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Any Given Child receives PNC Arts Alive grant to help launch *Lift Every Student*

[PNC Arts Alive](#) has awarded Any Given Child (AGC) Jacksonville a \$20,000 grant in support of [Lift Every Student](#), an artists-in-schools residency program in which Jacksonville artists will be embedded in Duval County Public Schools and paired with educators to merge the arts with other academic areas. The first four artists will begin their residencies this academic year.

AGC Jacksonville, an initiative led by the Cathedral Arts Project, worked in partnership with Duval County Public Schools and the Cultural Council of Greater Jacksonville to identify and support four local artists to pilot the first year of this program. AGC is pleased to announce that local artists Lucy Chen, Sarah Crooks, Valerie Esguerra and Erin Kendrick have been selected and will be working with the staff, faculty and students at [John Love Early Learning Center](#), [Hyde Grove Early Learning Center](#), [Hyde Park Elementary School](#), and [Smart Pope Livingston Elementary School](#), respectively.

In 2016, these schools were selected to become the district's first to focus on arts integration as a whole-school model for learning. Lift Every Student will align with and enhance the schools' curriculum and academic goals in and through the arts in an ongoing effort to turn around student enrollment and achievement.

"I think everyone involved in the project was encouraged by the immediate interest we saw from the community," said Allison Galloway-Gonzalez, executive director of AGC Jacksonville. "The pool of professional artists who applied was extremely strong. Our final four artists are incredibly talented, connected to the community, and deeply committed to supporting students. We are so thrilled that our partners in this effort are working with us to make this a great model for the future."

This program will empower students through proven success of arts integration; non-arts educators to learn new techniques in teaching from a unique one-on-one collaborative partnership; and local Jacksonville artists to utilize their art as an educational tool and build new professional skills. These partners will come together to excite, engage and provide long-term benefits to these public schools and their communities.

According to a statement from the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, "when students learn through arts integration, they are engaged in experiences in which they actively build and demonstrate their understanding of both the art form and the other curriculum area."

Lift Every Student is the only residency program of its kind in the region. Arts integration uses the power of the arts to make subjects like math, science, social studies and English more accessible to all types of learners and ensures a depth of knowledge retention in these subject areas that is only achievable with project-based activities. This program is part of a multi-pronged approach to promote equitable development in Jacksonville and integrate the arts into all of Jacksonville's communities.

Additional funding for this program comes from the generous support of David Engdahl, a local artist who, earlier this year, pledged the entirety of his own recent Ann McDonald Baker Art Ventures award to this program's inception.

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Any Given Child Jacksonville is uniting diverse stakeholders that include Duval County Public Schools personnel and students, arts organizations, artists, and business and community leaders. We have worked ceaselessly to raise awareness and build capacity to ensure every K-8 student in Duval County receives access to a high-quality arts education. Learn more at capkids.org/agcjax.

PNC Arts Alive has supported arts and economic development since its debut in 2009, awarding approximately \$13 million in grants to enterprising cultural organizations in Columbus, OH; Philadelphia, PA; and St. Louis, MO, served by PNC, through funding delivered by the PNC Foundation, which receives its principal funding from The PNC Financial Services Group. PNC Arts Alive has supported new exhibitions and festivals, pop-up theater and music performances, mobile arts vans, family arts programs and more. This award-winning program has earned recognition from Americans for the Arts, along with regional arts organizations.

Lucy Chen is chair of the music department at Edward Waters College, founder of the Keys on Parade group piano program for children, and has taught piano at Boston University and the University of Florida. As a performer, Ms. Chen made her concert debut in 2014 at Weill Recital Hall in Carnegie Hall. Highlights of her career include performances at the Music Teachers National Association conference at the Oberlin Conservatory, the Liszt Bicentennial Celebration at the Boston Tsai Performance Center, and the Spring of Shanghai concert series at the He Lu Ding Concert Hall in Shanghai. Ms. Chen received her Doctor of Musical Arts in piano performance from Boston University.
www.lucychenstudio.com

Sarah Crooks, an eco-feminist artist, has had her multifaceted works commissioned for hospitals, libraries, science centers, healing spaces and private homes. Awarded the Ninah May Holden Cummer Award in 2016 for artfully connecting people with the environment, she teaches, creates and frolics in Jacksonville, FL. Exhibited throughout the Eastern United States, her projects have received major funding from Florida Blue and The Community Foundation. Earning her Bachelor of Fine Arts from the University of North Florida (1989), she studied botanical illustration at the New York Botanical Garden (1997-1999) and became a certified Florida Master Naturalist in 2014. A seasoned champion of the discarded and wild, more about her work can be found at www.artistsarahcrooks.com

Valarie Esguerra is a creative who believes we all embody great stories that connect us as human beings. As a Jacksonville native, Valarie grew up writing, directing and producing plays for her church, as well as acting in the local community theatre circuit. She graduated from the University of South Florida with dual degrees in communications and English, with an emphasis in theatre. Since 2004, she has served as a story and dialogue consultant on made-for-television movies airing on NBC and the WB, and has created and developed original show ideas for The Blaze Network and The Hallmark Channel. In addition to scriptwriting and consulting, Valarie continues to write, direct and produce stage plays. She enjoys mentoring the youth of our city as a volunteer for The Pulse Christian Youth Center.

Erin Kendrick is a visual artist from Jacksonville, FL, whose color-rich, acrylic ink-stained works seek to inspire a dialogue about contemporary spectatorship and the power of language as it relates to perceptions of and about black women. She has exhibited in museums, galleries and alternative spaces throughout the Southeastern United States. After receiving her formal art training at Florida State University (BFA, studio art, 1999) and Georgia State University (MFA, drawing and painting, 2003), she worked for many years as a studio artist and art educator in Atlanta, GA. In 2009, she relocated to build a career as an event and graphic designer. She currently works as a program and event coordinator at the University of North Florida and an adjunct professor at Columbia College.
<https://erinkendrick.wordpress.com/>