

**THE FIRST LADY CALLS ON COMMUNITY PARTNERS TO
RECOGNIZE THE POWER OF THE ARTS IN EDUCATION**

September 17, 1998

First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton today spotlighted the critical role of the arts in education. In a White House ceremony, Mrs. Clinton spoke to members of the Arts Education Partnership about the power of the arts in children's education. Mrs. Clinton highlighted the important progress made in the field of arts education in recent years, and called for further attention. In particular, Mrs. Clinton stressed how national policies and partnerships can support local arts education efforts. She applauded the commitments of the partners present, including the Head Start Bureau, and welcomed new partners, including the CBS Corporation and VH1, both of whom announced their companies' commitments to arts education.

BUILDING ON THE CLINTON ADMINISTRATION'S COMMITMENT TO ARTS EDUCATION. The Clinton Administration is committed to making the arts basic to every child's education. In the *Goals 2000: Educate America Act of 1994*, the Administration added "arts" to the core subjects listed among the National Education Goals. In addition, the *Improving America's Schools Act of 1994* (the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act) includes language highlighting the power of the arts to strengthen education. In 1995, the National Endowment for the Arts and the U.S. Department of Education established the Arts Education Partnership to assist national, state and local arts education advocates to include the arts in the education improvement efforts supported by *Goals 2000* funding. Since then, the Partnership has been able to track at least \$10 million in awards to local arts education applicants through the various State departments of education and has since expanded its work beyond its initial *Goals 2000*.

For the first time since the 1970's, American students have been tested on their knowledge and skills in the arts through the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) program. The NAEP program, or the "Nation's Report Card" tests to determine students' academic achievement; the inclusion of the arts in its test underscores the significance of the arts as important academic material. The results of the NAEP program will be released in November 1998. The National Endowment for the Arts and the U.S. Department of Education both supported the development of the National Standards for Arts Education with which the NAEP test was aligned.

ARTS EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP. The Arts Education Partnership is a private, nonprofit coalition of education, arts, business, philanthropic, and government organizations that demonstrates and promotes the essential role of arts education in enabling all students to succeed in school, life, and work. The Arts Education Partnership was formed in 1995 through a cooperative agreement between the National Endowment for the Arts, the United States Department of Education, the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies, and the Council of Chief State School Officers.

The Arts Education Partnership will produce a handbook on Partnerships for Arts Learning in the Spring of 1999. The Partnership will also release a report highlighting school districts that value arts education in November 1998, in conjunction with the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, the GE Fund, the MacArthur Foundation, Binney and Smith, Inc. and the U.S. Department of Education.

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Highlights of the Partnership's commitments include:

- **THE HEAD START BUREAU.** The HHS Head Start Bureau, a member of the Arts Education Partnership, revised its program performance standards in January, 1998, adding a standard in the arts for its 2,000 centers around the country. The Bureau is now creating materials to assist its centers' staff and parents to implement creative learning experiences for their children. Recent research conducted at a Head Start site suggests a link between early childhood instruction in musical keyboards and the development of important brain synapses which support spatial-temporal ability.
- **AMERICANS FOR THE ARTS/CBS CORPORATION.** Michael Jordan, Chair of the Board of non-profit Americans for the Arts and CEO of the CBS Corporation, announced the creation of Youth Arts USA. The initiative is a national, multi-year effort of Americans for the Arts to bring much-needed attention to the value of the arts in the lives of America's children. There are three main parts to the initiative: research, policy development and a public awareness campaign. As part of the public awareness campaign, CBS Corporation is producing public service announcements and contributing air time for broadcasting them. The PSA's will begin airing in October, National Arts and Humanities Month, and will reach millions of viewers.
- **VH1 SAVE THE MUSIC MILLENNIUM COMMITMENT.** Earlier in the day, VH1 President John Sykes joined the First Lady at the Marie H. Reed Community Learning Center to announce its donation of \$100,000 worth of musical instruments to three D.C. schools as part of a total \$1.3 million contribution nationwide. At the White House event, VH1 announced its 10-year commitment to raise \$100 million to benefit one million children. *Save the Music* is an initiative of VH1 to raise money and collect old instruments to donate to school instrumental music programs. A receiving school must commit to hire or retain a certified music specialist and to keep the instrumental program as part of the school day. In each of the 16 cities in which *Save the Music* now operates, VH1 has a local cable partner who airs public service announcements, and, of course, school partners who implement the instrument instruction.

Members of the public can call the U.S. Department of Education's toll-free at 1-877-4ED-PUBS to receive a copy of *Eloquent Evidence: Arts at the Core of Learning* and a *Guide to Arts Education and School Improvement Resources for Local and State Leader* or visit the Partnership's web site at <http://aep-arts.org> for further resources.