



## PRESS RELEASE

**May 12, 2016**  
**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### FEDERAL ART GRANT AWARDED TO LOCAL NON-PROFIT AND CITY OF LAKE ELSINORE

**Lake Elsinore, CA:** STUDIO 395 Foundation, Inc., a local non-profit arts cooperative, and the City of Lake Elsinore were awarded a 2016 Our Town grant from the federally funded National Endowment for the Arts. This Creative Placemaking grant funds projects that represent the distinct character and quality of their communities with a vision for enhancing the social and/or economic livability of the community, that support the integration of arts and design into the fabric of civic life and are a creative approach to addressing community challenges or priorities.

Last year, the Lake Elsinore City Council established an Arts and Culture Sub Committee with the goal of increased artistic and cultural activity to the daily fabric of the city to assist with economic growth and revitalization. The project awarded the Our Town grant for \$25,000 will be the establishment of the ARTcademy on the site of artists' village/festival setting called, the ARTistDetour, in the historic downtown area on a small property owned by the city located on the corner of Library St. and Main St. The ARTistDetour and ARTcademy are in the planning stages currently.

Since 2012, STUDIO 395 has been actively gathering artists and designing and creating public art in the City of Lake Elsinore. These range from a cultural festival celebrating the Dia de los Muertos, to mosaic pieces at the River Walk done by local school children to three years of artistic contributions to the Clean Extreme event held by the City. Recent work includes metal egrets in flight within the center median in front of the Outlet Mall and a barrier recognizing a colorful local legend, Bill Turner, at the newly refurbished Whisker's Beach.

This grant was one of only five awarded in California, one of the 64 across the nation. The Our Town awards for 2016 from the NEA total \$4.3 million and are highly competitive. Other recipients in California include the City and County of San Francisco, the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs, the Peralta Hacienda Historical Park in Oakland, and the University of California Regents in Berkeley.

"We are ecstatic that the NEA found merit in our ARTcademy project. It's an honor and a privilege to be able to bring these types of funds here that will go towards a venue and programming for the community," said Rebecca Esquibel, President of STUDIO 395 and a local business owner. "But this is the tip of the iceberg. We will need additional support of funds, material and services and we really hope the local community will get behind building the ARTistDetour."

This grant, applied for with the City of Lake Elsinore as a partner with STUDIO 395, will fund the needed equipment, supplies, storage, administration and teaching salaries needed to start up the ARTcademy

schedule of art classes to local residents. The plans look towards some workshops within the next two months and a larger schedule to begin in last summer.

STUDIO 395 got on the radar of the NEA after being awarded a California Arts Council grant for their Business of Art classes focused on providing guidance to artists looking to improve their business skills. Jane Chu, Chairman of the NEA, visited STUDIO 395 in February of 2014 to hear about their work, at the urging of the Riverside office of the Arts Council, and delivered a speech praising the combined efforts of the Lake Elsinore and STUDIO 395 and reinforcing how these Creative Placemaking partnerships not only improve areas aesthetically but also economically.

In the Our Town grant announcement, Chu states, “The broad-based partnerships and the focus on leveraging local cultural assets have helped residents engage the arts to spark vitality in their communities.”

“We heard her loud and clear,” says Johnathan Skinner, Director of Community Services. “And the more information we gathered on the positive impact of art and culture to the revitalization of an area, the more engaged we became in finding a way to make it happen. With support from Council members, Natasha Johnson and Steve Manos, who our the council representatives on the Art and Culture Sub Committee, we found a little piece of city owned property to dedicate to what we know is going to be a great venue for workshops and to have artists create that funky little art location that will be a draw for downtown.”

Founding STUDIO 395 member, Grace Sandlin, agrees, “Our mission from the get go has to bring art out to the community and to find local artists paid work or help them sell their work. The Artcademy will allow them to pass on their skills to everyone, even those underserved of hands on artistic experiences. But the location, the ARTistDetour, will provide a place for them to create and sell at a Sawdust Festival kind of venue on a scheduled basis. There is a lot of work to do but we are excited and we know this community will help us move it forward.”

In addition to the ARTcademy and the ARTistDetour projects, the Art and Culture task force is kicking off a street performers program along Main Street during Memorial Day weekend, May 28, 29 and 30. The group worked to change city ordinances to allow performers with a permit to charge for their work or take tips from the public. The goal is to bring more traffic to the Historic Downtown area on weekends and holidays, and to engage those artists that will want to sell and teach at the ARTistDetour.

“All the effort that STUDIO 395 has put forth by themselves and with the Art and Culture Sub Committee is paying off for our city, our businesses, our residents and local artists,” Said Councilman Manos. “Good things are coming and the ARTcademy and ARTistDetour will help us revitalize our downtown so it can be reestablished as the center of creative activity for our city.”

STUDIO 395 is a non-profit artist cooperative with a mission of taking art into the community by engaging the underserved resident of the area, such as at risk youth and the lower income, in civic art projects or events that allow them to create so that they recognize and can improve their artistic skills. The Art and Culture Sub Committee’s vision statement states: “The City of Lake Elsinore will incorporate the arts into civic planning to honor and promote our unique heritage, enrich the lives of residents and visitors, as well as bolster economic activity within the City and Region.”