

ca cultural alliance of fairfield county

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The founders of the Westport Artists' Collective are the 2016 ACE Artist Awardees, who will be celebrated, along with additional ACE Awardees at the Cultural Alliance of Fairfield County's 2016 ACE Awards breakfast on May 19th, at the Shore and Country Club in Norwalk. Additional awards will be giving in the following categories: Corporate, Nonprofit, Citizen and Educator. (Pictured, l-r: Nina Bentley, Tammy Winser, Jahmane

West, Helen Klisser During, Duvian Montoya, Miggs Burroughs)

Arthur Levitt Offers Keynote at Cultural Alliance of Fairfield County's Inaugural ACE Awards Breakfast on May 19th, with Tony Award Winning Actor James Naughton serving as Master of Ceremonies

Norwalk, CT –The Cultural Alliance of Fairfield County (CAFC) will hold its inaugural Arts & Culture Empowerment (ACE) Awards Breakfast on May 19, honoring individuals, organizations, and businesses who have made significant contributions to the Fairfield County community through arts and culture.

Master of Ceremonies, Tony Award winning actor and singer, James Naughton will kick off the awards breakfast, followed by keynote speaker Arthur Levitt, the twenty fifth and longest serving Chairman of the SEC. Levitt will be introduced by Karen Brooks Hopkins, President Emeritus of the Brooklyn Academy of Music and current Senior Fellow in Residence at the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

In Hopkins introduction of Levitt, she will speak to the need for a vibrant and well supported arts and cultural environment outside of New York City. Levitt will then address the critical role that businesses play in supporting the arts. In communities large and small, studies show that cultural organizations have a significant economic impact on local communities, improving the quality of life and encouraging community engagement.

“A vital arts scene is considered a significant plus for many of the most talented, vivacious and productive citizens in our economy,” says Levitt. “Just as strong schools make a place more livable, strong arts make a place more interesting - and therefore more valuable,” he adds. “Where art creates a vibrant economy, the economy must feed the arts world in turn.”

This year’s ACE Awards will be presented in five categories to those who have made a significant contribution to the community through arts and culture, or who have enriched the arts and culture sector through volunteerism or patronage. The 2016 ACE Awardees are as follows:

1. **ACE Corporate Award:** Bank of America, a leading supporter of the arts and sponsor of Fairfield County’s Community Foundation’s Giving Day, which raised more than \$1 million in 24 hours for local nonprofits, with 24% of those funds raised by arts & cultural organizations.
2. **ACE Artist Award:** Westport Artists’ Collective founders Duvian Montoya, Nina Bentley, Miggs Burroughs, Tammy Winsler, Helen Klisser During and Jahmane West, recognized for encouraging the careers and talents of local artists and contributing to our diverse artistic community.

1. **ACE Nonprofit Award:** Curtain Call, Inc., to be accepted by Lou Ursone, Executive Director. Curtain Call offers year round high-level community theatre performances, educational programs and has sustained a highly engaged and supportive group of patrons.
2. **ACE Educator Award:** The educational staff of the Bruce Museum for their exemplary work in arts and science education developing programming across generations and inclusive of STEAM educational concepts (Science, Technology, Education, Art and Mathematics).
3. **ACE Citizen Award:** Richard J. Wenning, Executive Director of BeFoundation, a family foundation devoted to dramatic improvement in the education of underserved children in Connecticut and CoFounder of SpreadMusicNow which is dedicated to ensuring there is adequate funding for music education.

The Breakfast will be attended by cultural leaders and stakeholders from throughout the Fairfield County region. Also featured is a raffle to help support the work of the CAFC. Top prize includes two tickets to a Broadway show (based on availability) and a limo ride to and from New York. Other prizes include a membership to Fairfield Theatre Company; family membership to the Aldrich Museum, a season subscription to the Stamford Symphony; private tour for two of the Philip Johnson Glass House; a pair of season tickets to the Westport Playhouse; an Executive Suite event at Harbor Yard, home of the Bluefish; and a weekend getaway at Zero Degrees hotel.

The ACE Award Breakfast, will take place on May 19, from 7:30 – 9:00 am at the Shore and Country Club in Norwalk. Tickets for the Breakfast and Raffle are now on sale at AceAwards2016.eventbrite.com.

The Cultural Alliance of Fairfield County supports cultural organizations, artists and creative businesses in Fairfield County through marketing, professional development and advocacy. For more information, visit CulturalAllianceFC.org.

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