



Laurie M. Tisch Illumination Fund Expands its Arts in Health Initiative

2020 grants support new programs that increase access to the arts to address mental health stigma, trauma, and aging-related diseases

Programs include visual arts, dance, and filmmaking to serve community members, caregivers and people facing health challenges across New York City

(New York, February 4, 2020) Philanthropist Laurie M. Tisch announced today the expansion of the Illumination Fund's Arts in Health Initiative to include 3 additional organizations and new programs at 7 others. The new grantees are Mekong NYC, CaringKind's connect2culture, and Queens Museum's ArtAccess.

In 2018 the Laurie M. Tisch Illumination Fund launched a \$10-million multi-year initiative to support organizations working on health issues that impact New York communities and that utilize the arts as a tool for healing, with a special emphasis on improving access and addressing disparities in health outcomes. The initiative highlights the value of multiple artistic disciplines, including visual art, dance, music, theater, and film, and focuses on three main issues: mental health stigma, trauma, aging-related diseases, as well as caring for caregivers and frontline healthcare staff.

"We know from decades of research that the arts have an important role to play in reducing stress, helping individuals in their healing process and in building healthier communities. We're pleased to be able to help increase access to these services to more people and communities who can benefit," said Laurie M. Tisch, founder and president of the Laurie M. Tisch Illumination Fund. "Several of the programs also serve caregivers, who are the unsung heroes of healthcare, and we are pleased to ensure that additional resources and greater attention are now available for them."

The Illumination Fund is providing new grants to support arts in health initiatives in these organizations:

Mekong NYC focuses on improving the quality of life of Cambodians, Vietnamese and other Southeast Asian communities in the Bronx and throughout New York City. These refugee communities are challenged by health and mental health disparities as well as collective trauma due to war, genocide, and resettlement. The organization provides access to essential social services, and through [cultural and community-building programs](#) Mekong NYC utilizes traditional visual and performing arts to strengthen intergenerational connections, build community pride, foster healing from trauma, and support resilience.

CaringKind's connect2culture harnesses the power of creative arts and culture and of positive social interaction to improve the lives of persons with dementia and their caregivers. [CaringKind](#), formerly known as Alzheimer's Association, New York City Chapter, has a particular focus on supporting families and caregivers, who experience higher rates of depression, isolation, and stress than non-dementia caregivers. Connect2Culture is one of CaringKind's flagship programs, partnering with museums, performing arts organizations and other NYC-based cultural venues to provide participatory programming and to train staff in develop meaningful access programs for people with dementia and their caregivers. The program is undertaking outreach to establish programs in the Bronx and other boroughs.

Queens Museum: ArtAccess provides programs for thousands of children and adults with varying physical, emotional, behavioral, and cognitive abilities across the New York City area, particularly the residents of Queens, a uniquely diverse and international community. ArtAccess also provides outreach services to members of their community who are in special situations, such as hospital-bound children suffering from extended illness, people with disabilities, special-needs students, caregivers, incarcerated youth, and children in foster care. ArtAccess programs are designed and led by licensed art therapists and arts educators.

Additionally, The Laurie M. Tisch Illumination Fund is providing new grants to advance the work of the following outstanding organizations through initiatives and development of organizational capacity.

Changing Minds Young Filmmakers Competition, a program of [Community Access](#), is an online film submission competition for filmmakers ages 15-25, using film as a storytelling medium to combat mental health stigma among youth. Last year youth from across the country submitted more than 950 films, and Community Access debuted its first Changing Minds Young Filmmaker Festival to show selected films. In 2020, Community Access is launching a partnership with the Jewish Board to reach classroom teachers, guidance counselors, and mental health professionals at public schools in New York City, as well as at community colleges and youth-serving organizations.

Fountain House Gallery, a program of [Fountain House](#), provides an environment for artists living and working with serious mental illness to pursue their creative visions and to challenge the stigma that surrounds mental illness. Its Gallery in Manhattan is a nonprofit exhibition space. In 2017, Fountain House established a dedicated studio space in Long Island City to provide working space for artists with mental illness and create opportunities to foster artistic talent, further mental health recovery, and prepare these artists to enter the highly competitive art market. This year, Fountain House Gallery is building upon its successful Artist Studio

Program by hosting artists in residence and providing training workshops and guidance in professional development.

The Art Therapy Project is the only non-profit in New York dedicated solely to providing free, guided art therapy to adults and youth affected by trauma, including veterans, survivors of sexual assault, and at-risk youth. In partnership with more than two dozen nonprofit organizations throughout NYC, the Art Therapy Project uses the creative process and support from art therapists to learn how to explore feelings, increase self-awareness, and cope with life's challenges. In 2020, the organization is expanding training for working and aspiring Licensed Creative Arts Therapists, social workers, and mental health professionals.

Gibney uses dance and movement workshops as a vehicle to help survivors of domestic violence and sexual abuse. Gibney's Move To Move Beyond program helps survivors address issues of choice, self-care and self-expression. In partnership with Sanctuary for Families, Gibney choreographers and dancers offer over 365 workshops yearly at local domestic violence shelters and partner sites. In 2020, Gibney is working with a group of Sanctuary for Families "Survivor Leaders" to offer performance and advocacy opportunities so that their experiences can educate and inspire broader communities.

The Creative Center at University Settlement uses arts participation to promote creative aging and as an outlet for patients and survivors of cancer and other serious diseases. In 2020, The Creative Center will advance core programs, including Artists in Residence at hospitals in New York City, daily workshops in visual, performing, and literary arts, and a Training Institute for Artists and Administrators in Healthcare and Creative Aging.

Dance for PD, a program of the Mark Morris Dance Group, provides dance and movement workshops for people with Parkinson's Disease, with classes available in all five boroughs. The Laurie M. Tisch Illumination Fund's grant will support ongoing programming as well as expansion of these programs to communities in need in Upper Manhattan, the Bronx, Staten Island, and Central Brooklyn, as part of an initiative to increase diversity, equity, inclusion, access to, and engagement in classes.

Arts & Minds provides museum-based workshops for people with Alzheimer's and other dementia and their caregivers at 14 museums. In 2020, Arts & Minds is expanding outreach in the Spanish-speaking communities of East Harlem, Washington Heights and Inwood, where rates of dementia are disproportionately high, and will be formalizing a training program for museum staff and docents to design and implement programs in additional sites.

"In 2018 a national Harris Poll found that more than 8 in 10 Americans believe the arts can help address key health challenges in their lives and in the lives of their loved ones," said Rick Luftglass, Executive Director of the Laurie M. Tisch Illumination Fund. "The public sees the power of the arts in challenging mental health stigma, overcoming traumatic events, and providing therapeutic benefits and quality of life for people with aging-related diseases such as Alzheimer's, other dementias and Parkinson's. Our Arts in Health initiative helps strengthen and advance these innovative programs."

About the Laurie M. Tisch Illumination Fund

The Laurie M. Tisch Illumination Fund is a New York City-based foundation that strives to improve access and opportunity for all New Yorkers and foster healthy and vibrant communities. The Illumination Fund plays an active role in supporting innovative approaches across a range of issues – ensuring that the arts and arts education are accessible to all, increasing access to healthy food, promoting civic service, and promoting economic opportunity. In 2018, the Illumination Fund launched Arts in Health, a \$10-million multi-year initiative to support organizations working on health issues that impact New York communities and that emphasize the arts as a tool for healing and building understanding. The new initiative's areas of focus have included the unique role of the arts in addressing mental illness stigma, trauma, and aging-related diseases. For more information, visit www.lmtif.org or follow @LMTischFund on Twitter.

###