

Press Release

Contact: Ryan Odinak, Executive Director
Cultural Alliance of Fairfield County
70 Sanford St.
Fairfield, CT 06824
203-256-2329
ryan@CulturalAllianceFC.org

For Immediate Release and Photo with Caption

Photo Caption:

Ryan Odinak, Executive Director of the Cultural Alliance of Fairfield County (left) attended National Arts Advocacy Day in Washington DC. She is pictured here with actor Kyle MacLachlan—of TV show *Desperate Housewives*, who as part of the event, spoke before the Appropriations Subcommittee on the Interior, encouraging Congress to increase funding for the National Endowment for the Arts.

Cultural Alliance of Fairfield County Executive Attends National Arts Advocacy Day to Represent the Region

Washington DC—More than 550 arts advocates from across the country attended National Arts Advocacy Day in Washington DC on April 12th and 13th. Ryan Odinak, Executive Director of the Cultural Alliance of Fairfield County and Board Director of the CT Arts Alliance attended to represent the region and the State of CT. Also attending from Fairfield County were Ann Sheffer, Elizabeth Morten and Susan Snyder. Cindy Clair, President of the CT Arts Alliance and Executive Director of the Arts Council of Greater New Haven served as CT's Advocacy Captain. Americans for the Arts organizes the annual event to brief participants on national issues effecting the arts and encourage them to make visits to the offices of CT Congressmen and Senators to lobby for their support.

Speaker of the House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) accepted the 2010 Public Leadership in the Arts Award for Congressional Arts Leadership, spearheading an electric start to Arts Advocacy Day during the Congressional Kick Off. Presented jointly by The United States Conference of Mayors and Americans for the Arts, Speaker Pelosi was given the award for her critical role in securing funding in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to save creative workforce jobs through the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). Other members of Congress gave remarks at the Congressional Arts Kick Off to rally the cry for arts support on Capitol Hill including Sen. Tom Udall (D-NM) and Reps. John Yarmuth (D-KY), John Lewis (D-GA), Betty McCollum (DFL-MN), Congressional Arts Caucus Co-Chair Louise Slaughter (D-NY), and new Interior Appropriations Subcommittee Chairman Jim Moran (D-VA).

On April 13, in conjunction with National Arts Advocacy Day, Americans for the Arts assembled a group of arts supporters to testify before the Appropriations Subcommittee on the Interior, encouraging Congress to increase funding for the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). The hearing included a wide range of testimony, from the personal stories of actors Kyle MacLachlan and Jeff Daniels to the viewpoint of rural community arts administrator Terri Aldrich of Minot, ND.

Others present to lend their perspectives were Ovation TV CEO Charles Segars, U.S. Army Brigadier General Nolen Bivens (Ret.), and Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter. NEA Chairman Rocco Landesman and Congressional Arts Caucus Co-Chair Louise Slaughter gave testimony previous to the Americans for the Arts panel. Chairman Moran and Ranking Member Simpson submitted questions to the witnesses to expand on their perspectives in support of \$180 million in funding for the NEA.

Participants also attended Americans for the Arts 23rd Annual Nancy Hanks Lecture on Arts and Public Policy at The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. Guest presenter, Mayor Joseph P. Riley, Jr. of Charleston, SC, focused on the art of city design; the revitalization of his hometown of Charleston; and the role mayors can play in transforming their cities into dynamic and more livable cultural communities. The night also included a lively performance by the Washington Performing Arts Society's Men and Women of the Gospel Choir as well as introductory remarks by Sen. Mark Begich (D-AK).

The mission of the Cultural Alliance of Fairfield County is to advocate for arts and cultural organizations and artists by promoting participation in arts and cultural activities, building organizational and professional expertise, integrating the cultural sector into regional economic development strategies, and encouraging equitable access to cultural opportunities and education. The organization services Bridgeport, Darien, Easton, Fairfield, Greenwich, Monroe, Weston, New Canaan, Norwalk, Shelton, Stamford, Stratford, Trumbull, Westport, and Wilton. For more information contact info@CulturalAllianceFC.org or 203-256-2329.



###