

**Media Contact:**

Casey Blake

480-644-6620

[casey.blake@mesaartscenter.com](mailto:casey.blake@mesaartscenter.com)

**Free festival event to be held at Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community Garden as part of Mesa's Water=Life Project**

*Project celebrates the past, present, and future of water as part of the Arizona Water Public Art Challenge*

**September 26, 2019 (Mesa, AZ)** – A free immersive festival event will be held at the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community (SRPMIC) Garden on Saturday, October 12, 10 a.m.-noon, in continuation of the Water=Life Project, a series of free artmaking workshops, demonstrations and events leading up to a nine-day installation in Mesa's Riverview Park. The free SRPMIC event on Oct. 12 will feature artmaking workshops, hoop dancing demonstrations, Native American flute playing, ceramic art and shell pendant activities. Visitors are also invited to learn about traditional and contemporary agriculture and gardening techniques and their impact on water use, and to explore the importance of water within the SRPMIC history and community.

Artists and performers featured at the event include: **Tony Duncan**, a five-time World Champion Hoop Dancer and Native American flute player; **Toby Jose**, a Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community member, singer, and musician; **Jacob Butler** a Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community member, artist, potter, and gardener, specializing in traditional shell working, including shell etching and carving; **Danielle Wood**, an art educator and exhibitor whose work involves abstract forms inspired by introspection, nature, shapes, and color found in the surrounding desert landscape; and **Rich Littlefield** an art educator with a background in archaeology who creates vessels inspired by early southwestern culture techniques, such as the coil sculpture method and the corrugated pinch method.

The culminating Water=Life temporary public art installation (Nov. 16-24 in Mesa's Riverview Park) will consist of visual, storytelling and interactive components and visitors to the installation will be encouraged to explore a "stream," guiding them to an inner circle where a soundscape and story walk highlight the relationship we have with water in all stages of our lives and the legacy of the ancient canal system that is the foundation for the modern system in use today. Participants in the workshops and events leading up to the installation can contribute to the project through ideas, personal reflection or artmaking to the creation of the culminating installation.

[www.mesaartscenter.com/waterlife](http://www.mesaartscenter.com/waterlife)

"The project installation is intended to be symbolic of collaboration, with people coming together to share stories and memories of water," said Tony Duncan, lead artist on the project. The installation will be commemorated in an opening celebration free to the public, Saturday, November 16, 10 a.m.- 2 p.m. Activities and events will include performances, an interactive

chalk art installation, mobile screen-printing by Jared Yazzie, live painting by TaLisa, hands-on artmaking activities/demos, and food options.

The project is made possible by the Arizona Water Public Art Challenge, presented by the Arizona Community Foundation, Republic Media and Morrison Institute for Public Policy. The project is also supported by a National Endowment for the Arts Art Works grant. The City of Mesa is one of five winners of the Arizona Water Public Art Challenge.

The project is presented by the City of Mesa and several of its departments, including the Department of Arts and Culture (Mesa Arts Center, i.d.e.a. Museum and Arizona Museum of Natural History), Department of Environmental Management & Sustainability, Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities, and the Department of Water Resources.

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### **About Mesa Arts Center**

Mesa Arts Center, owned and operated by the City of Mesa, is a unique, architecturally stunning facility located in the heart of downtown Mesa. Arizona's largest arts center is home to four theaters, five art galleries, and 14 art studios. Guests, patrons, and students come to Mesa Arts Center to enjoy the finest live entertainment and performances, world-class visual art exhibitions, and outstanding arts education classes. The Mesa Arts Center mission is to inspire people through engaging arts experiences that are diverse, accessible, and relevant. For more information, visit [mesaartscenter.com](http://mesaartscenter.com).