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Announcement of the 2018 Cornerstone of the Arts Honorees

SAN JOSE, Calif. –The City of San José Office of Cultural Affairs and the Arts Commission have announced the recipients for the 2018 Cornerstone of the Arts Awards Program, comprised of three categories:

- Randall King, co-founder and Artistic Director and Cathleen King, Executive Director of San Jose Stage Company will receive the Cornerstone of the Arts Award.
- *Sophie Holding the World Together*, a mural by artist El Mac and The Propeller Group, made possible by the San José Museum of Art, Empire 7 Studio, and the Children's Discovery Museum will receive the Creative Impact Award.
- Eastridge Center will receive the Business Support for the Arts Award.

The 2018 awards will be presented at the Cornerstone of the Arts event at the Hammer Theatre Center on October 12, 2018 at 6:00 p.m. At the event, grantees of the City of San José's Office of Cultural Affairs for Fiscal Year 2018-2019 will also be recognized for their contributions to San José's cultural life.

Randall and Cathleen King, Cornerstone of the Arts Honorees

In 1983, Executive Director and CEO Cathleen King and Artistic Director Randall King founded San Jose Stage Company (The Stage) when there was a need for a resident theatre company producing contemporary works showcasing locally based artists in an intimate setting. The Stage produced its inaugural season in a renovated loft above Cafe Stritch, formerly Eulipia Restaurant, on South First Street in Downtown San José. In 1990, The Stage was able to secure and manage their own facility on 490 South First Street.

Since securing its residence on South First Street, The Stage under Randall King's artistic

leadership has experienced incredible growth fostering new creative partnerships, including a three-year partnership with Luis Valdez and El Teatro Campesino in San Juan Bautista, co-producing the World Premiere of *Valley of the Heart* and commissioning a new play *Adios Mama Carlota* by Luis Valdez. Other recent commissions include an international co-commission and co-production collaboration with Dublin's City Arts Office in Ireland, *The Memory Stick*, by Irish playwright Donal O'Kelly. *The Memory Stick* received a staged reading at the Dublin Theatre Festival in Fall 2016 and the world premiere production at The Stage in Spring 2017. Randall's artistic leadership also resulted in The Stage's collaboration with local playwright Jennifer LeBlanc in the commission and production of Jane Austen's *Persuasion* in 2013 and a commissioned World Premiere of *Buffalo'ed* by Filipina American playwright Jeannie Barroga in 2012.

Randall has garnered numerous awards and recognition for his artistic contributions to the Bay Area, among them Theatre Bay Area's 40@40 for his significant commitment to the Bay Area theatre community for the past 35 years. Randall is also recognized for delivering edgy and innovative productions, and as a director, drawing high quality performances from his actors. Recent awards for productions include: Best Musical Production (Top Tier) for *The Threepenny Opera* (2014) Theatre Bay Area Awards; Best Overall Production for *Death of A Salesman* (2015) San Francisco Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle Awards; Best Overall Production for *Valley of the Heart* (2016) San Francisco Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle Awards; Best Overall Production for *The Toxic Avenger* (2017) San Francisco Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle Awards; and The Paine Knickerbocker Continuing Contribution Award presented to San Jose Stage Company for its continuing contribution to Bay Area theatre (2018).

Cathleen King has served as San Jose Stage Company's Executive Director and CEO for the past 32 years. She takes full charge of the administration of the organization, formulating policy and strategic plans essential to fiscal accountability, employment criteria, contract, and the overall day-to-day operations of the theatre. Cathleen has skillfully arbitrated with labor unions, demonstrating her early leadership ability as a founding member of the Coalition of Bay Area Theaters (COBAT). In 1983, Cathleen negotiated the establishment of Actors' Equity Association's collective bargaining agreement, the Bay Area Theatre Contract.

Cathleen also established and negotiated creative partnerships and co-productions with other organizations such as the Electric Company Theatre (Canada), Irish Theatre Institute (Ireland), El Teatro Campesino (San Juan Bautista, California), African American Shakespeare (San Francisco, California), Capital Stage (Sacramento, California); produced 17 world premieres; commissioned and developed new works contributing to the body of new American theatre; and she produced the Downtown Arts Series in partnership with the City of San José serving a diverse community of artists and arts organizations for ten years. Cathleen is credited with proposing and securing financial support from San José's Redevelopment Agency in 1989 for the development, functional design and build-out of the Company's 200+ seat theatre facility,

setting precedent as the first arts organization in San José to secure and manage its own facility in 1990. Through her leadership, The Stage has acquired the right to purchase the property on 490 South First Street and she is leading the planning of the development of a proposed new theatre facility as well as the Capital Campaign to support the newly envisioned theatre.

Sophie Holding the World Together Mural (2017), Creative Impact Honoree

Sophie Holding the World Together is a mural by artist El Mac and the Propeller Group, commissioned by San José Museum of Art (SJMA) in partnership with Empire Seven Studios and the Children’s Discovery Museum. *Sophie Holding the World Together* was created in conjunction with *The Propeller Group* exhibition, which was on view at SJMA October 27, 2017-March 25, 2018. Completed in December 2017, the mural is part of the Propeller Group’s *Viet Nam: The World Tour* project which strives to create connections across geographic borders. Working closely with SJMA’s curator Lauren Schell Dickens, the Propeller Group invited El Mac to create a permanent mural that would be accessible to all. The mural is located on the grounds of the Children’s Discovery Museum on Woz Way in San José. Financial support came from San José Museum of Art and a Kickstarter campaign which the museum launched to raise additional funding for the mural, receiving contributions from 156 unique donors and attracting new global attention for San José Museum of Art’s programs.

Nine-year-old Sophie Cruz has become a face of the American immigration reform movement. Born in Los Angeles to undocumented immigrants from Oaxaca, Mexico, Cruz first made headlines in 2015 when she crossed a police barrier during Pope Francis’s visit to Washington, DC, to hand the pontiff a letter asking him to help all immigrant children. Last year, she gave a moving speech at the 2017 Women’s March in Washington. Speaking in English and Spanish, flanked by her parents and younger sister, Cruz told the crowd: “We are here together making a chain of love to protect our families. Let us fight with love, faith, and courage so that our families will not be destroyed. I also want to tell the children not to be afraid because we are not alone.” In *Sophie Holding the World Together* (2017), Cruz is a symbol of resolve and hope, and of coming together across borders to fight for a shared future.

A public celebration honoring the mural took place on March 24, 2018, with officials from SJMA, the City of San José, Children’s Discovery Museum, and the Consulado General De México en San José welcoming this new public mural. Highlights included remarks by El Mac, The Propeller Group’s Tuan Andrew Nguyen, and Sophie Cruz, all of whom came to San José specifically to be part of the mural dedication. San José Museum of Art is proud to present this Mural of Hope to the citizens of San José.

Eastridge Center, Business Support for the Arts Award

Opened in 1971, Eastridge Center has served as a cultural hub for the diverse San Jose community for decades. Pacific Retail Capital Partners purchased the 1.4-million square foot

center in 2016 and completed an intensive multi-million dollar transformation. A key component of the renovation was visual and performing arts.

The Eastridge Mural Program and the bi-weekly Open Space event at the Eastridge Center are just two of the new platforms celebrating the arts community. The Eastridge Mural Program added 20,000 square feet of exterior murals, establishing the center as the largest facade of mural space on a shopping center in the country, and providing the community an infusion of color, creativity, and local pride. The Mural Program spotlighted California artists - including Lila Gemellos and Aaron de la Cruz. The Open Space event is a twice-monthly open mic night open to everyone, every age, and every art form. Each week, local musicians, spoken-word artists, dancers, poets, filmmakers, and comedians gather to share, collaborate, and perform. Open Space has expanded to include an annual Open Space Showcase as well as a regular Youth Open Mic, increasing both the impact of the artists' work and opening the doors for a truly all-ages community platform.

Other signature events and monthly programs at Eastridge provide opportunities for artistic expression and cultural celebration. Cultural festivals include Tet Festival, Bayanihan Festival, Moon Festival, Las Posadas, and a growing calendar of holidays that highlight the diversity of this multilingual local center. Eastridge Art Wednesdays feature performances in Center Court and are a solution for small local groups seeking to promote an upcoming show, grow their membership, or secure a monthly, recurring practice-performance location. A new monthly featured-artist program spotlights artists through digital and social content as well as a stipend for an on-site project; the program is currently featuring San José dancers and choreographers. Finally, Eastridge has committed annual funding to supporting the San José arts community by adding a new mural yearly to the increasingly vibrant property and surrounding neighborhoods.

About the Cornerstone of the Arts Awards Program

Established in 2013, the annual Cornerstone of the Arts Award honors individuals who have provided enduring and effective leadership contributing to the betterment of the San José arts community. Approved by the San José Arts Commission, honorees are considered as part of the foundation of the arts in San José who will be long remembered as a “cornerstone” of the arts community. Past Cornerstone of the Arts honorees include: Irene Dalis (2013), former Mayor Susan Hammer (2014), Carmen and Al Castellano (2015), Roy and PJ Hirabayashi (2016), and Elisa Marina Alvarado (2017).

About the City of San José Office of Cultural Affairs

The Office of Cultural Affairs is the City's champion in supporting and promoting the development of a rich arts and cultural environment for this diverse city's one million residents, its workers who live in neighboring communities, and its many visitors. It fosters cultural development through cultural funding programs, cultural workforce development, cultural facilities, special event services, and public art. Cultural Affairs is a division of San José's Office of Economic Development. For more information, visit www.sanjoseculture.org.

About the City of San José

Known as the Capital of Silicon Valley, San José is the nation's tenth largest city and the largest city in Northern California, with an ethnically diverse population of more than one million. San José was founded in 1777, once served as the state capital of California, and now encompasses 180 square miles. Facts about San José can be found here:

<http://www.sanjoseca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/780>. The City's website is www.sanjoseca.gov.

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