed to get the kids to do certain actions aimed at building their gross motor skills,” Dunlap said. “This includes making eye contact, improving coordination, following directions and playing instruments.”

To date, there have been three five week sessions, with a fourth session planned for this summer. Sessions are free and each has attracted between six and eight children and their parents. “We start each class with a welcoming song that’s meant to help these kids build confidence in a social setting,” said Dunlap. “The song is interactive so each child will stand up and say their name in front of the group. It’s a big thing for these kids to stand up and feel comfortable in front of others.”

Each class also introduces a “mystery instrument” through puzzle pieces the children assemble. A special guest is then revealed to play the mystery instrument, said Dunlap. Other songs are designed to get the children limber and working on motor movements, including shaking hands and navigating a small obstacle course.

“Our physical therapist measures the motor capability of children at the start of each session,” explained Kirsten Brouillet, Team NF Coordinator at Washington University Neurofibromatosis (NF) Center, which administers the program. “She noted that a child who couldn’t balance at all on one foot was either doing so or was close to doing so by the fifth [week].” Another parent said her child’s speech pathologist noticed improvement over the time her child was in the Beat NF class.

Trish Brennan, the mother of four-year-old Connor, said the program allowed her son to practice skills that are challenging for him in the context of something he loves: music.

“He would always share the instrument that was introduced in class and an interesting fact that he learned,” she said. “I’m not even sure he realized that he was working on the gross motor skills because the activities that were planned were engaging and fun. As parents, we appreciated the observant eyes of the professionals as well as getting the opportunity to meet other families affected by NF1 [through this program].”

Brouillet added prior to the program there was no group therapy program in place to work with NF1 children at such a young age. “We hope getting started with these kids this early will significantly help to improve their gross motor skills by the time they get to school,” she said.

Dunlap adds that tweaks to the program could create broader appeal. “We feel it could be a component of many early childhood programs and help children with all kinds of developmental delays and attention deficit,” he said. “We are exploring ways that we could use this program in the St. Louis public schools and bring it into early childhood programs.”

More information about NF1 can be found at nfcenter.wustl.edu.

Jazz St. Louis is an A&E Operating Grant recipient. For more information visit: jazzstl.org/education-outreach.
Circle of Giving
April 1, 2015 – May 31, 2015

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WORKPLACE GIVING:
Edward Jones Exceeds Goal

Edward Jones recently completed its 2015 Workplace Giving Campaign to benefit the Arts and Education Council and its nearly 70 grantee organizations. Led by the campaign partner chair, Vanessa Halim, and co-chairs, Sharon Norman and Mike Fross, the 2015 headquarters campaign exceeded its $530,000 goal; raising more than $586,000 to-date. Over 300 Edward Jones associates and partners volunteered on the campaign committee creating fun and engaging ways to learn about A&E, its grantees and to contribute to the arts in our community. Edward Jones managing partner, Jim Weddle, spoke at several campaign activities and kickoffs, rallying associates and partners around the company's long-standing history of giving back to the communities in which it associates and clients live, work and play. In recognition of and partnership with associates and partners' outstanding personal commitments to A&E, Edward Jones made a $305,000 corporate investment in A&E as well, bringing the firm's total 2015 commitment to over $891,000 to date. Edward Jones will continue its A&E Workplace Giving initiative this fall with a campaign involving area financial advisors and branch office associates, chaired by region leader Melissa Lenz.

Edward Jones has supported the Arts and Education Council for more than 20 years; during which time the company and its associates have invested more than $8.1 million in arts and arts education throughout the bi-state, metropolitan region.

To make your gift to the Arts and Education Council, visit KeepArtHappening.org or contact Kate Francis, Vice President of Development at (314) 289-4003.
Centene Center for Arts and Education  
3547 Olive Street  
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The Centene Center for Arts and Education  
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For rental information contact Susan Rowe Jennings at 314.289.4004 or Susan-R@KeepArtHappening.org