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ArtsWave Kicks Off Annual Community Fundraising Campaign Chaired by Triversity Construction's Mel Gravely

CINCINNATI (February 4, 2025) – The 2025 ArtsWave Community Campaign — the region's primary source of funding for the arts and the largest community arts campaign in the nation — launched today at the Cincinnati Art Museum's new Marek-Weaver Family Commons. **Mel Gravely, 2025 Campaign Chair and Executive Chair of Triversity Construction**, led the kickoff, welcoming community and arts leaders, including guest speaker **Cincinnati Mayor Aftab Pureval**, to rally support for this year's campaign.

Cincinnati's Arts Sector Fuels Regional Growth

The 2025 ArtsWave Community Campaign launches amid a wave of cultural momentum for the Cincinnati region. Last year's **BLINK, illuminated by ArtsWave**, broke attendance records, drawing over **2 million visitors** to Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky. Cincinnati was ranked among the **top 20 most arts-vibrant regions** in the U.S. for the fourth consecutive year by SMU Data Arts and USA Today named the region **#1 in the nation for street art**.

This year, Cincinnati's growing reputation as a national arts hub will be further reinforced when ArtsWave partners with **Americans for the Arts to host its national convention in the city for the first time**. Additionally, many ArtsWave-supported organizations are expanding their reach with new and revitalized spaces: The historic Emery Theater is being restored by **The Children's Theatre of Cincinnati**, the **Fitton Center for Creative Arts** is opening a satellite education facility in West Chester, **ArtWorks** debuted its new home in Walnut Hills, the **Clifton Cultural Arts Center** opened its new facility, **FotoFocus** is building a permanent home, the **Cincinnati Art Museum** recently unveiled the Marek-Weaver Family Commons and more.

Reflecting on this momentum, Gravely emphasized, "As I look around the region in 2025, I see growth and vitality fueled by the arts. This didn't happen by accident. It happened through decades of intentional and consistent investment in arts organizations, artists and creative spaces by folks in the region. ArtsWave's unique

model of garnering annual community-wide support is the foundation for our arts sector's success."

"Discover Together" Why Our Arts Matter

The 2025 campaign theme, "**Discover Together**," highlights the power of the arts to build connections. Gravely underscored the importance of this theme, saying, "The arts help us create understanding and bridge divides. Every regional achievement we've highlighted reflects this, and each new or revitalized arts space strengthens that connection. We experience the arts together. They help us discover the way forward together. Now, we need to support them — together."

ArtsWave President & CEO **Alecia Kintner** reinforced the need for continued investment, "Each year since 1927, our community has come together to build a stronger region through the arts. The stable foundation built over these many years pays dividends today as we witness firsthand how the arts are shaping our region's identity."

Continuing Success: Early Momentum in 2025

Gravely emphasized the importance of this campaign building on last year's record-breaking success, saying, "We know that we can look forward to amazing results this year. We also know there may be headwinds. 2024 was an extraordinary year chaired by Jon Moeller and Lisa Sauer. But, the \$12.5 million raised last year for the arts should not be an anomaly, it should be the foundation for the future. It's how we keep arts groups strong, how we keep kids experiencing field trips, how we keep our region's cultural vibrancy. Our goal is to continue this fabulous momentum for the 2025 campaign and beyond."

That momentum is already taking shape. Gravely announced that the **Executive Leaders Challenge** has gained strong early traction, thanks to the efforts of his campaign cabinet of volunteers (list below) and to a generous challenge grant from the **Greater Cincinnati Foundation**, which matched the first 100 gifts of \$5,000 or more with an additional \$500. As of the kick-off, that number had been reached with more contributions still coming.

How to Support the Campaign

ArtsWave funding supports **150+ local arts organizations, projects, and artists**. Donations come from individuals in workplace giving campaigns at more than 200 regional companies, special fundraising events and direct giving at artswave.org/give. As a thank-you, ArtsWave offers exclusive donor benefits, such as Reds and Music Hall tickets, behind-the-scenes experiences with FC Cincinnati and arts organization and exclusive events and affinity groups.

The **2025 ArtsWave Community Campaign runs through the end of May**. To donate or learn more, visit artswave.org. To download the new ArtsWave App, visit artswave.org/app or search in your preferred app store.

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About ArtsWave

ArtsWave, the local nonprofit arts agency serving the Greater Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky region, is the engine for the arts. Its roots stem back to the late 1920s when the Cincinnati Taft family provided initial investment matched by community support. In the late 1940s, it established the first United Arts Fund in the nation and, in the mid-1970s, the first organization to initiate workplace giving for the arts. ArtsWave continues to innovate while leading, as illustrated by its No. 1 rank nationally in community arts fundraising, coordination of a sector-wide Blueprint for Collective Action, piloting of new technologies to maximize arts engagement and development of resources for the arts. Each year, ArtsWave raises millions of dollars from tens of thousands of donors — corporations, employees, foundations, residents and others — to support more than 150 arts organizations, projects and artists. In 2024, ArtsWave raised a record \$12.5 million through its annual campaign from individuals, businesses and foundations to further the region's strategic growth goals. Donations to the 2025 ArtsWave Campaign can be made at artswave.org/give.

2025 ArtsWave Campaign Cabinet

2025 ArtsWave Community Campaign Chair Mel Gravely has recruited a team of corporate leaders and community volunteers for the 2025 campaign.

Mel Gravely, Chair

Candace McGraw, Vice Chair

Laura Berkemeier, Ignite
Philanthropy
Kim Best, CVG
Kelly Bonnell, Constellation
Wealth Advisors
Jody Brant, Katz Teller
Archie Brown, First
Financial Bank
Brendon Cull, Cincinnati
USA Regional Chamber
Ryan Dunlap, Triversity
Kay Geiger, Retired PNC
John Gray, Fifth Third Bank

Devon Greco, BE NKY
Growth Partnership
Leon Hampton, Dinsmore
Amy Hanson, Amy Hanson
Advisory Services
Don Hogle, Atomic Robot
Todd Immel, Deloitte
Steve Kenat, SHP
Marcene Kinney, GBBN
Jes Laine, Guaranteed
Rate, The DiBari Laine
Group
Danny Lipson, Urban Sites
Samuel Moore, Jr., Retired
P&G
Amber Ostaszewski,
Cincinnati Symphony
Orchestra

Matthew Randazzo,
Greater Cincinnati
Foundation
Jackie Reau, Game Day
Greg Riley, Schaefer
Cheryl Rose, Constellation
Wealth Advisors
Kitty Strauss Rosenthal,
Community Volunteer
Lisa Sauer, Retired P&G
Kate Smith, Wood, Herron
& Evans
Tim Steigerwald, Messer
Construction Co.
Warren Weber, PNC
Tira Williams, TriHealth