



Connecticut Commission on Culture & Tourism

Art
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NEWS

For immediate release

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**CONNECTICUT COMMISSION ON CULTURE & TOURISM
PARTNERS WITH YOUNG AUDIENCES OF CONNECTICUT/VSA ARTS TO HOST
STATEWIDE FORUM ON CAREERS IN THE ARTS
FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES**
One-Day Event Includes Career Strategy Development

HARTFORD, Conn. (October 27, 2008) – The Connecticut Commission on Culture & Tourism, in partnership with Young Audiences of Connecticut/VSA *arts*, will present a one-day statewide forum on November 15, 2008, from 9:30 am to 4:00 pm, at the Carol Autorino Center for the Arts and Humanities at Saint Joseph College in West Hartford. The forum will bring together artists of all abilities, advocates, service providers, organizations and state agencies to assess the opportunities and challenges for artists with disabilities and develop strategies for their career advancement.

The goals of the forum are to promote dialogue and networking opportunities; share information and resources from the community, state and national level; identify opportunities, barriers, challenges and career needs of artists with disabilities; and recommend strategies and next steps. Interwoven throughout the day will be opportunities for participants to consider a series of essential questions.

“The state is committed to identifying and reducing barriers faced by people of all ages with disabilities,” says Governor M. Jodi Rell. “We must help employers and employees with disabilities find one another and reduce isolation wherever we can.”

“Connecticut has many talented citizens with disabilities,” says Karen Senich, Executive Director of the Connecticut Commission on Culture & Tourism. “This forum will stimulate the beginning of a system of communication and network so that artists, providers, agencies and organizations will support each other to advance careers for artists with disabilities.”

The forum is sponsored by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and the National Arts and Disabilities Center (NADC) at the University of California in Los Angeles. Since

2001, the NEA and the NADC have awarded grants to state arts agencies to conduct forums on careers in the arts for people with disabilities. The long-term goal is to establish arts and disability networks and partnerships across the nation so that ongoing programs and services can be provided for artists with disabilities.

Forum offerings will include keynote presentations by Paula Terry, Director of the Office of AccessAbility at the National Endowment for the Arts, and Stephanie Moore, Director of Visual Arts at VSA Arts in Washington, D.C. Breakout sessions will cover pragmatic topics such as the business side of the arts; disability and employment related policies, services and support from the community and the state; and transitioning from school to career. Several accomplished and inspiring artists with disabilities will share their successes and challenges: Aaron Kubey, actor and Executive Director of the National Theatre of the Deaf; poet Ekiwah Adler-Belendez; guitarist John Denner; actress Ashley Wolfe and scriptwriter Nancy Wolfe; and graphic artist Monique Silva. Kubey, Adler-Belendez, and Denner will also perform. There will be an art exhibit and technology display. Evening performances will feature Little Theatre of the Deaf and the Ricky Alfonso Jazz Quintet.

Forum registration is \$20.00 which includes continental breakfast, lunch and two complimentary tickets to the evening performance.

Registration deadline is November 7, 2008.

To register, please visit www.cultureandtourism.org or www.yaconn.org Large print formats are available on the websites.

About the Connecticut Commission on Culture & Tourism

The Connecticut Commission on Culture & Tourism brings together tourism, film, history and the arts. Its mission is to preserve and promote Connecticut's cultural and tourism assets in order to enhance the quality of life and economic vitality of the state. The Connecticut Commission on Culture & Tourism is located at One Constitution Plaza, 2nd Floor, Hartford, Connecticut. For more information, please visit www.cultureandtourism.org.

About Young Audiences Arts for Learning Connecticut, a VSA arts Affiliate

Young Audiences Arts for Learning Connecticut, a VSA arts Affiliate, is a non-profit organization that brings inclusive educational arts programming to children and families throughout Connecticut. Our mission is to integrate the arts into the lives of all children in educational and community settings. YAC/VSA arts is located at 3074 Whitney Avenue, Hamden, CT. For more information please visit www.yaconn.org.

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