



DC COMMISSION ON ARTS & HUMANITIES

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT
SUBMITTED BY HERAN SEREKE-BRHAN, PhD
MARCH 21, 2022

* Agency Development*Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Access*Improved Grantmaking* Community Engagement*CAH Beyond Grants*

The following is a summary of the agency's activities and operations:

Annual budget oversight hearing

CAH will have its annual budget oversight hearing before the DC Council Committee of the Whole beginning at noon on Tuesday, March 29, 2022.

Community Engagement

Since January 2022, CAH has conducted five virtual community engagement programs through two of its three tracks: Business of the Arts presented sessions on themes of copyright and trademarking and legal protections for artists and creators (in partnership with the Washington Area Lawyers for the Arts); and CAH in the Community presented programs featuring partners and participants in *Create and Thrive!* arts program for older adults and a discussion on 'De-Mystifying the Grants Panel Process' with staff and former grantee discussants. Thus far over 250 participants have attended the sessions.

Public Art: *Resilience and Uncertainty* Exhibition Public Programs

As part of its FY22 Arts Exhibition Grant, CAH hosted the opening of *Resilience and Uncertainty* exhibition curated by Julio Valdez at its 200 I Street gallery on February 25, 2022. The exhibition features six contemporary, intergenerational artists from Washington, DC and New York, NY, and how they are experiencing and responding to the turbulent and unsettled period of the past two years. Artists Felix Angel, Mildor Chevalier, Patricia Encarnacion, Eric Finzi, Dominic Nash and Ezequiel Taveras, were present at the opening and the exhibition featured bi-lingual (English/Spanish) catalogue and wall text. Commission Chair Van Lee and ED Sereke-Brhan welcomed artists and guests along with Commissioners Torres and Ucles. Public programming for the exhibition includes a guided tour by participating artists, a virtual poetry reading and an upcoming printmaking workshop. The exhibition closing program will take place on April 14, 2022 and feature musician Eric Mehring.

Arts Education: Poetry Out Loud and Words on Fire Programs (March 12-13, 2022)

CAH hosted a two-day youth poetry program on March 12-13, 2022: the Poetry Out Loud recitation competition supported by the National Endowment for the Arts, the Poetry Foundation, and state arts agencies and Words on Fire, a poetry slam and written poetry contest for District high school students. CAH also produced an online anthology of students' works available on the agency's website.

Around 694 students from the following schools participated: Ballou High School (Ward 8); Banneker High (Ward 1); DC International (Ward 4); Dunbar High School (Ward 5); E.L. Haynes Public Charter School (Ward 4); Jah Kente International, INC (Ward 4); KIPP DC: College Prep (Ward 5); Roosevelt High School (Ward 4); SEED School (Ward 8); and St. Anselm's Abby School (Ward 5). Twenty-four teaching artists provided 87 classes and participated along with their students in the program which was attended by parents and

supporters. Commission Chair Van Lee, Commissioner Torres and ED Sereke-Brhan and Deputy Director, David Markey along with CAH staff members attended and supported the programs.

The winners for Poetry Out Loud were: First Place: Warwick Lloyd, St. Anselms Abbey School; Second Place: Evangeline Harrod, Capital City Public Charter School; Third Place: Flor Flores, Kipp DC College Preparatory. For the Written Poetry Contest: First Place: Maria Rivera, El Haynes Public Charter High School; Second Place: Silas Alemayehu, Dunbar High School; and Third Place: Laila Scrivner, KIPP College Preparatory. And for the Student Poetry Slam: First Place: Alyssa Toussaint, DC International; Second Place: Herman Buckman, KIPP DC College Preparatory; and Third Place: Araiya Brewer, Ballou High School (coordinated by Do the Write Thing).

###