



Media Contact:
Big Thought: Amy Gerald
469-916-9802 or agerald@bigthought.org

The Wallace Foundation: Mary Trudel
212 251-9815 or mtrudel@wallacefoundation.org

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THE WALLACE FOUNDATION APPROVES \$8 MILLION GRANT TO FUND GROUND-BREAKING DALLAS ARTS LEARNING INITIATIVE

Gift is believed to be the largest arts-education grant in Texas history and is considered a "huge win" for city's children



DALLAS (Dec. 14, 2006) - The Wallace Foundation, a New York-based independent national foundation, has notified Big Thought, that it has approved a three-year, \$8 million grant to help establish the Dallas Arts Learning Initiative (DALI). The program is a groundbreaking partnership between the City of Dallas, Dallas Independent School District, and local cultural organizations and will be managed by Big Thought.



The grant, along with other funds that have been committed and that Big Thought expects to raise, will help DALI connect and coordinate the efforts of Dallas' schools, libraries, cultural institutions, community-based organizations and others to provide access to high-quality arts learning. The Wallace Foundation will also develop lessons from DALI's work intended to help other cities make the arts a central part of the learning and development of all children.



"This is a huge win for the Dallas Independent School District," said Dallas Independent School District general superintendent Michael Hinojosa. "Dallas ISD is very appreciative of The Wallace Foundation for this contribution, and for supporting our efforts, as a leader among urban districts, to offer quality arts education programs for all students."



DALI is designed to coordinate and leverage high-quality arts learning experiences for Dallas children and families. The three main goals of the programs are to:



- Increase the amount and quality of arts education in Dallas ISD elementary schools
- Work with the City of Dallas to create networks that coordinate arts programming for children and families at the neighborhood level
- Work with Dallas cultural providers to more deeply position the arts as a tool in the teaching of science, math, social studies and language arts as well as bolstering fine arts education

"Ultimately the people of Dallas are the biggest beneficiaries," Dallas city manager Mary Suhm said. "With this grant, each organization will be better able to plan and target arts education programs to reach the spectrum of Dallas, whether they are being served at a library, recreation center, school, or cultural center. It's an old adage, but working together, everyone really will achieve more."

"Parents, policymakers, business and school leaders tell us they want the arts to be part of every child's education - but that achieving the goal is difficult given the multiple players and priorities," said The Wallace Foundation President, M. Christine DeVita. "Dallas has made remarkable progress in aligning the city's cultural assets, financial resources, policies and practices to achieve this goal. We are delighted to help catalyze and expand this effort and expect it to yield useful lessons for other cities."

The Wallace Foundation grant supplements and leverages existing community investments in arts learning. Additional funding will be needed to fully implement and sustain the project. These funds will come from public and private sources including charitable foundations, corporations, individuals and government agencies. As the program's managing partner, Big Thought will take the lead in raising these funds on behalf of DALI.

Last January, The Wallace Foundation extended a \$1 million grant to help plan DALI. More than 500 parents, educators, politicians and art advocates were convened in a series of meetings to express their opinions about what levels of arts education were currently available to the city's children and what steps might be taken to improve access to high quality arts education. The Foundation has also commissioned two research studies, one from Harvard Graduate School of Education's Project Zero to better understand how to achieve quality in arts education, and a second from RAND Education to understand how cities can set up effective ways to deliver arts education. Both will be published later in 2007. Wallace has also funded planning work in New York City that is intended to strengthen arts education.

On Jan. 18, 2007 a public briefing will be held to formally announce the DALI roll-out plan and to announce the first neighborhoods that will be affected. More information on this celebration will be made available in the next few weeks.

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Big Thought

Big Thought is one of the largest non-profit learning partnerships in the nation, inspiring, empowering, and uniting children and communities through education, arts and culture. Formed in 1987, the Dallas, Texas-based organization offers a diverse array of arts and culture-based performances, workshops, cultural excursions and multi-visit residencies for children and teens, and provides professional development and training to help adults use these programs. Big Thought's programs reach an average of 400,000 students, teachers and family members each year in schools, libraries, museums, juvenile facilities and community centers. Programs are presented in affiliation with Young Audiences, Inc. More information on Big Thought can be found at www.bigthought.org.

The Wallace Foundation

The Wallace Foundation is an independent, national foundation dedicated to supporting and sharing effective ideas and practices that expand learning and enrichment opportunities for all people. Its three current objectives are: strengthening education leadership to improve student achievement; enhancing out-of-school learning opportunities; and expanding participation in arts and culture. More information and research on these and other related topics can be found at The Wallace Foundation Knowledge Center at www.wallacefoundation.org or by calling 212-251-9810.

City of Dallas

The City of Dallas delivers public safety, economic development, sanitation, water, planning and other municipal government services to millions of residents, visitors and businesses each year. To access city services online, visit www.dallascityhall.com or call 311 from within the city limits to request non-emergency services. Dallas is the *City that Works*.

Dallas ISD

The Dallas Independent School District, the 12th largest school district in the nation with a diverse population of more than 160,000 students, is committed to becoming a leader in urban education and student achievement. District students come from homes in which 70 different languages are spoken. Serving these students are more than 19,000 employees, making the Dallas ISD one of the largest employers in the city. A voter-approved \$1.37 billion building program is changing the look of Dallas neighborhoods with 21 new schools and more than 1,600 classrooms and renovations to existing schools to improve the learning environment for district students. We educate and graduate students ready for college. www.dallasisd.org.