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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Business Support of the Arts Awards Announced for 2010

Raleigh, N.C. -- United Arts Council of Raleigh and Wake County, Inc. and the Greater Raleigh Chamber of Commerce have named recipients of the annual Business Support of the Arts Awards, recognizing outstanding contributions to the arts in our area by businesses, organizations, and individuals. Awards are given in four categories: large business, small business, individual and arts education.

The Business Support of the Arts Awards will be presented on February 17, at 6:30 p.m. at a reception and open house during a celebration that includes United Arts' large donors, board of directors and friends.

AWARD RECIPIENTS BY CATEGORY

Recipient of the award in the **Small Business** category, **Irregardless Café and Catering** (and owners Arthur and Anya Gordon) is cited for its strong support of Pinecone (Piedmont Council of Traditional Music) and NC State University's Center Stage. For the past two years, Irregardless has made in-kind gifts of meals for Pinecone's artists performing in their Down Home Series. And for many years, Irregardless has provided meals for the touring artists who perform as a part of the Center Stage series. These in-kind gifts alone are valued at many thousands of dollars each year. But beyond these contributions, the Gordons have sought other ways to help: In 2009, Irregardless hosted a Pinecone donor appreciation event. For Center Stage, the Gordons "never say no," donating an opportunity to join him as chef-for-a-day in their silent auction; hosting the 25th and 30th Anniversary parties for Center Stage in their restaurant; and providing complimentary catering for a Center Stage Celebration for several hundred. Irregardless and the Gordons are cited for untiring energy, constant faith in the important contributions the arts make to our community, and unwavering support in challenging economic times.

Capital Bank is the recipient of the **Large Business** category award for demonstrated extraordinary support of the arts. The firm's investment in North Carolina Theatre covers the full scope of the theater's mission. In 2009, Capital was the presenting sponsor of High School

Musical 2, providing not only \$25,000 in cash support but promoting the show by sending over 20,000 fliers in bank customers' statements. Capital also posted show posters and fliers in all of its branches. The bank has also been instrumental in NC Theatre's outreach to young performers: President & CEO Grant Yarber's genuine and heartfelt support for aspiring artists has led to a four-year \$100,000 commitment to NC Theatre's Capital Awards. This annual awards ceremony celebrates musical theatre excellence at area high schools. The bank's involvement has increased exponentially since the program began in 2007; Capital Bank has leveraged their support to garner an additional \$25,000 to support the program. Additionally, Capital Bank supports Artsposure, Artspace, Carolina Ballet, NC Museum of History, NC Symphony, Opera Company of North Carolina and Raleigh Little Theatre and purchases and displays works of local visual artist in all their branches and in the lobby of their headquarters in downtown Raleigh.

The honoree in the Individual Category is **Anthony Blackman**, nominated by Cary Visual Art. Blackman is president of Atlantic Tire and Service. He was recently named the 2009 Business Leader of the Year by the Cary Chamber of Commerce. His dedication to his firm's motto of "Trust, Service and Commitment" is clear: Blackman has served Cary Visual Art by sponsoring the CVA Art Ball, by serving on their Executive Board and by chairing their Fundraising Committee. His support for the Arts Ball began in 2002. Four times in the past eight years, he has been a \$10,000 sponsor of this event. Cary Visual Art cites as vital his steady support in this time of economic uncertainty and his unwavering support for his commitment to public art in the community.

The Arts Education awardee is **the Community Music School**, which has served our area since 1994. The Community Music School has been a trailblazer in providing quality private music instruction to deserving students facing financial challenges. Students who receive free or reduced-price lunch at area schools are eligible to make application to the School, which then matches the student's particular interest with a professional instructor. For a half-hour private lesson, students pay merely one dollar. For the course of their musical educational experiences, instruments are loaned, free of charge, to the students who may not have access otherwise. If necessary, music books are also provided. The school also has a program for special needs children offering the same service. For advanced students, comprehensive individualized instruction is provided, as well as the opportunity to perform in ensembles.

The school also partners with other arts organizations to provide the most comprehensive arts experience possible to its students. These partners have included the Raleigh Chamber Music Guild, the Raleigh Symphony, Raleigh Ringers, Carolina Arts Festival, Artsposure, Young Strings of the Triangle and the Philharmonic Association. Through these partnerships, their students have the opportunity to participate in workshops, master classes, open rehearsals and demonstrations.

Working in 13 areas of instruction with a faculty of 14 and a student population of 125 (and a waiting list of 70), Community Music School faces provides a meaningful and unique service to Wake County. The school was honored with the Raleigh Medal of Arts in 1999, by Mr. Holland's Opus Foundation in 2002, and a Coming Up Taller Award in 2003, an award of the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities. The Community Music School plays a vital role in making quality musical instruction available to a population that under current circumstances would not have the opportunity. Its alumni, faculty and current students, waiting list, partnerships and prestigious recognitions are testament to its value and legacy.

The United Arts Council's mission is to build better communities through support and advocacy of the arts. The mission of the Greater Raleigh Chamber of Commerce is to sustain and further develop a thriving economy and to enhance our community's quality of life.