



For Immediate Release:

April 21, 2016

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Bluemont Awarded \$20,000 Jack Kent Cooke Good Neighbor Grant *in support of the Artists-in-Education (AIE) Program*

Bluemont Concert Series has received a \$20,000 Good Neighbor Grant from the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation in support of its Artists-in-Education (AIE) program. After a competitive selection process that included nearly 150 applicants, Bluemont was one of only seven organizations selected, placing it in the top 5% of applicants. Established in 2012, The Good Neighbor Grants were created to support and strengthen non-profit organizations in the Northern Virginia, metropolitan Washington, D.C., and Maryland areas that provide underserved students with enriched educational experiences.

In this spirit, Bluemont's Artists-in-Education (AIE) program helps schools integrate cultural and artistic programs into their curricula. **Since 1976, Bluemont has presented more than 6,156 programs for 1.7 million students in 23 Virginia school districts.** In schools across Virginia, these interactive programs blend the arts with history, science, literature, and other core subjects to entertain, inform and bring classroom learning to life.

"The Artists-In-Education (AIE) program perfectly embodies the Bluemont mission to provide high-quality, cultural events that are accessible, affordable, and family-oriented," said Bluemont's Executive Director, Lily Dunning. "The Artists-In-Education program is Bluemont's largest program in terms of number of events and allocated resources, and this grant ensures that its legacy will continue to provide programs for students who might not otherwise have access to the arts. We are honored and grateful that the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation has acknowledged the value of these programs through such a generous grant."

"Bluemont's Artists-in-Education Program does an outstanding job exposing students to cultural and artistic programs that enrich their learning," said Cooke Foundation Executive Director Harold O. Levy. "It's important that all students are able to learn about our nation's rich cultural and artistic heritage through the unique programming they provide."

Bluemont's 40-year legacy in Virginia schools has been built on partnerships with local foundations and grant makers, as well as countless contributions from a broad base of individual, family, and business supporters in the community.

The Jack Kent Cook Foundation Good Neighbor Grant Program is the most recent grant awarded to Bluemont's Artist-In-Education program. Last October, Bluemont received the Dominion ArtStars Award from Virginians for the Arts (VFTA), in partnership with Dominion Resources. Over the years, the program has also been supported with major grant awards from the Claude Moore Charitable Foundation, Fred and Karen Schaufeld, Rappahannock Electric Cooperative: Operation Round Up, Verizon Foundation, Dominion Foundation and Middleburg Bank, among others.

"As schools across Virginia are working with leaner budgets, grant opportunities like the Jack Kent Cooke Good Neighbor Grant are crucial to providing students with access to the arts," Bluemont Board Chair Brett Burke said. "We know that using art to teach affects students in measureable ways; it raises achievement levels, improves graduation rates, and increases cultural awareness. This generous grant ensures that Bluemont's Artists-In-Education Program remains a part of that positive impact."

The \$20,000 Good Neighbor Grant will fund programs in Clarke, Loudoun and Fauquier counties, providing programs for 14 public schools and reaching 3,750 students.

About the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation

The Jack Kent Cooke Foundation is dedicated to advancing the education of exceptionally promising students who have financial need. It offers the largest scholarships in the U.S., comprehensive counseling and other support services to students from 8th grade to graduate school. Since 2000, it has awarded about \$147 million in scholarships to more than 2,000 students and \$90 million in grants to organizations that serve outstanding low-income students.

About Bluemont

The Bluemont Concert Series is a non-profit cultural and educational organization that has helped build the cultural spirit of more than 50 Virginia communities by inspiring and educating people of all ages throughout the year. Bluemont's Artists-In-Education program provides the highest quality cultural and educational programs in schools across Virginia.

For more information about Bluemont, call Executive Director Lily Dunning at 540-955-8186 or visit www.bluemont.org.

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