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NACo honors the arts at Annual Conference

PITTSBURGH – The National Association of Counties Arts and Culture Commission recently presented its Annual Arts Awards during NACo’s Annual Conference in Allegheny County/Pittsburgh.

This award program recognizes counties that have used arts and cultural activities to address not only the quality of life, but also social problems in their communities.

Arts Advocacy Award
Each year the Arts and Culture Commission asks the host arts commission at the site of the NACo Annual Conference to select a local recipient for its Arts Advocacy Award. The recipient is a person who has provided outstanding support for the arts in the host county. The 2012 recipient, selected by the Regional Arts and Culture Commission, is The Pittsburgh Foundation.

The Pittsburgh Foundation received the Advocacy Award for its work on the 2011 Pittsburgh is Art Day of Giving, through which local arts organizations raised nearly $1.9 million in a 24-hour period of online giving. The award was presented by Mitch Swain, who was the first CEO of the Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council in 2006.

Arts and Culture Award
There were two winners selected this year by the Arts and Culture Commission’s independent panel of judges:

- **Columbus Muscogee County, Ga.** – In an attempt to not only increase education of the arts but to also increase awareness of the hungry in the local community, Muscogee County started its Empty Bowl Fundraiser. Community members painted bowls with their own designs, which are then given back to the county parks and recreation department for their Empty Bowl Brunch. At this brunch, county residents purchase bowls which they can keep to enjoy all-you-can-eat homemade style soups, breads, desserts, and drinks at the event. All of the money raised during the event goes to benefit the Muscogee County Kid’s Café, a program that is part of the local

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• food bank. In 2012, more than 1,200 bowls were decorated and since 2009 more than $25,000 has been raised.

• Clayton County, Ga. – In a successful attempt to reinvigorate knowledge and access to artistic development, Clayton County started its Kaleidoscope of Young Artists program. The theme of the Kaleidoscope of Young Artists program is to provide a wide array of fun and in-demand sources of artistic expression for the county’s youth. In total, the Kaleidoscope summer program offers 240 art classes benefiting the youth of Clayton County and their families.

**County Leadership in the Arts Award**
The County Leadership in the Arts Award is presented each year by Americans for the Arts, a sponsor of the Arts and Culture Commission. This year’s winner is the Montgomery County, Ohio Board of Commissioners.

The board was recognized for its continued support of the arts even during economically tough times by committing resources for recreation, arts and culture, festivals and family-based activities. Their efforts included securing resources to continue to fund arts and cultural programs and working with the city of Dayton to revive the urban core with a particular emphasis on creating a sense of place while attracting and retaining the creative class.

The Montgomery County Arts and Cultural District leads a comprehensive cultural plan which called for the funding of the county’s visual arts, ballet, opera, theatre, museums, performing arts, folk arts, dance, symphony, public radio, television, arts education and historic preservation; the creation of Culture Works (the merger of the local arts council and the united arts fund); the construction of the Metropolitan Arts Center, which houses several small and mid-size arts organizations; and the building of the state-of-the-art Schuster Performing Arts Center.

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The National Association of Counties (NACo) is the only national organization that represents county governments in the United States. Founded in 1935, NACo provides essential services to the nation’s 3,068 counties. NACo advances issues with a unified voice before the federal government, improves the public’s understanding of county government, assists counties in finding and sharing innovative solutions through education and research, and provides value-added services to save counties and taxpayers money. For more information about NACo, visit [www.naco.org](http://www.naco.org).