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LATINO ARTS STRINGS PROGRAM TO RECEIVE COMING UP TALLER AWARD IN WASHINGTON, D.C.



(WASHINGTON, D.C.) The Latino Arts Strings Program, a Milwaukee-based initiative that offers musical training and performance opportunities to area youth, is being nationally recognized as one of 18 youth arts and humanities programs to receive the prestigious 2008 *Coming Up Taller Award*. Youth and adult representatives of the program will travel to Washington, D.C., for an 11:00 a.m., November 14 ceremony, where they will accept the award.

Coming Up Taller is an initiative of the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities (PCAH). The President's Committee partners with the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) to administer the program, which was founded in 1998.



The Coming Up Taller Awards recognize and support outstanding community arts and humanities programs that celebrate the creativity of America's young people, and provide them with new learning opportunities and a chance to contribute to their communities. The awards also highlight the contributions that historians, scholars, librarians and visual and performing arts make to families and communities by mentoring children. More than 350 nominations were received by the program in 2008.



By not focusing on what's missing, but rather on what's possible for at-risk youth, the Latino Arts Strings Program sets a high-standard for these individuals, offering rigorous sequential string musical training. Latino Arts provides instruments and music to students in grades 1-12 from a predominantly Latino section of south Milwaukee and individual and small-group lessons in violin, viola, cello and guitar. Students from the Wisconsin Conservatory of Music and the University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee assist the program faculty.



Participants in the program often perform in mariachi bands, youth orchestra and guitar ensembles at community festivals. These performances raise awareness of Latino music, building self-confidence, skills and a sense of new possibilities among the young musicians. The program has demonstrated significant results in leading the youth toward productive behaviors. They are expected to practice daily, and adult family members are required to sign a log that confirms they have done so. Among 5th grade Strings Program participants, the average Reading GPA increased

from 2.81 to 3.45 over a two year period. The program also establishes a strong foundation for students who wish to pursue careers in music. The Milwaukee Youth Symphony Orchestra currently includes 17 Latino Arts Strings participants.

“This music program has become a wonderful journey for all the students, not only in the exploration of music, but in the exploration of personal potential. In this program we help students push beyond their limits in order to find their dreams by giving them the tools they need to succeed,” said Dinorah Marquez, Creator and Director of the Latino Arts Strings Program.

“Arts and humanities activities have a wonderful way of enabling young people to discover their unique talents and Coming Up Taller programs help light the fires of curiosity and creativity in young people, using the discipline that arts and humanities require to learn about themselves and explore the world around them interests while forging a path to success in school and life,” said Adair Margo, Chairman of the President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities. “Those who commit themselves to learning how to play these instruments are demonstrating the amazing things that can be accomplished through hard work and dedication to this challenging art form. Meanwhile they’re creating beautiful music to inspire their families and friends throughout the Milwaukee area.”

The President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities bridges the interests of federal agencies and the private sector, supports special projects that increase participation, and helps incorporate the humanities and the arts into White House objectives. The National Endowment for the Arts is a public agency dedicated to supporting excellence in the arts, both new and established; bringing the arts to all Americans; and providing leadership in arts education. Because democracy demands wisdom, the National Endowment for the Humanities serves and strengthens our Republic by promoting excellence in the humanities and conveying the lessons of history to all Americans. The Institute of Museum and Library Services is an independent federal grant making agency dedicated to creating and sustaining a nation of learners.

For more information please visit the following Web sites:

Latino Arts: www.latinoartsinc.org

Coming Up Taller: www.cominguptaller.org

President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities: www.pcah.gov

National Endowment for the Arts: www.arts.gov

National Endowment for the Humanities: www.neh.gov

Institute of Museum and Library Services: www.imls.gov

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