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youngARTS™ FINALISTS NOMINATED TO RECEIVE GREAT WHITE HOUSE HONOR

The Presidential Scholar Nominations Are In!

MIAMI (January 22, 2009) – What do the White House, ballet slippers and a saxophone have in common? They all connect to youngARTS™ and their exclusive relationship with the Commission on Presidential Scholars. youngARTS is the core program of the National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts (NFAA) and is the sole nominating agency for this division of the U.S. Department of Education and the Presidential Scholars in the Arts Program. NFAA has nominated 60 youngARTS Finalists for consideration by the Commission on Presidential Scholars. From the complete list of nominees, approximately 20 of these students will receive this incredible recognition; they will be honored at the White House as well as show their artwork at the Smithsonian Institution and perform at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in June of 2009.

Christina DePaul, the President and CEO of youngARTS says, “We are so proud of all our exceptionally talented students and I am thrilled to witness their success. This is just the beginning for these students; they have proven without a doubt that they are the best of the best in the nation.” The students selected as Presidential Scholars in the Arts stand toe to toe with the most brilliant minds in our country. They represent the leaders of the future. President Obama is expected to be present at the ceremony to honor all the Presidential Scholars, including the Presidential Scholars in the Arts. “In these dark, challenging economic times it is great to see the light from these students who will be the ones to lead us to a brighter future,” adds DePaul.

youngARTS celebrates and rewards exceptional student artists from across the U.S. in each of nine artistic fields: cinematic arts, dance, jazz, classical music, photography, theater, visual arts, voice and writing. Selected from thousands of applicants across nine disciplines, 140 of the “best of the best” won the right to travel to Miami this year for **youngARTS Week**, an all-expense paid gathering that included master classes, workshops, readings, exhibitions and performances. It was not a vacation for these students; they were being adjudicated the entire time and then the 60 nominees were then selected and presented to the Commission on Presidential Scholars. Inclusion in the Presidential Scholars Program, now in its 45th year, is one of the highest honors bestowed upon graduating high school seniors. Each year 141 Scholars, including up to 20 Scholars in the Arts, are selected on the basis of superior academic and artistic achievements, leadership qualities, strong character and involvement in community and school activities.



This year, over 3,000 students are eligible for the program's academic component, based on outstanding scores on the SAT or ACT exam. Of these, 121 will be selected as Presidential Scholars.

The complete list of youngARTS Finalists who have been nominated as Presidential Scholars in the Arts:

Holden Brown, Cinematic Arts, Mandeville, LA
Gabriel Gomez, Cinematic Arts, Brooklyn, NY
Georgianna Gyzen, Cinematic Arts, Irvine, CA
Ernest Baker II, Dance, Opa-Locka, FL
Ryan Casey, Dance, Lexington, MA
Jeniffer Criss, Dance, Dallas, TX
John Crowley, Dance, Ballston Lake, NY
Hannah Darrah, Dance, Durham, NC
Vidya Govind-Thomas, Dance, Schaumburg, IL
Daniel Mitra, Dance, Woodstock Valley, CT
Raymond Pinto, Dance, Bridgeport, CT
Nathaniel Trasoras, Dance, Downey, CA
Ben Benack III, Jazz, Pittsburgh, PA
Kate Davis, Jazz, West Linn, OR
Armand Hirsh, Jazz, New York, NY
Gi-Young Hwang, Music, Brea, CA
Andrea Jarrett, Music, Saline, MI
Benjamin Lash, Music, Evanston, IL
Emily Levin, Music, Centennial, CO
Yuqing Meng, Music, Madison, NJ
Leann Osterkamp, Music, Boulder, CO
Christopher Pell, Music, Bronx, NY
Nathaniel West, Music, Columbus, OH
Allen Yueh, Music, Bridgewater, NJ
Julia Kellman, Music, Pacific Palisades, CA
Annie Wentzell, Music, Ocean Springs, MS
Adam Anderson, Theater, Laxahatchee, FL
Rachel Clausen, Theater, Moorehead, MN
Nicholas Druzbaniski, Theater, Marietta, GA
Olivia Harris, Theater, Dallas, TX
Carl Johanson, Theater, Dresden, ME
Steven Johnson, Theater, Rockford, IL
Emily Koch, Theater, Sherman Oaks, CA
Khadija Rolle, Theater, Hialeah, FL
Devyn Tyler, Theater, Pearland, TX
Priscilla Aleman, Visual Arts, Miami Lakes, FL
Peter Ferguson, Visual Arts, Fairfield, PA
Becca Goodman, Visual Arts, Owings Mills, MD
Meagan Jenigen, Visual Arts, Richmond, VA
Diana Lozano, Visual Arts, Greenacres, FL
Jasmine Nones-Newman, Visual Arts, Miami, FL



Michael Okey, Visual Arts, Lauderdale Lakes, FL
Jordan Pemberton, Visual Arts, Tecumsch, MI
Thomas Rust, Visual Arts, Chesterfield, MO
Joshua Arky, Voice, Brooklyn, NY
Byron Becker, Voice, Hillsborough, CA
Julian Cook, Voice, Chicago, IL
Eryn LeCroy, Voice, Belle Mead, NJ
Miles Mykkanen, Voice, Bessemer, MI
Nicole Rood, Voice, Pelham, NY
McKenna Whisler, Voice, Pittsburgh, PA
Celia Bell, Writing, Baltimore, MD
Trent Creswell, Writing, Chattanooga, TN
Monica Fleisher, Writing, Kirkwood, MO
Ryland Marsh, Writing, Brooklyn Park, MN
Jasmine Miller, Writing, Nashville, TN
Maggie Millner, Writing, Cherry Valley, NY
Kevin Morrell, Writing, New York, NY
Neha Parthasarathy, Writing, Simpsonville, SC
Emily Reit, Writing, Coronado, CA

For information about how to register for the 2009 NFAA youngARTS program, please call 1-800-970-ARTS (2787) or visit www.youngARTS.org.

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About youngARTS™:

youngARTS™ is the core program of the National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts (NFAA). youngARTS identifies the nation's most talented high school seniors in nine different disciplines in the performing, literary and visual arts. The program offers unique educational opportunities as well as scholarships and awards to artists who demonstrate extraordinary talent. youngARTS is based on the belief that the arts sustain their power only if they are continually renewed and refreshed by the vigor and perspective of young artists. Since 1981 youngARTS has facilitated more than \$80 million in scholarships for higher education institutions throughout the country and has gifted over \$6 million in awards. youngARTS is the exclusive nominating agency to The Commission on Presidential Scholars for the annual selection of the Presidential Scholars in the Arts; the selected few receive their awards at the White House each summer. Alumni include Broadway actors, award-winning playwrights, published authors and numerous esteemed musicians and visual artists. Christina DePaul, an accomplished, award-winning artist and educator, is the new President and CEO of youngARTS. For more information, please visit www.youngARTS.org.

About Presidential Scholars: A complete list of candidates will be available on the program's web page at <http://www.ed.gov/programs/psp/awards.html> (case sensitive). Semifinalists will be announced early April and Scholars in May. News media without Internet access may call 202/401-1576 for a list of candidates by state. For more



information about the student(s), contact the student(s) directly. The United States Presidential Scholars Program was established in 1964, by Executive Order of the President, to recognize and honor some of our Nation's most distinguished graduating high school seniors. In 1979, the Program was extended to recognize students who demonstrate exceptional talent in the visual, creative and performing arts. Each year, up to 141 students are named as Presidential Scholars, one of the Nation's highest honors for high school students. The Scholars represent excellence in education and the promise of greatness in young people. In honoring the Presidential Scholars, the President of the United States symbolically honors all graduating high school seniors of high potential.