

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**AUGUST WILSON CENTER FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN
CULTURE EDUCATION ASSOCIATE PARTICIPATES IN THE
ARTS EDUCATION COLLABORATIVE'S LEADERSHIP
ACADEMY**

PITTSBURGH – Sarah Williams, Education Associate for The August Wilson Center for African American Culture, was selected this summer to participate in the 2007 Arts Education Collaborative Leadership Academy. The Academy, now in its fifth year, engages participants in learning valuable teaching skills and acquiring the confidence needed to increase the visibility and credibility of arts programs in their schools and districts. The 15 selected educators will spend the 2007-2008 school year focusing on the Pennsylvania Academic Standards in the Arts and Humanities, research-based instructional strategies and studio opportunities to enhance their work as teaching artists.

The No Child Left Behind Act has threatened the very existence of the arts in K-12 education. Now, more than ever, arts educators need to develop the leadership skills

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and knowledge that will enable them to plan and support quality arts education at the school, district and community level. The Leadership Academy enables area arts educators to take an active role in using NCLB as a catalyst for creating higher quality arts education, rather than allowing the arts to be siphoned out of the schools.

“This year’s Leadership Academy is filled with focused, passionate arts educators and we are delighted for the opportunity to support them as they create and implement their action plans,” says AEC Director Dr. Sarah Tambucci. “Every year we are thoroughly impressed by the goals that Academy members are able to accomplish using their action plans, and we look forward to each new class with great anticipation of the high quality work we will witness over the course of the year.”

Williams joined the rest of the class July 23rd – 27th for an interactive workshop hosted by Pittsburgh Public School’s Creative and Performing Arts High School (CAPA). Workshops demonstrating the value of integrating various art forms into teaching were presented by musical theatre actor and CAPA teaching artist Billy Hartung, Artistic Director of Attack Theatre Michele de la Reza and jazz singer and CAPA teaching artist Etta Cox. The class was also able to take advantage of their downtown location by utilizing The Andy Warhol Museum and its studio arts educators as part of their learning process. The grand finale for the week was a performance by the Etta Cox and Al Dowe Band. Band members performed a showcase of African American music while culturally and historically contextualizing the music throughout the performance.

Sarah and her classmates will work closely with Leadership Academy manager and AEC Program Associate, Elizabeth Kripp, to develop and implement action plans

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that focus on an identified school, district or organization need. In addition to the individual support provided by the AEC staff and previous years' graduates, Academy members will regroup for four Leadership Seminars hosted by regional cultural organizations throughout the 2007-2008 school year.

For more information on the Arts Education Collaborative Leadership Academy, contact the AEC at 412-201-7405 or info@artsedcollaborative.org. For more information on the AEC, visit www.artsedcollaborative.org.

Leadership Academy Class of 2007

Lisa Belczyk, The Pittsburgh Symphony, *Manager of Education & Community Engagement*

Linus Craig, Pittsburgh City Theatre, *Director of Education*

Marian Day, (Cornell SD) *Visual Art Teacher*

Laura Ferguson, Propel Charter Schools, *Arts Coordinator*

Carol Froelich, Howe Elementary School (Mount Lebanon SD) *Vocal Music Teacher*

Jaime Fry, Hyde Elementary School (Moon Area SD) *General/Choral Music Teacher*

Rachel Koch, Imani Christian Academy, *Art Director*

Diane Oberst, Ross Elementary School (North Hills SD) *Visual Art Teacher*

Kelly Jane Pellechio, Johnston Elementary School (Wilkinsburg SD) *Visual Art Teacher*

Kristin Purcell Sacco, K.D. Tillotson School, *Visual Art Teacher*

Tricia Rohlf, Brownsville Area High School (Brownsville Area SD) *Director of Dramatic Activities and Guidance Counselor*

Kara Stauffer, Canon-McMillan High School (Canon-McMillan SD) *Visual Art Teacher*

Sara Strzempek, West View Elementary School (North Hills SD) *Visual Art Teacher*

Karen Vachon-Thaner, Wyland Elementary School (Hampton Township SD) *Visual Art Teacher*

Sarah Williams, The August Wilson Center for African American Culture, *Education Associate*

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