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BRICOLAGE RECEIVES BENEDUM FOUNDATION FUNDING TO EXPAND EDUCATION PROGRAM

Bricolage's Midnight Radio Education Program will deliver STEAM-integrated, project-based education rooted in the arts to Middle and High School students in the Greater Pittsburgh Area.

PITTSBURGH, PA (June 30, 2016) — Thanks to a \$250,000 grant from the Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation, Bricolage's Midnight Radio Education Program will expand to Intermediate Unit #1 (IU1) Alternative Schools in Fayette, Greene and Washington Counties and the Fort Cherry school district. For the past four years Bricolage's program has been limited to social studies and language arts classes in Washington and McGuffey Middle Schools. This grant will not only allow the program to expand to new schools, but also grow to include Math, Science and Robotics, making it a full STEAM-based project. In the wake of cutbacks in national (National Endowment for the Arts), state (Pennsylvania Council on the Arts) and local arts funding, this generous grant will allow four new schools to integrate the arts into the existing curriculum both enhancing students learning process and exposing them to art on all levels.

According to superintendents, principals and teachers in both McGuffey and Washington, the program has been hugely successful in motivational, social and cognitive development for all of their students who participate, even those with disciplinary issues. Dr. Roberta Dilorenzo, superintendent of Washington School District commented: "This project has been important in so many ways to our students; it has engaged them in thought and ownership, and taught them pride in their work, and fostered self-esteem as well." From superintendents to teachers involved in the project, all had positive comments: McGuffey Middle School Social Studies teacher Cristin Litman noted, "All students, no matter their ability level, can participate and thrive in this program. Many new or undiscovered student talents are revealed through this process. Students leave this program with a sense of achievement and a new confidence!"

Bricolage's Educational Program is based on their popular Midnight Radio series which takes the form of a classic 1940's radio broadcast, featuring live Foley (practical sound effects), commercial spoofs, and a cast of actors juggling multiple roles. Following this

format, students research, develop, write, rehearse, and perform their own plays based on what they're studying in school. In addition to core curricular connections, students practice artistic disciplines including creative writing, dramatic writing, performance, vocal production, music composition and performance, public speaking, sound design, and Foley artistry.

“One of the biggest challenges in rural counties is integrating a full service scope of the arts into curriculum in so many districts. It is a constant battle to make certain that students are exposed to the arts on all levels: performance, theatre, dance, sculpture, painting and various media of artistic expression, particularly those school who have alternative students,” said Sam Turich, Bricolage’s Education Project Manager. “The Benedum Foundation's support has been essential to the development and growth of this program from the beginning, and this new grant is an inspiring commitment to the growth of our Education Program.”

The word Bricolage means, “making artful use of what is at hand.” What excites this company is the connection and interaction between seemingly disparate elements, and the potential for these components to resonate as one cohesive event. "What's at hand" is Pittsburgh's changing landscape, its plentiful human and material resources, and the salient political, cultural, and ethical issues they encounter and react to each day.

Dr. James V. Denova, Vice President of the Benedum Foundation said in summary: “This project is at the heart of what Benedum is pleased to fund – those things that impact the arts in education for children. Ultimately as we know through research and statistics, participation in arts education programs improves the cognitive development and learning skills across the board for those who are exposed. The Benedum Foundation is excited to be a catalyst for change in the arts community in rural Southwestern PA.”

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