

**FROM:** Opening Act

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### **Opening Act to Receive \$20,000 Grant from the National Endowment for the Arts**

New York, NY - National Endowment for the Arts Chairman Jane Chu has approved more than \$30 million in grants as part of the NEA's first major funding announcement for fiscal year 2017. Included in this announcement is an Art Works grant of \$20,000 to Opening Act for their After School Theater Program. The Art Works category focuses on the creation of art that meets the highest standards of excellence, public engagement with diverse and excellent art, lifelong learning in the arts, and the strengthening of communities through the arts.

"The arts are for all of us, and by supporting organizations such as Opening Act, the National Endowment for the Arts is providing more opportunities for the public to engage with the arts," said NEA Chairman Jane Chu. "Whether in a theater, a town square, a museum, or a hospital, the arts are everywhere and make our lives richer."

"We're so honored by the NEA's support of our work and eagerly anticipate providing a stage for more powerful young artists whose stories need to be told," said Opening Act's Executive Director, Suzy Myers Jackson.

Opening Act's flagship program is a free, full-year After-School Theater Program in which high school students at partnering schools take part in a highly structured, goal-oriented curriculum that uses improvisation, acting games, and writing exercises to help unleash their creativity, foster collaboration, and develop professional acting techniques. The Program culminates in a week of student-created original plays, developed around topics and issues important to the students. The Program is designed to provide the city's most under-resourced high school students, who otherwise lack access, with the opportunity to experience the transformative power of the arts. Using aspects of formal theater training, the program helps students acquire critical knowledge and skills in the arts while developing their leadership and community-building skills. We know these skills are vital to empowering our students to become fulfilled, responsible citizens.

For more information on projects included in the NEA grant announcement, visit [arts.gov/news](http://arts.gov/news). For more information on Opening Act, visit [openingact.org](http://openingact.org).