

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today, I represent two organizations, Partners for Arts Education and the Arts & Culture Leadership Alliance of Central New York.

Arts & Culture Leadership Alliance (ACLA) is a collective of executive leadership from over 30 arts & cultural organizations, with an additional membership of “friends” from many colleges/universities, social/business agencies, and individual professional artists.

We know that creativity in the 21st century economy is being raised by researchers as a valuable commodity in the US to drive peace and prosperity for our global future. Millions of dollars in this region alone are generated by cultural activities.

Partners for Arts Education (PAE) provides support for integration of the arts into everyday student learning for schools, arts, cultural, community organizations, and individual artists in every county in the state of New York.

PAE has a special commitment to upstate New York right now, as we are located in Central New York, and have developed a new initiative titled “Arts in Mind” with the Syracuse City School District and an enthusiastic body of economic, cultural stakeholders.

Studies show that the arts are most valuable when they are a relevant and regular part of community and educational life. When they are not set aside as a “special” and when engagement in visual or performing art-making is consistent, then critical thinking skills, social achievement, and academic rigor are increased in multiple dimensions.

Both organizations believe that New York arts and cultural strength will come from restoration of funding for the NYS Council on the Arts (NYSCA) to its original 1989 level of \$59 million. This current year brought a significant increase to \$49 million, and we hope to continue this trend. Since NYSCA dollars are decentralized, local agencies have the democratic power to shape distribution and capacity-building.

Partners for Arts Education also encourages the inclusion of Legislative Bill A8685 for the Cultural Education Department that will provide \$30 million for educational services in cultural institutions to fund curriculum-based educational programs for elementary and secondary students

We are proud to acknowledge that local interests in this budget also include aid to upstate symphony orchestras, individual artists, and school improvement.

I am closing with some simple data for the record:

A 2007 sample survey* of only 18 regional cultural organizations showed:

- Total full & part time employment is 998. (210 full time, 255 part time, 542 contract)

- Total attendance is over one million people, exceeding attendance at ticketed collegiate (739,000) or non-collegiate (550,000)sports events.
- Over 160,000 students were served,
- Total spending: \$19,117,722
- Total earned and contributed income: \$18,460,457
- If the arts were treated as one company, the total employment would place it 20th among the top 25 employers in Onondaga County just after Welch Allyn and just before Excellus Blue Cross/Blue Shield.

The recent “Brain Drain” summit led by first-lady Silda Spitzer, relied on many Central New York cultural voices, we hope that all of our leaders see the arts as an economic catalyst, as she does.

Thank You.

** Sources available on request.*

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