



Arts Education: Lift Every Voice **Discussing equity and race in arts education**

Jacksonville, Fla. (February 1, 2017) – Any Given Child Jacksonville is proud to present *Arts Education: Lift Every Voice* on Thursday, January 14, at WJCT Public Broadcasting. Inspirational keynote speaker Sonia Manzano, of *Sesame Street* fame, will share her journey from theatre student to pioneer for Hispanic women in television. A panel discussion will follow, featuring local and national arts education experts, which will delve into the importance of identifying and closing the gaps in arts education, especially as they impact students of color.

A VIP reception with Manzano and the panelists will take place at 6 p.m., followed by the keynote presentation and panel discussion at 7 p.m. The entire program will be filmed by WJCT and edited for television with a local air date to be announced later this year. Tickets to the event can be purchased at <https://capkids.ejoinme.org/AGC>.

The panelists include Dr. Mai Dinh Keisling, visual arts educator at Paxon School for Advanced Studies; Mario Rossero, senior vice president of education for the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts; Stanford Leon Thompson, founder & artistic director of Play On, Philly!; and Rev. Kimberly L. Hyatt, president & CEO of the Cathedral Arts Project.

“I think it has a terrible impact when you don’t see yourself reflected in the society because then you get the feeling you don’t belong,” said Manzano.

“Among the many benefits of arts education is its ability to show children that there are multiple perspectives,” said Hyatt. “It empowers us to create community-oriented environments in which the marginalized are pulled out of the shadows and their voices are lifted. Arts education is truly a rare equalizing factor that has the power to blur the lines across the socioeconomic racial spectrum.”

Cultural Fusion, a collective of cultural organizations in Jacksonville, has adopted the theme of “Lift Every Voice” for its collaborative efforts in 2016 to support members of the community who have historically gone unheard. This event is a proud part of an important conversation in our community.

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***Any Given Child Jacksonville** is uniting diverse stakeholders that include Duval County Public Schools personnel and students, arts organizations and 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.*

Sonia Manzano has affected the lives of millions since the early 1970s as the actress who defined the role of Maria on the acclaimed television series *Sesame Street*. Sonia was twice nominated for an Emmy Award as best performer in a children series and has won fifteen Emmy Awards for her television writing. She is also the author of picture books *No Dogs Allowed* and *A Box Full of Kittens* published by Simon and Schuster. Sonia's first YA novel *The Revolution of Evelyn Serrano*, published by Scholastic, was a Pura Belpre honor, winner of the CLASP Americas Book Award, and acclaimed by Kirkus as a "stunning debut." Sonia's Christmas picture book with Simon and Schuster, and a memoir with Scholastic were just published this year.

Dr. Mai Dinh Keisling emigrated from Vietnam in 1982 after living in three refugee camps for a year. She received her Bachelor of Fine Arts in painting and ceramics from Jacksonville University and her Master of Arts in teaching math and art. Dr. Keisling completed her Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership at the University of North Florida in July 2015, focusing on how community leaders' leadership behaviors influence K-12 educational policies, specifically examining cultural and ethnic/minority groups' means of advocacy and activism in the community. She currently teaches sculpture, AP art history and IB art at Paxon School for Advanced Studies.

Mario Rossero is responsible for the overall planning, management and supervision of the programs and operations of the Kennedy Center's Education Division. Mr. Rossero previously served as the Chief of Core Curriculum for Chicago Public Schools, providing leadership and strategy to offer a robust education for all students, including literacy, mathematics, science, social science, the arts and global citizenship. Prior to this role, he served as the Director of Arts Education, leading the charge to increase equity and access to all art forms through the first ever district-wide Arts Education Plan. From 2010-11, Mr. Rossero, a practicing visual artist, served as the Senior Program Officer for Arts Education for Pittsburgh Public Schools. From 2004-10, he served in various roles in Chicago Public Schools, including Director of Magnet Schools and Programs.

Stanford Thompson is a musician and educator who is passionate about using music for social action. He is the Founder and Artistic Director for the El Sistema-inspired program, *Play On, Philly!* and the Chairman of El Sistema USA. He also serves on the boards of the Interlochen Center for the Arts, the Philadelphia chapter of the American Composers Forum, Jubilee School, and as Chairman of The Curtis Institute of Music Alumni Council. He regularly contributes to the communities of TED, League of American Orchestras, and El Sistema inspired initiatives around the world. Trained as a professional trumpeter, Mr. Thompson has performed and soloed with major orchestras around the world while actively performing chamber music and jazz. He is a native of Atlanta, GA, and holds degrees from the Curtis Institute of Music and the New England Conservatory's Abreu Fellows Program.

Reverend Kimberly L. Hyatt brought a diverse background to the Cathedral Arts Project when she became President & CEO in 2002, earning her Bachelor's degree from Presbyterian College in Clinton, SC, and her Master's degree from Princeton Theological Seminary. She moved to Jacksonville in 1996, after working as a business lobbyist in Washington, D.C. Rev. Hyatt serves on the Board of Governors for the Jacksonville Regional Chamber of Commerce, the Board of Trustees for The Cathedral School, the Board of Trustees and the Permanent Judicial Commission of the Presbytery of St. Augustine. She is an active member of Downtown Rotary, the Jacksonville Women's Network, and the Chamber's Downtown Development Committee. She was named a Woman of Influence by the Jacksonville Business Journal in 2015, was a finalist for the EVE Award in 2014 and received the Woman of Vision Award by Girls Inc. in 2011.