

# PRESS RELEASE

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## ***UNITED ARTS RECOGNIZES ORANGE COUNTY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS FOR THEIR COMMITMENT TO ARTS EDUCATION***

**ORLANDO – February 27, 2020** – United Arts of Central Florida, in partnership with Orange County Public Schools (OCPS), hosted more than 220 Orange County arts, education and community leaders at the 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Principals Arts Appreciation Breakfast on February 19, 2020 at the Dr. Phillips Center for the Performing Arts. The Principals Breakfast celebrates the achievements of OCPS principals in retaining certified arts teachers in every school and continually expanding access to arts education for all students.

The program included remarks from Pam Gould, Orange County School Board Member, and Dr. Bridget Williams, Chief of Staff for Orange County Public Schools, before the presentation of awards. The Arts Principal Awards, the highlight of the breakfast, recognize principals who continuously lead the way in supporting and promoting arts education and arts participation in their schools. The winners were chosen by a panel of arts education professionals, including Orange County Public Schools administrators, cultural organizations, and arts-supporting businesses. The winning principals each received a \$1,000 cash award for their school's arts programs, two tickets to a Broadway Series production, courtesy of Dr. Phillips Center for the Performing Arts, and a *United ArtsCard*, a buy-one-ticket-get-one-FREE and discount card to arts performances and exhibitions throughout Central Florida.

Guests were welcomed to the Dr. Phillips Center by the Ocoee High School Marching Band. The event also featured performances by the Olympia High School Jazz Band, Riley Kennedy of Olympia High School and Danelis Cruz of Cypress Creek High School.

The 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Principals Arts Appreciation Breakfast was presented by United Arts of Central Florida and sponsored by Wells Fargo, Dr. Phillips Center for the Performing Arts, Universal Orlando, OUC, Premiere Show Group, Rollins College, Valencia College, Jennifer Quigley, Maria and Andrea Ruiz-Hays, and City of Orlando's District 3 Commissioner, Robert F. Stuart.

The following awardees are being honored for the expansion of their arts programs while maintaining standards of high academic achievement.

**Seth Daub – Catalina Elementary**

Seth Daub is a strong supporter and promoter of the arts. He encourages his staff to develop new opportunities for students so they can explore their creativity and abilities in the arts. During his tenure he has expanded the number of arts opportunities by adding a full-time dance teacher and several arts clubs. The school's dance and chorus programs have performed in the community and regional competitions. He has even participated in dance and step performances with his students. Mr. Daub is the President of the Florida Association of School Administrators and in 2018 was the NAESP National Distinguished Principal for Florida.

**Raymond “Chuck” Yockel – Southwest Middle School**

Chuck Yockel views the arts as an integral part of the school culture. He encourages programs to have “patio performances” in the courtyard for students to enjoy before school and music groups are encouraged to play at parent meetings and student orientations to emphasize the importance of the arts. The visual arts program has grown under his leadership to support two full-time visual arts teachers. This program is recognized for its high quality and currently has work on display at the Orlando Museum of Art. He also supports student performances by dressing up in character while attending concerts and plays. In 2018, Mr. Yockel was named Administrator of the Year by the Orange County PTSA.

**Allison Kirby – Jones High School**

Allison Kirby has fostered the arts in her school and the community. She consistently provides financial support for arts programs including transportation, supplies, instruments and uniforms. As a result of her efforts, Jones High School received a piano from the Manilow Music Project in 2018. Under her leadership the arts department expanded to include a full-time theater program. Ms. Kirby appeared on “The Ellen DeGeneres Show” after writing a letter to help send the band and choir to Carnegie Hall.

**About United Arts of Central Florida**

United Arts is a collaboration of individuals, businesses, governments and school districts, foundations, arts and cultural organizations, and artists. Its mission is to enrich communities by investing in arts, science and history. United Arts serves residents and visitors in Lake, Orange, Osceola and Seminole counties through the more than 60 local arts, science and history organizations it supports. It does this by providing direct support through grants and contracts for services, collaborative fundraising, arts education opportunities, advocacy, and technical and administrative assistance. Since 1989, United Arts has invested more than \$155 million in Central Florida’s arts and culture.

For more information, visit <http://www.UnitedArts.cc> or call 407.628.0333.

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