

*Acting on dreams. Drawing on life. Painting a future for children.*

## Media Release

### **CFAX Santas Anonymous Donation Expands artsREACH Program Offerings**

**June 12, 2007:** As artsREACH celebrates reaching a milestone of delivering 100 workshops this school year, organizers have another reason to celebrate. A donation of \$20,000 from C-FAX Santas Anonymous means artsREACH organizers will be able to expand their offering of in-school art workshops to 150 for the 2007/2008 school year. It will be the greatest program offering in the organization's history.

“This is the largest stand-alone donation we've received since artsREACH was founded and it's a fantastic boost to our organization and the children who participate in the workshops,” says Marilyn Sing founder and Board President, OCTA Collective Society. “Not only will it allow us to deliver more workshops in the coming school year, we'll be able to provide more workshops in the schools where children will benefit the most.”

The funding will pay for 67 workshops in the 2007/2008 school year, providing 1,500 students with the opportunity to participate in drawing, painting or theatre workshops, which focus on building confidence and self-esteem. Over 3,300 students are expected to participate in artsREACH workshops next year.

“One of the goals of Santas Anonymous is to broaden children's exposure to valuable learning activities in and out of the classroom through our special gifting,” says Mel Cooper, President, C-FAX Santas Anonymous. “Thanks to artsREACH, more of Victoria's children are able to experience new opportunities for creative expression.”

ArtsREACH is managed by the OCTA Collective Society, a Victoria-based charitable organization dedicated to providing programs and services that help individuals participate in positive change within the community. ArtsREACH aims to help young people develop artistic and creative skills while developing an appreciation for the arts. Programs are delivered at no charge to public elementary schools in the Capital Region and all materials and instruction are provided. Workshops focus on developing skills such as communication, personal management and teamwork - core skills that lead to increased employability later in life. By developing those skills at a young age, children are more likely to adopt them as natural behaviours throughout their lifetime.

ArtsREACH workshops are primarily delivered in schools with a high percentage of children from lower-income families. A total of 3,340 children have participated in 167 workshops in 31 schools throughout the CRD since the program's inception in 2005.

CFAX Santas Anonymous helps children and families in need throughout the CRD including a Christmas food hamper program and toys, gifts and games program which provides Christmas gifts for between 3,000 and 3,500 children. Over the last 10 years Santas Anonymous has also provided funding to selected special children's projects aimed at youth under 18 years old.

For more information see [www.octacollective.com](http://www.octacollective.com) and [www.santasanonymous.com](http://www.santasanonymous.com).

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