Contact: Ryan Strand
Vice President, Marketing & Communications
513.632.0148; ryan.strand@artswave.org

ArtsWave recognizes arts leaders, looks ahead to centennial at Annual Meeting

CINCINNATI (Nov. 9, 2026) — ArtsWave celebrated the past year's accomplishments and looked ahead to its 2027 centennial at its annual meeting earlier this week. The organization shared results from its 2026 Community Campaign, recognized outstanding cultural leaders, elected new trustees and officers and approved funding for 30 arts projects across the Cincinnati region.

The meeting highlighted ArtsWave's tradition of collective support for the arts and its plans to build on that legacy for future generations.

"Nearly 100 years ago, Charles and Anna Sinton Taft challenged Cincinnatians to come together in support of the arts," said Debbie Hayes, ArtsWave Board Chair and president and CEO of The Christ Hospital Network. "That commitment has continued through generations of community leadership and generosity. As we begin our centennial, we have an opportunity to build on what they started and shape the next century of arts in our region."

Community impact and campaign results

ArtsWave President and CEO Alecia Kintner shared highlights from the organization's 2026 Community Report, including the results of the **2026 ArtsWave Community Campaign, which raised more than $12 million from more than 20,000 donors**.

"Our community continues to show what is possible when people invest in the arts together," said Kintner. "That support allows us to strengthen the organizations that make our region distinctive while finding new ways to connect more people to the arts.

As we approach our centennial, we're focused on building the audiences, participation and support that will sustain the arts for generations to come."

Kintner also highlighted the recent release of the **ArtsWave App 2.0**, part of the organization's efforts to connect more people with the arts and create new opportunities for ongoing support. The app makes it easier to discover local arts experiences and access exclusive deals. For $9.99 per month, members can enjoy discounts and special offers while supporting the region's arts.

The full 2026 Community Report is available at artswave.org/report.

ArtsWave honors cultural leaders

ArtsWave recognized two recipients of the 2026 Rosa F. and Samuel B. Sachs Fund Prize, honoring outstanding contributions to the cultural life of Greater Cincinnati.

- **Carmon DeLeone**, Music Director Emeritus of Cincinnati Ballet, was recognized for his decades of musical leadership and contributions to the region's performing arts community.
- **Mark Patsfall**, artist and founder of Clay Street Press, was honored for his own work and his support of generations of artists, helping establish Cincinnati as a center for fine art printmaking.

ArtsWave also acknowledged **Saida Lewis and Daniel Chimusoro**, previously named recipients of the inaugural t.t. stern-enzi Filmmaker's Award, and highlighted the Lazard and Coralie L. Kahn Scholarship, presented in partnership with the Art Academy of Cincinnati.

New grants approved

ArtsWave trustees approved **30 grants totaling $169,144** for arts projects in fiscal year 2027 through three affinity-based grant programs. These investments reflect ArtsWave's ongoing commitment to engaging more people in the arts and supporting creative experiences that represent the region's diverse communities.

These three grant programs focus on engaging specific communities through arts experiences that reflect their interests, identities and perspectives and are funded by members of the respective affinity groups.

The grants include:

- **Twelve ArtsWave Pride Grants totaling $82,206**, supporting projects that engage and highlight the LGBTQ+ community.
- **Nine ArtsWave Young Professionals Grants totaling $47,250**, encouraging young professionals to connect with the region's arts and each other.

- **Nine ArtsWave Circle Grants totaling $39,688**, supporting projects centered on Black and **African American** arts experiences.

For more information about these and all of ArtsWave's grants, visit artswave.org/funding.

Board leadership elected and thanked

- Trustees elected six new members to three-year terms: Allison Chapman of Deloitte, Leon Hampton of Dinsmore, Joel Kashuba of Fifth Third Bank, Jennifer Knight Zelkind of Women Writing for a Change, Larry Krauter of CVG and Sonya Walton of Messer.
- Trustees also elected two new members for one-year ex-officio terms: Jennifer Damiano, President of Cincinnati Shakespeare Company and Linda Holthaus, President of Summermusik. Bob Bitter was elected for a term concurrent with his role has President of Cincinnati Opera.
- Debbie Hayes was re-elected Board Chair, with Kala Gibson as Vice Chair, Joe Muraca as Treasurer, Megan Shaffer as Secretary and Alecia Kintner as President.
- ArtsWave also thanked outgoing trustees Ron Bates, Caroline Hyatt, Katy Sheehan, Vada Hill, Thanh Pham, Phil Duncan and Mu Sinclaire for their service.

Looking ahead to ArtsWave's second century

With its centennial approaching, ArtsWave is looking beyond the milestone itself to the investments and community commitments that will shape the next 100 years.

Tim Spence, Chairman, President & CEO of Fifth Third Bank and Chair of ArtsWave's Second Century Campaign, challenged the community to build on a century of collective support for the arts by growing ArtsWave's endowment and expanding annual giving. Together, these efforts will help ensure the region's arts continue to thrive for generations to come.

"We've inherited something extraordinary from the Cincinnatians who came together 100 years ago," said Spence. "Now it's our turn to build on that legacy and make the same kind of commitment for the next 100 years. By growing permanent support and increasing annual participation, we can make sure our arts remain a defining strength of this region for generations to come."

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About ArtsWave

ArtsWave fuels the Cincinnati region's arts, supporting 150+ organizations, projects and artists each year. Founded in 1927, ArtsWave marks its centennial in 2027 as the primary way the Cincinnati region collectively funds the arts. Each year, tens of thousands of individuals, businesses and foundations give through ArtsWave to drive a more vibrant economy and connected community. Through the Blueprint for Collective Action, ArtsWave strategically makes investments that maximize the arts' impact across the region. Learn more and give at artswave.org.