



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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EVENT

10th Anniversary MPAartfest

Sunday, October 2, 2016

10 am to 5 pm in McLean Central Park

MPAartfest Celebrates a Decade of Connecting Art and Community

McLean, VA: Ten years ago, McLean Project for the Arts (MPA) launched a new community outdoor art festival. It was a labor of love for MPA's staff, board of directors and dedicated volunteers. With more than a year of planning, hundreds of volunteers and sponsors, hope for good weather and faith that the community would turn out in support of the arts, MPAartfest was born. Now an annual, free community-wide celebration of the visual arts that attracts nearly 5,000 visitors, MPAartfest transforms McLean Central Park into a lively landscape of mini-art galleries showcasing and selling the work of acclaimed artists from the Mid-Atlantic region. Along with the artists' tents, live music and food from local restaurants in the park, MPAartfest offers a variety of arts and STEAM (STEM+Art) activities to engage creative minds and captivate art-lovers of all ages.

One of the many wonderful aspects of MPAartfest is its mission to "Connect Art and Community". MPAartfest's founding chair Bari Levingston and the first event committee established this as an objective in planning its first year—and it caught on. Levingston said "We felt strongly that MPAartfest should be an event for the community to come together in celebration of the arts." In its 10th year, through good weather and bad, MPAartfest has grown into one of the premier community events in Northern Virginia. "It continues to be a draw for the local McLean community and for others in the wider metro area too. It is a fabulous place for people to enjoy the arts outside and catch up with friends from the community. Connecting art across artists, adults, companies, students and schools is what this is all about," added Anjali Gupta, one of this year's event co-chairs.

Among the many engaging creative activities available throughout the day at MPAartfest, visitors can participate in the making of a community mural with the theme of celebrating MPAartfest's 10th Anniversary. Sharon Fishel, director of MPA's ArtReach program is initiating the concept and will help manage the work in process. Fishel, an accomplished visual artist, enjoys the challenge of bringing the work of many hands together with different perspectives, ages and skill levels into the creation of a large work of art. "It will be an exciting process, and it represents the idea of Art and Community coming together," commented Fishel. Another component of the piece will be recognizing the effort of community teams participating in "10 on10", an effort to raise money to support MPAartfest and MPA programs. The finished work will be displayed in a few McLean venues in the months after the event, including the Dranesville District Supervisor's offices.

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One exciting recent addition to activities is MPAartfest's STEAM (STEM+Art) Center. Building on MPA's new and existing public and private partnerships, MPAartfest will again offer a variety of STEAM-based learning stations. Among them is Art in Architecture, where visitors may learn about space and design concepts and use a variety of design elements to create and build. Another is Robotics. Guided by The Potomac School Robotics Team, the Robotics station lets visitors explore VEX and VEX IQ snap-together robotic systems to build imaginative moving creations. Using Math in Art will also be featured. Also returning to MPAartfest is the Children's Science Center, Northern Virginia's first interactive children's science museum, offering more unique STEAM Center programming for all to enjoy.

Other favorite aspects of MPAartfest include the *Children's ArtWalk*, an awe-inspiring open-air gallery displaying teacher-selected artwork from students representing local public and private elementary schools, sponsored by the McLean Community Foundation and coordinated by the New Dominion Women's Club. Budding artists may create their own artwork at MPA's *Hands-On Art Studio*, sponsored by TTR SOTHEBY'S International Realty. Another popular creative outlet for teens and adults is MPA's Open Studio, where visitors can try their hand at sketching live models with the beautiful backdrop of McLean Central Park.

As a juried art show, MPAartfest is popular with participating artists as well. MPA selected among scores of artist applicants for their work's merit as well as ensuring that a wide variety of media and styles are represented at the event. The call for artists goes out months in advance, and then selected artists meet at MPA to walk the park venue to get a sense for the surroundings long before the tents go up. "It's truly a labor of love for all of us," MPA's Executive Director Lori Carbonneau summed up the overall value of MPAartfest, "With more than 50 mini-art galleries to browse, delicious selections from local restaurants, live music throughout the day, and a host of creative interactive experiences for everyone, MPAartfest really does connect art and community."

McLean Project for the Arts (MPA) is a nonprofit visual arts center dedicated to connecting art and community by bringing museum-quality contemporary art exhibitions and arts education to McLean. MPA helps make successful learners by increasing their access to the visual arts. MPA's award-winning *ArtReach* program supports schools with STEAM (STEM +Art) learning throughout the school year and through its dynamic summer camp program. *ArtReach* also educates seniors and individuals with special needs. *MPA's year-round youth art classes support its partnership with Fairfax County Public Schools and STEAM education.*

MPA presents this community-wide celebration of the visual arts in collaboration with lead community sponsor McLean Community Center, event partner Fairfax County Park Authority, TTR Sotheby's International Realty, Deirdre Maull Orthodontics, Capital One, David and Lorna Gladstone Foundation, McLean Properties, LLC, Land Art Design, McLean Community Foundation, Burke & Herbert Bank, J. Gilbert's Wood-Fired Steaks & Seafood, UBS Financial Services, Inc. –The ESOP Group, Suzanne and Glenn Youngkin, Sun Gazette Newspapers, and additional supporters including: Arts Council of Fairfax County, Virginia Commission for the Arts, The National Endowment for the Arts, and many others.

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