



For Immediate Release

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MECU Commits \$200,000 to Launch Two New Arts Every Day Programs
Arts Challenge Fund designed to incentivize arts instruction in Baltimore City Public Schools

Baltimore, MD (January 31, 2019) – MECU today announced it has pledged \$50,000 in annual funding for the next four years to support the launch of two new Arts Every Day initiatives – the Arts Challenge Fund and the MECU Music Ed/Remix – that enhance arts education for students in Baltimore City Public Schools in a time when budgets for arts disciplines are declining nationwide.

Arts Every Day (AED) is a non-profit that aims to make arts education and cultural experiences an integral part of classroom instruction for all preK-12 students in Baltimore City Public Schools. Founded in 2006, the organization funds more than 250 arts programs, impacts over 22,000 students and 1,200 educators, and promotes more than 500 teaching artists and arts each year.

MECU's annual contribution will help establish the Arts Challenge Fund, designed to incentivize Baltimore City Public Schools principals to expand and sustain arts instruction. For the 2018-19 school year, the Arts Challenge Fund will match up to \$1,000 of a principal's spending on arts materials, instruments, instrument repair, and equipment. In future years, MECU and AED aim to grow the fund through added support from Baltimore-area businesses and advocates for the arts.

"MECU is demonstrating considerable leadership in establishing the Arts Challenge Fund and in approaching other corporate partners who can provide additional support," said Julia Di Bussolo, Executive Director of Arts Every Day. "We hope that the Fund will serve as an incentive for expanding arts instruction across Baltimore City Public Schools."

City Schools CEO Sonja Brookins Santelises said: "Not only do the arts help young people develop creative thinking and skills in expressing themselves, but they enrich our academic programs and keep students engaged and coming to school every day. This new initiative from Arts Every Day and MECU will provide much-needed resources to support and expand access to the arts in our schools, and we thank these great partners for contributing to this essential part of a well-rounded education."

In addition, MECU will be the exclusive sponsor of MECU Music Ed/Remix, a new program that will enable local musicians to collaborate with Baltimore City Public Schools students on original works, record those compositions, and stage two performances over a single school year.

As Baltimore City's largest credit union, MECU is committed to supporting the community by lifting up non-profit agencies in their quest to improve the quality of life for City residents. In 2018, MECU reached out to AED to see how it could help support efforts to enhance arts education in Baltimore City.

"To further our strong commitment to Baltimore City Public Schools and to support arts education, we are proud to collaborate with Arts Every Day," said John Hamilton, President and CEO of MECU. "We know exposing our students to art and culture helps to foster creative thinking skills leading to higher achievement and personal growth, areas that Arts Every Day's work emphasizes, which makes them a fantastic partner."

Research has consistently shown that comprehensive arts education increases student engagement, empowerment, self-expression, creativity, and academic achievement. Baltimore City Public Schools includes 172 schools and programs serving 79,287 students, but fewer than 20 percent of those students are enrolled in both visual art and music. Improving music, visual art, theater, dance, and media arts instruction and access will help students develop into more well-rounded individuals and prepare them for college and/or careers.

"MECU's support for the Arts Challenge Fund and the MECU Music Ed/Remix is unique for several reasons," Di Bussolo said. "The funding is specifically focused on the arts, which are an essential element of a complete and balanced education, and will sustain these efforts for a full four years."

Public schools in Baltimore City can now apply for up to \$1,000 in arts-specific matching funds for the 2018-19 school year by visiting <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/artschallengefund>. Applications for the Arts Challenge Fund will be accepted through the end of the school year. An awarding ceremony will be held on April 6 at "fyi...For Your Inspiration," a citywide student exhibition at the Baltimore Museum of Art presenting artwork by Baltimore City Public Schools students.

Baltimore area businesses and organizations interested in contributing to the Arts Challenge Fund are encouraged to contact Betty Gonzales, Development Coordinator for Arts Every Day. To learn more about the Arts Challenge Fund and MECU Music Ed/Remix, visit www.artseveryday.org.

About MECU

Established in 1936, MECU is Baltimore City's largest credit union, with assets of approximately \$1.2 billion. MECU has nine branches throughout the Baltimore area and offers a full range of financial products and services. The credit union also provides access to over 30,000 free ATMs and 5,000 shared branches nationwide through the CO-OP network. MECU has distinguished itself in the Baltimore community by returning more than \$90 million in profits to its members as part of a cash bonus program that rewards members for choosing MECU. Membership with MECU is open to anyone who lives, works, worships or attends school in Baltimore City. Learn more at www.mecu.com.

About Arts Every Day

Arts Every Day (AED) is proud to be a driving force in building and sustaining a Baltimore City that values public education through creativity, art, and culture. A 501(c) 3 founded in 2006 as one in only eight

organizations originally funded by the Ford Foundation, AED works to ensure all Baltimore City Public Schools students have access to the arts every day through arts education, arts programming, and arts-integrated instruction. Arts Every Day works toward this goal through the forging of partnerships with schools and the arts and cultural community over the long-term to inspire lasting change. For more information, visit artseveryday.org.

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