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What's the Big Idea

Berkeley's Teen Advocacy Initiative

to threaten arts programs in schools across the country, teen advocates in the San Francisco Bay Area are speaking up to claim their arts education. **Berkeley Rep's Teen Council** founded the **claimyourARTS** initiative in 2011 after teen participants became increasingly aware of funding issues facing arts education programs in schools across the country and were struck by the under-representation of students in the conversation about arts education. "It's about creating a culture where we have a say in our own arts programming and where youth are not marginalized in the arts," said Oscar Peña, a member of the arts advocacy committee.

The claimyourARTS initiative has mobilized more than 60 teenagers from across the Bay Area around issues affecting arts education. Youth advocates have hosted interactive advocacy trainings and conferences; produced and directed a PSA about the importance of arts education; and visited with politicians on the local, state, and national levels.

While continuing to host and refine advocacy training sessions, the students are also partnering with the California Alliance for Arts Education on a video campaign encouraging California teens to explain why arts education matters to them. They are also planning a trip to Sacramento to present the videos for state legislators. "I want to see claimyourARTS spread across the nation," says Bowen Bethards, the initiative's chairperson. Center Theater Group in Los Angeles has started a teen advocacy group based on Berkeley Rep's model, and others across the country are starting to follow suit. Want to learn more or get information on how to lead your own teen arts advocacy initiative? Visit www.berkeleyrep.org/school/teencouncil_claimyourarts.asp for a step-by-step toolkit.



2012 Board President of Grand Rapids Cultural Marketing Group Kerri VanderHoff accepts the Arts Destination Marketing Award from Americans for the Arts Immediate Past Board Chair Ken Ferguson (left) and President and CEO Robert L. Lynch (right) at the Americans for the Arts National Arts Marketing Project Conference in Charlotte, NC. Photo by George Hendricks.

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A Rising Tide Floats All Boats

THE GRAND RAPIDS CULTURE PASS rolled out in 2010 with a bang—the kind of bang that can only be accomplished through many voices and many organizations coming together to create change in their community. A diverse group of institutions including the ballet, symphony, opera, museums, zoo, library, and more offer the Culture Pass as a member benefit to their constituents—and share their internal lists along the way. "Not everyone is aware of all the great opportunities for arts and culture in Grand Rapids, so by combining mailing lists, we can cross-promote and take these already arts-leaning audiences to new opportunities," said Past President of the Cultural Marketing Group Board and Project Manager at the Grand Rapids Art Museum Kerri VanderHoff. "It brings arts and culture to the top of people's minds when they are thinking about how to spend the day, and that only happens through collaboration: A rising tide floats all boats!" For more, visit www.culturepassgr.com.