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DATE: June 14, 2017

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**More Than \$82 Million Awarded for Arts Projects Nationwide by NEA
Includes \$20,000 grant awarded to Baltimore School for the Arts**

Baltimore, MD—National Endowment for the Arts Chairman Jane Chu has approved more than \$82 million to fund local arts projects across the country in the NEA’s second major funding announcement for fiscal year 2017. Included in this announcement is an Art Works award of \$20,000 to the Baltimore School for the Arts Foundation to support TWIGS, a free multidisciplinary arts education program for students from underserved communities. The NEA received 1,728 Art Works applications and will make 1,029 grants ranging from \$10,000 to \$100,000.

“The arts reflect the vision, energy, and talent of America’s artists and arts organizations,” said NEA Chairman Jane Chu. “The National Endowment for the Arts is proud to support organizations such as the Baltimore School for the Arts, in serving their communities by providing excellent and accessible arts experiences.”

“This is the first time in TWIGS’ history that it has received one of these highly competitive grants by the National Endowment for the Arts,” said Dr. Chris Ford, director of the Baltimore School for the Arts. “We’re absolutely thrilled; more importantly, it enables us to be able to serve more of Baltimore’s children, who might not have access to arts opportunities otherwise.”

BSA’s TWIGS program offers free classes in dance, vocal and instrumental music, stage production and design, theatre, visual arts, and visual storytelling to students in the second through eighth grades who reside in the City of Baltimore and who qualify by audition. Auditions are held in the spring for the following school year. Each year, the program serves about 700 students from 60+ Baltimore City Public Schools.

In each area of concentration, classes were carefully developed by both experienced artists and specialists in early childhood education and are taught by professional artist/teachers selected for their skill in working with younger students. TWIGS also serves as a feeder to the highly selective high school, currently ranked the top public school in Baltimore City by *U.S. News and World Report*.

HelloTWIGS! serves four schools in areas of Baltimore City in which BSA currently has limited or no representation in TWIGS or our high school programs. Each Saturday, BSA brings by bus about 70 students from Tench Tilghman Elementary/Middle School, Armistead Gardens, Lakeland Elementary/Middle, and Maree G. Farring Elementary/Middle School to BSA to attend a class in dance, visual arts or theatre, and to eat a healthy lunch.

TWIGS received an Art Works II grant. Art Works is the NEA's largest category and focuses on funding the creation of art that meets the highest standards of excellence, public engagement with art, lifelong learning in the arts, and strengthening of communities through the arts.

Competition for NEA grants is significant. In this second funding round for FY 2017, the agency received 2,063 eligible applications. The value of NEA funding is not only its monetary impact but also its reputation. An NEA grant confers a seal of approval, allowing an organization to attract other public and private funds beyond the required 1:1 match. In 2016, the ratio of NEA dollars to matching funds was 1:9 or \$500 million.

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The Baltimore School for the Arts is a nationally recognized public arts high school that provides its students with intensive pre-professional training in the arts in conjunction with a rigorous academic curriculum. BSA graduates go on to the most selective arts and university programs nationwide and achieve prominence in theater, film, music, dance, and the visual arts. Additionally, the BSA's highly acclaimed TWIGS program offers free after-school arts instruction to 700 city elementary and middle school children from schools across Baltimore, as well as other outreach initiatives to thousands more. Founded in 1979, the school is an integral and vibrant part of Baltimore's educational and cultural communities.

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