

Efroymsen Family Fund awards the University of Chicago \$2 million challenge grant to support the Green Line Arts Center

(Chicago, IL – June 12, 2017) The University of Chicago has been awarded a \$2 million challenge grant from the Efroymsen Family Fund for the future Green Line Arts Center on the [Arts Block](#) in Chicago’s Washington Park neighborhood. Led by UChicago’s [Arts + Public Life](#) initiative, the new arts center will be an interdisciplinary hub at the forefront of visual, performing, and media arts for individual artists and cultural organizations who represent or advance the interests of under-resourced communities on the South Side and beyond.

The Efroymsen Family Fund grant is intended to inspire other donors to match the \$2 million donation.

The Green Line Arts Center will magnify the artistic, cultural, and economic impact of the Arts Block—a cultural destination along the heart of East Garfield Boulevard. The new center will showcase performance and film; incubate artists and local businesses; provide space, equipment and resources for local professional and amateur filmmakers; and feature accomplished artists from around the world. The Green Line Arts Center will also expand skills training and employment experience opportunities for local adults and youth.

“The Green Line Art Center is an important next step in the University of Chicago’s culture-led community redevelopment efforts and the transformation of the Arts Block in Washington Park,” said Bill Brown, senior adviser to the provost for arts at UChicago. “The generous grant from the Efroymsen Family Fund makes it possible for the University to begin building the new arts center and to expand the impact of Arts + Public Life’s community and artist-focused programming.”

Already a thriving center of artistic activity, the Arts Block is home to the University’s [Arts Incubator](#), which hosts a residency program that supports local artists in all disciplines, a design apprenticeship program for teenagers and a rich array of public programming, from jazz concerts and record releases to artist lectures and exhibitions. The Arts Block is also home to the University’s [Place Lab](#) and additional enterprises including the Currency Exchange Café and BING Reading Room.

“The Green Line Arts Center was born out the need for space by many great makers in the city of Chicago who live or want to create work on the South Side. Artists interested in cinema, dance, music, and theater will have a space where they can workshop and incubate their ambitious projects,” said Theater Gates, professor in the Department of Visual Arts and director of Arts + Public Life. “Space for artistic experimentation is critical to nurturing creativity and the development of thriving, culturally engaged communities.”

The Green Line Arts Center builds on Arts + Public Life’s existing partnerships with local artists and arts organizations such as Assata’s Daughters, the Washington Park Camera Club, and Tofu Chitlin’ Circuit. The center will incubate artists, cultural organizations, and



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businesses, and provide platforms for creativity. The increased artistic activity on the Arts Block will generate cultural and economic opportunities by providing space and programming for local artists and organizations, bringing an increased number of arts patrons to Washington Park, and attracting private investment in the corridor and the surrounding community.

Construction of the Green Line Arts Center will begin with the renovation of 6,600 square feet of vacant storefronts located at 323-329 E. Garfield Boulevard. The new space will include a black box theater, rehearsal space, green room, dressing room, and lobby space for gatherings and exhibitions. Construction is expected to begin in late summer 2017.

Future components of the Green Line Arts Center will include spaces for cinema, theater, dance and music performances, among other flexible production support areas. In recognition of the Efroymsen Family Fund's generous commitment, the University will name a theater in the Green Line Arts Center.

"The Efroymsen Family Fund has a history of investing in efforts that create opportunities for individuals and families to experience the arts. The Green Line Arts Center and Arts Block will be a unique arts destination for not only the University Community but for the residents of Washington Park and beyond," said Elissa Hamid Efroymsen. "We commend the University of Chicago for leading this project and its work to positively impact the city and the South Side of Chicago. We are excited to be involved in a project that will bring diverse groups of people together and create new opportunities for the arts, artists, and creative entrepreneurs. Our hope is that others will join us in supporting the Green Line Arts Center."

The University continues to seek funding for the project. As planning moves forward and funds are secured, the University will continue to work with Washington Park civic leaders, neighbors, and the Green Line Arts Center Advisory Committee to shape programming. The advisory committee includes arts faculty and administrators at the University and leaders at Chicago-based cultural organizations, including Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, Joffrey Ballet, KLEO Center and Lucky Plush Productions, among others.

Additional plans for the Arts Block include transforming a vacant lot into outdoor, public green space. A range of free public programming led by Arts + Public Life and community partners will expand into the future outdoor space.

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ABOUT UCHICAGO ARTS

UChicago Arts connects and amplifies the impact of the University's nearly 100 arts organizations, initiatives, and academic programs. This work brings together the efforts of students, faculty, artists, and community partners to infuse creativity throughout the intellectual life on campus while solidifying the University's role as a cultural destination and resource on Chicago's South Side. For more information about UChicago Arts, visit arts.uchicago.edu.

ABOUT ARTS + PUBLIC LIFE

Arts + Public Life, an initiative of UChicago Arts, builds creative connections on Chicago's South Side through artist residencies, arts education, and artist-led projects and events. Arts + Public Life aims to create a robust, collaborative, and meaningful relationship between the University of Chicago and the South Side's vibrant civic, cultural, and artistic communities. For more information about Arts + Public Life visit, arts.uchicago.edu/apl.

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