



INSTITUTE for EDUCATION and the ARTS

Education Alive!

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STARK COUNTY KICKS OFF MAJOR EDUCATION AND THE ARTS INITIATIVE IN OHIO

Stark County, OH – The *NATIONAL OVERTURE OF EDUCATION AND THE ARTS IN OHIO* will kick off on Monday, October 10 in Stark County, opening a multi-year program designed to show how using the arts to teach core academic subjects can help all students become more engaged in their learning and how to improve their academic performance. Developed by the non-profit **Institute for Education and the Arts** in close cooperation with educators, business, cultural and civic leaders in Stark County, the *National Overture* program presents events this October in schools, libraries, museums and civic centers in Alliance, Canton and Massillon. The public is invited as well as educators, cultural and business leaders to participate in many of the sessions.

The *National Overture* will

a) demonstrate the power of the arts as teaching tools (a Canton native now with a national troupe in Washington, DC will show how dance can teach math),

b) highlight many ways this can readily be done in the local community (the Library of Congress and the Canton Symphony will each share the extraordinary resources and programs they have developed for home and school use) and

c) support an extensive professional development program for educators (Stark County ESC will focus this year on teaching through the arts, in a professional development program called “Putting the Arts in the Picture”).

The *National Overture* will also include Panel & Community Discussions to engage parents, educators, business and civic leaders and concerned citizens in active discussions about the role of the arts in effective teaching and learning and how this can be done in Stark County. In addition, discussions will focus on the important impact the arts and education can have on economic development and community revitalization.

Stark County was chosen last year as the first pilot site for the Institute's *National Overture of Education and the Arts in Ohio*. A prestigious local Advisory Committee was established with **Sheila Markley Black** as Chair, and together with an Implementation Committee of educators and with experts from local business, cultural and civic organizations have worked with the Institute to design a program of particular relevance and value to Stark County. These October events will be the first phase of the 2005-2006 program with a more in-depth and extensive plan of activities scheduled for next spring and leading into the next school year.

In a statement released this week, **Congressman Ralph Regula**, a former educator and long-time representative of the Stark County area, stated that "teaching through the arts is an innovative approach that provides powerful tools to engage students in the learning process" and that "success of this effort will bring great benefits to individual students, the local community and the nation."

Larry Morgan, Superintendent of the Stark County ESC has worked closely with the Institute in planning this initiative, and has made special efforts to ensure that all schools across the County can benefit. **Vince Watts**, Executive Director for the Town Hall on Race Relations and Advisory Committee Board Member noted that "it is essential that we offer this opportunity to all children, at all skill levels and from all backgrounds. The Institute is taking steps to do just that." **Joe Halter**, local business executive and chair of the board of Arts in Stark, warmly welcomed the *National Overture* initiative, stating that it would be helpful in uniting the many different parts of the County, in sharing local resources, and in building a positive national image.

Ronald Stowe, President of the Institute for Education and the Arts, said that "Stark County is an ideal location for this initiative. Stark County offers many dedicated and talented educators, exciting cultural organizations and artists, and a strong desire by the business community to revitalize the region. The needs are here, and so are the resources; we hope that we can help pull them together."

For program details or with questions, please contact info@edartsinstitute.org, or call (330) 649-1219 or 202 223-9721 x117.

The Institute for Education and the Arts is a non-profit education organization based in Washington, DC. For more information about the Institute and the *National Overture*, please see www.edartsinstitute.org.

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