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WEDU PBS Presented Arts Impact Award from the Tampa Bay Businesses for Culture and the Arts

Tampa, FL – WEDU PBS was honored Thursday, October 24 with an **Arts Impact Award** from the **Tampa Bay Businesses for Culture and the Arts**. The annual Impact Awards and Save the Arts Benefit was held at The Vinoy Hotel in St. Petersburg.

The ceremony, now in its 19th year, celebrates Tampa Bay businesses and organizations that serve as strong and effective advocates for the arts. Celebrating 55 years of service to the Tampa Bay area this Sunday, WEDU has been supporting and promoting Tampa Bay's arts and culture through a variety of platforms on-air, online, and in the community.

WEDU provides a front row seat to viewers for some the most impactful and cultural arts venues, events, and performances from around the country at no charge to viewers. PBS Arts Festival has brought opera, ballet, orchestra, and even banjo playing to the forefront. Programs on WEDU such as ***In Performance at the White House*** celebrating Latin American Heritage Month and Black History Month, ***Great Performances***, and ***Live at the Met*** allow citizens of all income levels open access to the arts.

Going into its second season, ***WEDU Art Plus*** highlights Tampa Bay arts and culture during the weekly half hour program showcasing our local offerings on a national stage. This level of exposure is often out of reach financially to local nonprofit arts and culture providers.

WEDU also provides a voice on-air to local venues and artists through additional WEDU productions such as ***Up Close with Cathy Unruh*** which has featured venues and programs offered by the Mahaffey Theatre, the Florida Orchestra, Lowry Park Zoo, MOSI, Florida Aquarium, and many more.

Through online platforms, WEDU provides avenues for local arts and culture venues, artists, and organizations to promote their missions and events. WEDU hosts a community calendar online and an affordable e-newsletter and e-blast program. WEDU also hosts online resources for citizens to connect with arts and culture programming. WEDU is also a provider of Florida PBS Learning Media which is an online resource where students, parents, and teachers can search for videos and resources under arts and culture to support their educational endeavors.

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In addition to on-air programming, WEDU has a long-standing commitment to bring programming to life in the community through outreach events. A long-time supporter of independent filmmakers, WEDU is kicking off our third season of ~~Community~~ Community Cinema. Through Community Cinema, WEDU hosts FREE screenings of Independent Lens films within the community. To date, WEDU has hosted more than 22 screenings over 2 years. Each film is followed by a panel discussion, keynote speaker, or performance based on the film. One of the most successful screenings was for the film **Deaf Jam** which chronicled hearing impaired high-school students as they explored the world of self-expression through poetry and poetry slams. The event was successful in bringing together an assortment of organizations whose missions were aligned very closely, but they had never worked together. Following WEDU's screening event, these organizations formed a coalition and began holding deaf poetry workshops for students. The coalition also planned a public event with the students and brought one of the featured performers in WEDU's original Community Cinema film from New York to participate. This is a prime example of WEDU's mission and goal to not only provide access to arts and culture to the community, but also to be the catalyst for activism and awareness.

WEDU has also held free community events for what may be deemed non-traditional arts and culture awareness. In March, WEDU held 3 community screenings for the film **Wonder Women**, which chronicled the history of females in comic book art.

WEDU strives to not only be innovators in arts and culture, but also to recognize others in our community that promotes and supports the arts. Through the WEDU Be More Awards, WEDU recognizes and celebrates arts and culture organizations within our community. On February 20th, 2014, WEDU will present the 9th annual Be More Enriched Arts and Culture Award. This award recognizes culturally-based organizations that contribute to the spirit of adventure and exploration through education in the arts and culture by creating an exciting and engaging museum experience to visitors. *Winners have included:* Programs or experiences related to the arts, performance, historic, or zoological; programs that provide cultural experiences to audiences who might not otherwise have opportunities to witness or be an active participant.

WEDU remains steadfast in providing avenues to explore the arts and culture around the globe, but most importantly telling the stories of local talent within the Tampa Bay community.

ABOUT WEDU PBS

WEDU is West Central Florida's leading PBS station and public media company reaching 16 counties through media platforms including on-air programming and online experiences that broaden horizons, transport and transform and open gateways to new ideas and new worlds. Financially supported by the community, the organization offers a wealth of award-winning inspirational, educational and enlightening content over a variety of media platforms including: television programming, station's website, www.wedu.org and various social media platforms, monthly member magazine *Premiere*, educational outreach activities and a myriad of special events. WEDU's focus on the local community has resulted in the station being regarded as a beacon of trust for men, women and children of every walk of life no matter their age, ethnicity or socio-economic status. WEDU is a treasured community resource; a window to the world for the homebound and a vital educational source for the youngest members of society. WEDU prides itself on its position in the Tampa Bay community as a leader, partner, informed citizen and a member of PBS, the most trusted institution in America (Harris Interactive Trust QuickQuery, January 2013). For more information, program schedules or to support WEDU visit www.wedu.org; WEDU Public Media on Facebook and Twitter or call 813.254.9338.

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