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Jones, Ashcraft Invited to Stanford University

Purpose Prize Follow-Up Helps Ensure Continued Success

Purpose Prize winner Gene Jones and Dr. Joan Ashcraft, TUSD's Fine & Performing Arts/OMA Program Director, will attend a three-day national Innovation Summit at Stanford University sponsored by Civic Ventures, Nov. 9 – 12. The conference will bring together Purpose Prize winners and Fellows with thought leaders from government, philanthropy, academia, and funders. Conversations with national leaders, panel discussions with Prize winners, and in-depth workshops on social entrepreneurship will be interspersed with networking opportunities and cultural events.

The Purpose Prize provides five awards of \$100,000 and 10 awards of \$10,000 to people over 60 who are taking on society's biggest challenges.

The content of the Summit will include several topics, all key to helping advance and institutionalize the award winners' projects:

- Public relations, communications, strategy assistance and training;

- Access to a network of social innovators and organizations, institutions, and funders committed to the kind of work in which the participants are engaged;
- Eligibility for additional investments, on a competitive basis, from a new Fund for Innovation seeded by the funders of The Prize.



Dr. Joan Ashcraft, Gene Jones

Summit participants will work with IDEO, an innovative company that "helps clients and organizations navigate the speed, complexity and opportunity areas of today's world."

The Summit will end with an **Awards Banquet** at which Purpose Prize winners will be recognized and presented with their checks. **Jones, one of the five \$100,000 prize winners, will donate his entire prize to TUSD's OMA Program.** ■

Gene Jones Celebrated at Reception

More than 100 community and education leaders and friends celebrated Gene Jones' accomplishments and his \$100,000 Purpose Prize award from Civic Ventures at a reception at the Lodge on the Desert on Oct. 24.

Highlighting the evening was a program that included musical performances by three OMA teaching artists: harpist Gregg Reynolds and opera singers Kathryn Mueller and Juan Aguirre. Jones was presented with a recognition certificate from Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords. Arts Integration Specialist Darden Bradshaw presented an oil-pastel

painting by OMA Wakefield student, Chantelle Contreras. And OMA Foundation President Dr. Mary Belle McCorkle presented a framed photo of Gene that accompanied a story about him in the Arizona Republic and reprinted with the Republic's permission.



Dr. Joan Ashcraft, Gene Jones, Dr. Mary Belle McCorkle

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Successful Quest for an Arts Integration Specialist

Parents & TUSD Staff Work Together to Achieve Common Goal

By Kathy Campbell, Fruchthendler parent & OMA Foundation Parent Council Representative

Imagine walking into a portable classroom at an elementary school and seeing 18 kindergartners working collaboratively on a creative writing exercise. Imagine returning two days later and witnessing the students using instruments to tell their story. It is a magical experience to watch the kindergartners working together with their words and music.

This is what parents of K – 2 students at Fruchthendler Elementary School experienced one week this past May. The Arts Integration Specialist organized a series of OMA Open Houses to introduce parents to the many wonders of OMA. The open houses occurred during the school day, making it difficult for parents to attend; however, the turn out was amazing. Parents wanted to see with their own eyes what this ‘OMA thing’ was that their children kept talking about.

The parents were delighted to see their children in action. The stories the students created were imaginative and carried forward concepts that they were learning in the classroom. One first grade teacher even brought in test scores from the third quarter, stating the improvement was ‘astounding’ and attributing it to the addition of OMA.

The school was able, with the help of funding through the PTA, to get OMA for the second semester of 2006 – 2007. Parents overwhelmingly approved the expenditure of PTA funds, even though there were no guarantees that OMA would continue after the one semester. The PTA funding ran out at the end of the school year, and the hope was that the TUSD Governing Board would approve the OMA position for Fruchthendler when voting on the upcoming school year budget in June.

Now imagine that very same school with the OMA room eerily quiet. No students giggling as they enter, no excited Arts Integration Specialist greeting them at the door, no music being played or stories being written. This is a very different experience than the one above. Aware that this was a very real

possibility facing Fruchthendler Elementary School for the fall of 2007, two motivated parents stepped in to help get the Governing Board to approve the position. One of these parents had just been asked to join the OMA Parent Council, a volunteer group of parents committed to bringing OMA to every elementary school within TUSD.

Parents of K – 2 students were quickly made aware of the possibility of losing OMA and were asked for help. The Parent Council representative attended each OMA Open House and explained the reality to parents. The other parent distributed a notice to all K – 2 students to take home so parents who could not attend the OMA Open House would be made aware of the potential loss of OMA. All that parents were asked to do, if they believed that OMA was vital to their child’s elementary experience, was to write a letter to the TUSD Governing Board supporting Fruchthendler’s retaining OMA.

Well, persistence paid off. On June 12, the TUSD Governing Board approved a full-time OMA Arts Integration Specialist for Fruchthendler Elementary School. This is a shining example of the positive benefits of parents and TUSD staff working together to achieve a common goal. Now our children will be exposed to, and delighted by, the many wonders of the OMA program!

OMA Foundation’s Parent Council Tackles Critical Issues

The OMA Parent Council was formed by the OMA Foundation in the winter of 2007 to become a direct connection between OMA schools and the foundation and to support the foundation in its fundraising, public awareness, and advocacy goals. Right now 22 of OMA’s 42 schools are represented on the council.

There are two critical and immediate opportunities the council is helping the foundation work on: 1) increasing tax credit contributions to TUSD schools; 2) helping place an override election on the November 2008 ballot and ensuring its passage. Both of these issues need council members to advocate within their schools and neighborhoods and to help the foundation in its outreach efforts by providing unvarnished feedback about OMA from their schools and neighborhoods.

An especially important ongoing responsibility of council members is to bring issues and concerns directly to the foundation and to take foundation information back to their schools.

The Parent Council serves an important communication role, and we urge all 42 OMA schools to designate a representative to serve on the council. **Please e-mail Shirley Kiser for more information and/or to designate a council member.** shirley.kiser@tusd1.org

Gene Jones Celebrated at Reception

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Along with his thanks to the numerous people who have contributed to the OMA Program’s success, Jones said, “You sit on a shelf waiting for the billions of years that this Earth has been in existence, and you have your turn onstage for a nanosecond. To waste it by doing nothing is unthinkable.”

The Lodge on the Desert graciously underwrote part of the cost of the reception, making it possible to hold this special event for a special person at a special Tucson property. ■

If You Haven't Yet ... Please Make Your Tax Credit Contribution to an OMA School

The Arizona Tax Credit Program allows you to make a contribution to a public school of your choice and reduce your tax burden. It costs you nothing, yet it improves our schools!

With the budget cuts TUSD is facing your contribution is more important than ever. These contributions are critical to our schools, allowing them to provide programs and services they otherwise could not afford. In 2006, TUSD schools received \$2,482,248 in tax credit contributions.

The information that follows briefly explains the Arizona Tax Credit, how it works, how you can contribute and **why designating your tax credit contribution to an OMA school is a good investment.**

WHAT THE TAX CREDIT IS

The Arizona Tax Credit Program allows you to make a contribution to an Arizona public school of your choice – and then to reduce your Arizona tax obligation by an equal amount.

For 2007, **single individuals** can contribute up to **\$200**, and **married couples** filing a joint return can contribute up to **\$400** to any Arizona public school.

HOW THE TAX CREDIT WORKS

Whatever amount you choose to contribute will be directly deducted from the total amount you owe in state taxes. **For example**, if you owe \$500 in state taxes, and you and your spouse, filing jointly, make a \$400 contribution to a public school, you then will owe the State \$100. This is why this tax law is a win-win. Our children and schools benefit. And it doesn't cost you anything.

YES. I want to make a tax credit contribution to an OMA school.

WHY DONATING YOUR TAX CREDIT CONTRIBUTION TO AN OMA SCHOOL IS A GOOD INVESTMENT

Research by a nationally known and highly respected evaluation firm shows that the OMA Program:

- Helps expand our children's world.
- Improves their academic achievement.
- Raises their test scores.
- Intensifies their love of learning by participating in the arts.

Right now the OMA Program serves 42 TUSD elementary and middle schools. But the Foundation's and TUSD's goal is to serve 100% of TUSD's 93 elementary and middle schools.

OMA SCHOOLS: 2007-2008

• Banks	• Hudlow	• Reynolds
• Blenman	• Hughes	• Richey
• Booth	• Johnson	• Robins
• Cavett	• Kellond	• Rogers
• Corbett	• Lawrence	• Rose
• Cragin	• Lineweaver	• Sewell
• Davidson	• Lynn/Urquides	• Vail
• Dietz	• Lyons	• Van Buskirk
• Duffy	• Miles	• Van Horne
• Fickett	• Miller	• Wakefield
• Fort Lowell	• Mission View	• White
• Fruchthendler	• Naylor	• Whitmore
• Hohokam	• Ochoa	• Wright
• Howell	• Oyama	• Wrightstown

If you have questions, you can find more information by going to TUSD's home page: www.TUSD1.org & click on AZ tax credit.

OR

Call the OMA Program or OMA Foundation offices at 225-4900 or 225-4656.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO CONTRIBUTE NOW, PLEASE COMPLETE AND MAIL THE FORM BELOW TO: Joan Ashcraft, DMA, Director TUSD Fine & Performing Arts Dept./OMA 2025 E. Winsett Street, Tucson, AZ 85719

MAKE OUT YOUR CHECK TO ONE OF THE OMA SCHOOLS ABOVE. BE SURE TO WRITE "OMA" IN THE MEMO LINE ON YOUR CHECK. We'll promptly send you a receipt.

YES, I WANT MY TAX CREDIT CONTRIBUTION TO GO TO AN OMA SCHOOL

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Contribution Amount \$ _____

Name of School _____

Please clip this form, make out your check to an OMA school of your choice, write "OMA" in the memo and return it to: **Dr. Joan Ashcraft, 2025 E. Winsett Street, Tucson, AZ 85719.** When we receive your check, we'll quickly mail you a tax receipt.



OPENING MINDS
THROUGH THE
ARTS

**OPENING MINDS THROUGH
THE ARTS FOUNDATION**
2025 E. WINSETT STREET
TUCSON, AZ, 85719

Non-Profit
Organization
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Opening Minds Through The Arts Foundation

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Report To Readers From OMA Foundation President, Dr. Mary Belle McCorkle

It is my privilege to serve a second year as the president of the OMA Foundation. Thank you all for your support of our very young foundation whose sole purpose is to advocate for the Opening Minds Through the Arts Program in TUSD. As our key benefactor Gene Jones would say, "It's all about the kids."

Our foundation last year raised \$257,000 for the OMA Program. Most of this money paid for the professional teaching artists, vital to the program's success. This year the foundation board has developed a strategic plan to almost double this amount in 2007-2008.

Next, this is the first school year that we have been able to offer TUSD employees the option of contributing to the OMA Foundation through payroll deduction. Many of you have taken advantage of this opportunity, and for those of you haven't and would like to, please call or e-mail Shirley Kiser, our executive director, and she will be delighted to send you a payroll deduction card: 225-4656 or shirley.kiser@tusd1.org

We also are excited to report that we've developed a Parent Council comprised of representatives of OMA schools: Our council is ready to assist with an override election when the TUSD Governing Board makes that official.

Finally, the foundation works hard to help increase tax credit contributions in TUSD for the OMA Program. Please designate your tax credit contribution to your favorite OMA school and mark "for OMA" in the memo.

Best wishes for the holiday season!
Mary Belle McCorkle

Please Consider a Tax Deductible Contribution to the OMA Foundation

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

Name (s) _____

Address _____

Zip Code _____ Phone Number _____

Please make check out to: Opening Minds Through The Arts Foundation

We will send you a receipt acknowledging your donation.

Send donation to: **Opening Minds Through The Arts Foundation**
2025 E. Winsett Street, Tucson, AZ 85719