

Art-Reach

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: January 10, 2018**The Virginia and Harvey Kimmel Family ENCORE Program is established at Art-Reach***Virginia and Harvey Kimmel provide sustaining support for accessible arts programming in Philadelphia.*

In December 2017, **Art-Reach** and the **Virginia and Harvey Kimmel Arts Education Fund** of The Philadelphia Foundation established the **Virginia and Harvey Kimmel Family ENCORE Program**. This program provides **innovative, accessible arts programming** to people with disabilities through adaptation of existing arts programming in Philadelphia. Art-Reach's ENCORE program had been known for creating some of the most innovative accessible programming in the country. In just the past year, ENCORE programs included a verbally described and ASL interpreted tour of the Philadelphia Flower Show, and the Martha Graham Cracker Cabaret Full Access show. However, the most ambitious project to date had been the production of the integrated ballet, *I AM*, featuring students with cognitive disabilities and dancers from the PA Ballet Second Company. The piece was choreographed by Jessica Kilpatrick. In the last year, Art-Reach created 232 different ENCORE projects and provided opportunities for 9,850 people with disabilities to engage with the arts. "The support of Virginia and Harvey Kimmel will allow Art-Reach to push the envelope of accessible arts further than ever before." said John Orr, Executive Director of Art-Reach adding, "This is really exciting for Art-Reach and for a city that strives to be the most accessible arts city in the country."

The Virginia and Harvey Kimmel Family ENCORE Program will start 2018 off strong by launching an integrated tap performance including **Overbrook School for the Blind (OSB) and the Pennsylvania Ballet Second Company (PBII)**. The 13-week collaborative project will include six students from OSB and six dancers from PBII, and will culminate with a live performance on March 24, 2018. In total, Art-Reach hopes to create over 275 accessible projects in 2018.

In addition, Art-Reach will establish the **Kimmel Award for Accessible Experience** to add to a suite of awards presented annually during their Cultural Access Awards. The inaugural award will be presented in March 2018 at the 2018 Cultural Access Awards.

Art-Reach, founded in 1986, is committed to creating, advocating for and expanding accessible opportunities in the arts so the full spectrum of society is served. Art-Reach believes that disability is a product of design rather than diagnosis and that good design creates a more accessible world. Art-Reach strives to make the arts more accessible by helping arts organizations adapt their programs so that people with disabilities have opportunities to engage with the arts.

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