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Mesa Arts Center Announces Grant from the Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust

Funding to support expansion of Project Lit program into 12 additional schools

For Immediate Release

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Mesa, Arizona – Mesa Arts Center (MAC) has received a \$50,000 grant from the Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust to expand its Project Lit program, an arts-integrated literacy initiative that targets students K-12. The program uses various art forms including storytelling, hip hop, and drama to improve the traditional literacies of reading, writing, and speaking, while engaging students in collaboration, creativity, critical thinking and problem solving.

“These funds will support expansion of Project Lit, a program utilizing the arts to build literacy in K-12 students, into 4 additional Valley schools each year from 2018-2020, essentially doubling the total number of students served by this program by 2020,” said Cindy Ornstein, Executive Director of Mesa Arts Center. Project Lit, which is one component of a much larger engagement effort of MAC, is facilitated through strategic partnerships with local arts organizations such as Humor Writes, AZ Beat Lab and Phonetic Spit.

Mandy Tripoli, Director of Community-Engaged Practice at Mesa Arts Center, said of the program, “The arts are uniquely positioned to generate engagement with, investment in and motivation for learning both in and outside of the classroom. In addition to developing critical skills like reading and writing, Project Lit encourages and fosters development of incredibly important career and life skills, like teamwork, discipline, and critical thinking.”

“During her career, Nina Mason Pulliam shared her financial success and business leadership skills with many charities. She had a keen awareness of challenges that face our community and would take great pride in the outstanding work being done by organizations like Mesa Arts Center,” said Trustee Chair Carol Schilling. “Through her Trust, we continue to build on her legacy, which clearly reflects her heart for philanthropy.”

The grant to Mesa Arts Center represents one of 42 awarded to organizations by the Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust during the second of two grant cycles this year. Since the Trust began its grant making in 1998, it has awarded more than \$292 million to 963 organizations in its home states of Arizona and Indiana. For more information about the Trust and its programs visit www.ninapulliamtrust.org.

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ABOUT MESA ARTS CENTER

The Mesa Arts Center mission is to inspire people through engaging arts experiences that are diverse, accessible, and relevant. Owned and operated by the City of Mesa, Arizona's largest arts center is recognized as an international award-winning venue. The unique and architecturally stunning facility is home to four theaters, five art galleries, and 14 art studios and an artist cooperative gallery. For more information, visit mesaartscenter.com.

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