

THE PORTLAND CREATIVE CONFERENCE GIVES BACK

Funds raised at the creative industries event support various K-12 arts education programs in Oregon

Portland, Ore. (March 8, 2016) – Keeping the Arts, a nonprofit that supports K-12 arts education programs in Oregon, has announced financial support for several programs as a result of funds raised at the 2015 Portland Creative Conference. Including the new grants, Keeping the Arts has distributed over \$85,000 to support such programs.

Programs selected to receive financial support from Portland Creative Conference proceeds are:

- Burns High School in Burns, OR to support band and choir programs
- Caldera Arts Center in Sisters, OR to support their arts programs for underserved youth.
- Children’s Repertory of Oregon Workshops in Florence, OR to support their production of Shrek, the Musical, JR., which will have a kids cast and crew of 50 and will be seen by 1,500+ kids in the community of Florence.
- Valley Catholic High School Theater Department in Beaverton, OR to purchase new microphones for their theater productions, to enable all performers to be heard clearly by the audience.

“The Portland Creative Conference as a systemic event,” said Steve Gehlen, Conference Chairman and Co-Founder of Keeping the Arts. “We produce an event that offers creative industries professionals an opportunity for new ideation, inspiration and connections. Then we use a high percentage of the proceeds to support the development of the next generation of creative professionals.”

The 2016 Portland Creative Conference will take place on Friday September 23rd in the Gerding Theater at the Armory.

"The grant from Keeping the Arts means a lot to my band and choir students. Because of this support we can now cover the expenses needed to get to our district band festival and also take our choir on a field trip in May that would otherwise not have happened," said Kyle Ruggles, director of the Burns High

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School band and choir. "I see these events as part of the healing process the kids are going through after a difficult couple of months in our community related to the refuge occupation."

Supporting arts education programs in rural Oregon is a priority for Keeping the Arts. Several members on the organization's Board of Directors were raised in such communities.

"Grants from Keeping the Arts help Caldera artists and designers mentor youth from underserved communities. This is crucial. If young people have the opportunity to exercise their creative muscles within a supportive community, they go on to apply their creative learning in all areas of their lives." Said Caldera Executive Director Tricia Snell. "We love that the Portland Creative Conference sees the value of supporting the next generation of creative thinkers. I have no doubt that some of them will someday be on the stage at the Conference."

Oregon-based arts education programs can apply for grants from Keeping the Arts at <http://keepingthearts.org/grants/grant-application-form/>

About the Portland Creative Conference

The Portland Creative Conference is an interdisciplinary exploration and celebration of the creative process across various creative industries. Past speakers include Spike Lee (director), Dan Wieden (advertising guru), Steve Buscemi (actor), Chelsea Cain (author), Chris Carter ("X-Files" creator), D'Wayne Edwards (Nike, Penske), Courtney Taylor-Taylor (The Dandy Warhols), and Brynn Bardacke (Coca-Cola). The next event is scheduled for September 23, 2016. The conference is produced by a volunteer team led by event Chairman Steve Gehlen. For more information, visit <http://www.cre8con.com>

About Keeping the Arts

Keeping the Arts is an Oregon-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit public charity dedicated to providing financial support to various K-12 arts education programs in Oregon, with a focus on rural Oregon communities. The organization is managed by a volunteer Board of Directors led by co-founder and Board President Steve Gehlen. For more information, visit <http://www.keepingthearts.org>

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