



Local Arts Agency Awarded \$100K for Innovative Program

Seattle, Washington - June 11, 2015 - The Washington Women's Foundation yesterday announced an award of \$100,000 to Path with Art, a local nonprofit that brings new voices into the cultural mainstream. The organization offers high quality arts courses, exhibitions and events to adults with little access to the arts: adults in recovery from homelessness, addiction, mental illness and other trauma.

"I've found my calling," says a poet named Pam, who at 45 is still dealing with the repercussions of extreme abuse in childhood. Through Path with Art poetry classes led by poet Tara Hardy, Pam found a means of healing as well as connecting to a healthy community centered on art. *"I've never felt part of a community. I've never felt part of anything in my life. And coming to these classes regularly...I mean feeling part of something... I never knew the benefits until coming here."*

The agency is one of the only nationwide that gives this fragile adult population the means and venues to tell their stories through art. Hardy, an award-winning poet, vouches for the program's results. *"The Path with Art students I teach create some of the best writing I come into contact with all year."*

Taught by well-known local artists, six hundred students can be served annually in the organization's multi-disciplinary courses ranging from visual art and music to writing and theater. Students are referred by 30 social service partners like Catholic Housing Services, Recovery Café and Plymouth Housing.

"I love the Symphony," says Deena, a low-income Path with Art student in her late 60s, *"but I couldn't go because I couldn't afford a ticket. Now, I can."* Path with Art provides free, guided access to the symphony, the opera, theaters and museums by working in concert with 25 local arts partners.

Holly Jacobson, the agency's Executive Director, explains that many students were isolated, depressed and even suicidal – prior to their involvement with the organization. "Reconnecting with self and community changes that. We see it over and over," she says.

The grant from the Washington Women's Foundation will have a tremendous impact on the young and growing organization. Jacobson says the funds will be used to support a plan to strengthen the organization's infrastructure to support the rapid growth in student population. She believes these underrepresented individuals add valuable diversity to the Seattle's arts community. "Visitors to our exhibits and performances see our students beyond the lens of stereotypes. Art reveals our shared humanity."

WWF President Beth McCaw says, "Path with Art submitted a compelling proposal to our membership. Their programs use art and the power of creative engagement to stabilize the lives of their students and make a positive impact on our community. We are proud to support their work."

A public exhibit of Path with Art's students' visual art will be on view First Thursday, July 2, at The Ninety, the newly opened Sounders FC event space on Occidental off Jackson.

For further information, contact Holly Jacobson, holly@pathwithart.org; 206 650-0669

About Washington Women's Foundation: Washington Women's Foundation educates, inspires and increases the number of women committed to philanthropy in order to strengthen community and demonstrate the impact that can result from informed, focused grant-making. The WWF Pooled Fund Grant Awards are determined annually by a vote of the Foundation's full membership. The Foundation's members, now more than 500 strong, have invested \$15 million of their own resources in nonprofit organizations over the last 20 years. Membership is open to all women interested in philanthropy.

For more information, visit www.wawomensfoundation.org.

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