

**For Immediate Release**

**Arts Street**

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**Creative Youth Take Flight: La Alma Connection**

National Endowment for the Arts, Rose Community Foundation and Denver Arts & Venues  
join hands with Denver youth at Arts Street

*Denver*— Through Arts Street’s LA ALMA CONNECTION project, Denver’s underserved high school to college-age youth will participate in sustainable Urban Design and Creative placemaking to improve the traffic congestion along Santa Fe during First Friday ArtWalks.

Encouraging the use of light rail transit will help solve the parking shortage at the Denver Art District on Santa Fe. At present, the five-block walk on 10<sup>th</sup> Ave is a major barrier and has little appeal for pedestrian use. By integrating functional art and community activities into the streetscape, the project will help activate and encourage alternative transportation. This process will leverage the creative energy of youth and apply them toward public infrastructure development to better the community affected by the traffic problems.

“Problem solving is the most important skill we teach at every level,” said Arts Street Executive Director Stella Yu. “Together with cognitive learning and collaboration through teamwork, youth at Arts Street apply their natural creative talents, and find that they can fly if they want to.”

Arts Street youth will partner with Denver Public Works, the La Alma Lincoln Park Neighborhood Association, artists, residents, and businesses to research and design a Master Art Plan and installation of public art that connects the nearby light-rail station to the Art District. This year-long project will be documented and broadcast through public media.

The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) has honored Arts Street with a \$25,000 Our Town award. Mayor Hancock of the City & County of Denver has selected Arts Street as the sole Denver applicant. In addition, Rose Community Foundation has funded a \$30,000 Innovate for Good companion grant to realize this youth-driven effort. Denver Arts & Venues is also supporting the project through the IMAGINE 2020 Fund by allocating \$2,500 toward “Creative Youth Tell the Story,” which will enable young people to document the placemaking process and the July 2016 community celebration with broadcasting through Denver Open Media. “We are thrilled that our funders recognize that the arts are more than entertainment, that they are most powerful when integrated into life as creative solutions for the betterment of society,” Yu added. “We thank our sponsors for their innovative approach to grants funding, allowing small organizations to make big impact to our communities.”

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**NEA Our Town Award:**

Arts Street is one of 69 National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Our Town projects selected nationwide. NEA Chairman Jane Chu announced awards totaling almost \$5 million through the Our Town program's

fifth year of funding to support creative placemaking projects that help to transform communities into lively, beautiful, and resilient places with the arts at their core. The NEA received 275 applications for Our Town this year and will make grants ranging from \$25,000 to \$200,000. For a **complete listing of projects** recommended for Our Town grant support, please visit the NEA web site at <http://arts.gov>. The NEA's online resource, [Exploring Our Town](#), features case studies of more than 70 Our Town projects along with lessons learned and other resources.

"Arts Street demonstrates the best in creative community development and whose work will have a valuable impact on its community," said Chairman Chu. "Through Our Town funding, arts organizations continue to spark vitality that support neighborhoods and public spaces, enhancing a sense of place for residents and visitors alike." Arts Street is also a 2004 National Arts and Humanities Youth Program, formally Coming up Taller, award recipient, one of five in Colorado. <http://www.nahyp.org/past-awardees-and-finalists/page/8/>

**Rose Foundation *Innovate for Good* Award:**

Through a competition aimed at making the Greater Denver community better, Arts Street's Creative Youth Take Flight – La Alma Connection is one of 9 projects among nearly 400 proposals awarded by Rose Community Foundation based on innovation, creativity, feasibility and the ability to make a measurable difference within a year.

Rose Community Foundation uses leadership, grantmaking and donor engagement to invest in strategic and innovative solutions to enduring problems and emerging issues. Since Rose Community Foundation's inception in 1995, it has donated more than \$277 million aimed at improving Denver. Info at: [rcfdenver.org/innovateforgood](http://rcfdenver.org/innovateforgood)

**Denver Arts & Venue *IMAGINE 2020* Award:**

Denver's Cultural Plan is Denver's first cultural plan since 1989. Denver Arts & Venues and the Denver Commission on Cultural Affairs launched the new IMAGINE 2020 Fund to support new, creative and innovative programs inspired by one or more of the seven vision elements outlined in the IMAGINE 2020 plan and that further develops Denver's creative landscape. The seven vision elements are Integration, Amplification, Accessibility, Lifelong Learning, Local Talent, Economic Vitality and Collective Leadership. Arts Street is among the 15 funded projects to amplify art, culture and creativity in Denver. For more information, please visit <http://artsandvenuesdenver.com>