

# CREATIVE TRUST

## **Informing and Advancing Arts Education in Ontario: the Performing Arts Education Overview**

Creative Trust and the Professional Arts Organizations Network for Education (PAONE) have joined together to undertake the first-ever study of arts education activities by performing arts companies in Greater Toronto.

The four-month study will survey dance, theatre and music organizations regarding the range, reach and impact of their arts education programs. This information will contribute to understanding best practices and increasing knowledge of the impact and contribution of performing arts companies on arts education

Creative Trust and PAONE will be supporting more than 50 participating companies in the development of programs and activities, leading to successful youth outreach, community engagement and audience development.

Current arts education activities offered in the G.T.A. range from student discount and matinee performances, workshop programs, artists-in-the-classroom sessions, resource guides, professional development opportunities for teachers, and more. There is general agreement about the value of these programs but there has, been little opportunity to evaluate them, assess their impact, highlight best practices, or identify how arts education fits into broader audience-building strategies and community goals. The Performing Arts Education Overview will do just that.

“Arts education embodies a core commitment by performing artists and arts organizations to their community, enabling young people to experience the power and inspiration of creative expression. With this study as a base, we will pool our knowledge, learn from those who do it best, expand our skills, and – we hope – touch more hearts and minds” Jini Stolk, Executive Director of Creative Trust.

The building of audiences is now a major focus for the Creative Trust, which has been working since 2003 to make positive changes to the financial health and sustainability of Toronto’s mid- and small-size creative music, theatre and dance companies. Expanding the audience base for these companies is essential to their future health and well-being. The Arts Education Overview is part of Creative Trust’s multi-year, multi-faceted Audiences Project, whose purpose is to raise the level of understanding and practice by performing arts companies in the areas of audience development, audience motivation and engagement, and arts education.

PAONE has provided support and networking opportunities for arts education administrators within arts organizations for more than 18 years. It represents a diverse group of arts organizations committed to the development of engaging arts experience for young people, and creating strong and valuable partnerships with educators and local communities.

The Performing Arts Education Overview, which will be launched this summer, was made possible by generous funding from the Ontario Ministry of Tourism and Culture through the Cultural Strategic Investment Fund.

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