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Howard County Arts Council Receives \$10,000 Grant from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) to Support Head StART in ART

Ellicott City, MD— The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) announced that the Howard County Arts Council (HCAC) has been awarded a \$10,000 *Learning in the Arts for Children & Youth* grant for its Head StART in ART program.

In FY2000, the Howard County Arts Council developed a partnership with the Ellicott City Head Start Center to establish an artist-in-residence program. This partnership, *Head StART in ART*, provides the Head Start students with an in-depth, hands-on artistic experience they might otherwise never have, and ensures them access to the arts. Many are introduced to the arts and a professional artist for the first time and experience the joy and wonder of artistic expression. The opportunity for such an experience during these formative years can have a key impact on the children's future appreciation of and involvement in the arts, as well as improve language learning skills.

Last year, mixed media artist, Caryl Henry Alexander, storyteller, Noa Baum, and Daniel Barash of the Shadow Puppet workshop brought the arts into the Head Start classrooms. Mixed media artist, Caryl Henry Alexander organized a workshop series for students to create animal masks inspired by art from Mexico. Students learned paper maché techniques and painted details on the animal masks by using mixed media and collage. Storyteller, Noa Baum's residency program demonstrated the telling of a story and learning about one's heritage and culture. Students recreated stories through movement, songs, and games. Shadow puppeteer, Daniel Barash and the Shadow Puppet Workshop introduced students to different types of puppets; such as finger puppets, hand puppets, marionettes and pop up puppets. Students created their own shadow puppets and incorporated these puppets into the interpretation of songs. Project funding will help bring in visiting artists who will provide integrated arts activities for students throughout the 2009-10 school year.

The Head Start Program is a federally funded program that has been helping low-income families and pre-school children across the country since 1965. Head Start offers pre-school programs for 3, 4, and 5 year-old children from low-income families by providing them with a stimulating and educational experience in a group setting. This worthwhile program gives the children a "head start" towards a successful future.

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Ensuring that children of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities have the opportunity to have access to the arts in school is an important goal of the Howard County Arts Council. Head StART in ART is one of several initiatives developed to meet that goal.

Please call 410-313-2787 or see the website for more information: www.hocoarts.org.

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The Howard County Arts Council is a non-profit organization whose mission is to serve the citizens of Howard County by fostering the arts, artists and arts organizations. The Howard County Arts Council receives major grants from the Howard County Government and the Maryland State Arts Council and sustaining annual support from corporate, foundation and individual sponsors. Howard County Arts Council offices are located at the Howard County Center for the Arts, 8510 High Ridge Road , Ellicott City , MD 21043 . The Howard County Center for the Arts is an accessible facility encouraging the full participation of individuals with disabilities. For information, call 410.313.ARTS (2787), fax 410.313.2790, or email info@hocoarts.org. TDD: 711