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## **Art-Reach and LiveConnections Team Up on Music Education Series for Adults with Cognitive and Developmental Disabilities**

On October 23, over 80 Art-Reach members will participate in a LiveConnections “World of Percussion” Bridge Session at partner venue World Cafe Live

**October 15, 2013 (Philadelphia)** – Art-Reach, a Philadelphia-based arts accessibility non-profit, shared today their upcoming series of educational performances with LiveConnections. On Wednesday, October 23, Art-Reach will bring 80 individuals with cognitive disabilities to participate in the “World of Percussion” Bridge Session presented by LiveConnections at partner venue World Cafe Live. This interactive performance showcases nearly 100 percussion instruments and rhythms from around the world and uses hands-on activities to explore creative expression through sound. Featured percussionists include Alex Shaw, Francois Zayas, and Art-Reach roster artist Doc Gibbs.

In addition to the 80 members in attendance, Art-Reach members will participate in pilot programming through LiveConnections new LiveStudio video initiative, where members will be able to live stream the Bridge Sessions from their facilities. LiveConnections aims to use the video system – installed as the result of a Knight Arts Challenge grant – to increase the accessibility of the Bridge Sessions and reach people who are unable to travel to the venue.

This Bridge Session and video streaming is part of a year-long partnership between Art-Reach and LiveConnections. Working together since 2009, the organizations jointly decided this year to offer a series of events specifically for Art-Reach member organizations that serve adults with cognitive disabilities. “Caregivers who work with this community have told us time and again how much the Bridge Sessions at LiveConnections have meant to their clients and how much they look forward to these musical experiences,” said Art-Reach Executive Director Marion Young. “We are thrilled to be able to extend to a year-long offering including the chance for participants who can’t travel to experience the session at their own facilities.”

The subsequent two Bridge Sessions of the series will be held in February and May. The goal of the series is to allow Art-Reach members to engage in musical performances and history at a level that a single event cannot offer. In addition to the 3 events at the venue and the live-streaming of each event, the musicians will also visit the member agencies’ facilities to further deepen their interaction with the art forms presented throughout the series.

LiveConnections’ general manager Melinda Steffy sees the partnership with Art-Reach as a natural extension of their mission. “Out of all of the educational sessions we do, our artists and staff often comment on how sessions with Art-Reach members are among the most significant and memorable. We see how powerful music is in connecting people with each other and with their own needs for self-expression. In launching our new video initiative, we’re hoping to share the experience with an even wider audience who would otherwise be limited by mobility issues or geography.”

### **Photos by Brian Young**

- 1) Musician Doc Gibbs and participants at a LiveConnections Bridge Session



- 2) Musician Alex Shaw at a LiveConnections Bridge Session
- 3) A LiveConnections Bridge Session

**About Art Reach:** Art-Reach is a Philadelphia based non-profit established in 1986 to make the arts of our region more accessible to people that lack access to our cultural organizations because of a disability, economic disadvantage, or other adversity. Through ticketed live arts events, on-site workshops, and a fine art placement program, Art-Reach empowers over 17,000 traditionally under-served individuals, of all ages, backgrounds and abilities to creatively participate in their communities, every year. For more information about how to get involved with or support Art-Reach, visit [www.art-reach.org](http://www.art-reach.org)

**About LiveConnections:** Celebrating its fifth anniversary, LiveConnections creates innovative, boundary-crossing music programming and education out of partner venue World Cafe Live. LiveConnections commissions collaborations that join artists from different genres to highlight how music crosses cultures and to reimagine the landscape of live music. Their unique approach combines live performance, digital streaming and interactive educational programming to ensure that audiences of diverse ages, locations, abilities and financial means are able to participate, aiming to remove barriers that prevent people from experiencing music. For more information, visit [www.liveconnections.org](http://www.liveconnections.org).

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