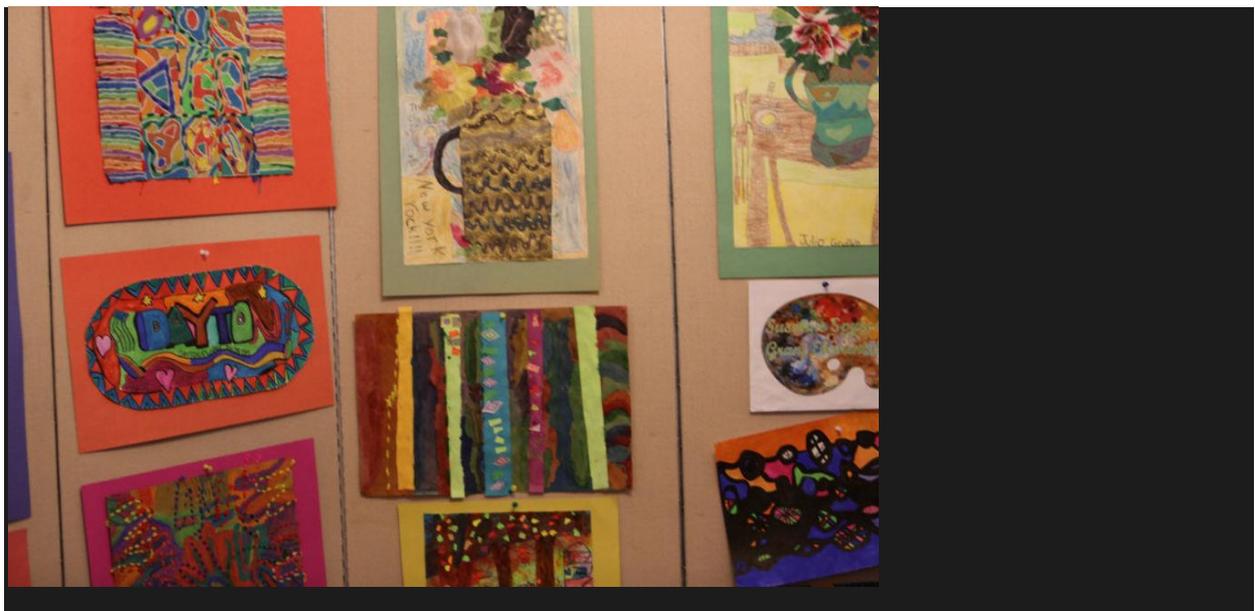


[http://www.nj.com/mercer/index.ssf/2015/09/trenton\\_is\\_1st\\_nj\\_city\\_picked\\_for\\_kennedy\\_center\\_a.html](http://www.nj.com/mercer/index.ssf/2015/09/trenton_is_1st_nj_city_picked_for_kennedy_center_a.html)

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## Trenton is 1st N.J. city picked for Kennedy Center arts program



The Washington-based Kennedy Center announced that Trenton is the 19th city -- and first in New Jersey -- selected for its Any Given Child initiative, which aims to bring "access, balance and equity" to arts education using an affordable model. Student choirs and bands performed.



By  
Cristina  
Rojas

**TRENTON** — When money is tight, music and art are often the first subjects to go. But arts education is being made a priority in Trenton, thanks to a new initiative with the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts that will help the district create a long-term plan.

The Washington-based Kennedy Center announced Wednesday that Trenton is the 19th city — and first in New Jersey — selected for its Any Given Child initiative, which aims to bring "access, balance and equity" to arts education using an affordable model.

"The students of Trenton are on the path to be inspired and energized through the arts," said Mario Rossero, the Kennedy Center's senior vice president of education. "We look forward to seeing the positive impact this program will have on the Trenton community.

The initiative involves three phases: strategic planning (year 1), implementation (years 2 to 4) and sustaining (year 5 and beyond).

Over the first nine months, Kennedy Center staff and consultants, along with a Community Arts Team, will review existing arts education for students in grades kindergarten through eighth to see what is offered, what is lacking and create a plan for improvement.

A committee will then be created to recommend to the district and local arts groups on how to best carry out the plan, focusing on increasing arts opportunities and reaching every child.

Educators and artists will also be able to take advantage of available resources.

The program aims to reduce administrative overhead by partnering with local arts groups and leveraging existing resources. Though the Kennedy Center covers the majority of the cost, the community is responsible for contributing funds toward the first four years.

Princeton resident Georgeanne Gould Moss, a member of the Kennedy Center's National Committee for the Performing Arts, is responsible for the funding and made a gift in memory of her late father.

"I've seen firsthand how this wonderful program offers artistic resources for children in underserved communities," she said. "Two years ago, I had a vision and dream to bring the resources of the Kennedy Center to our local community. I am honored that so many others felt the same way and helped to turn this vision into reality."

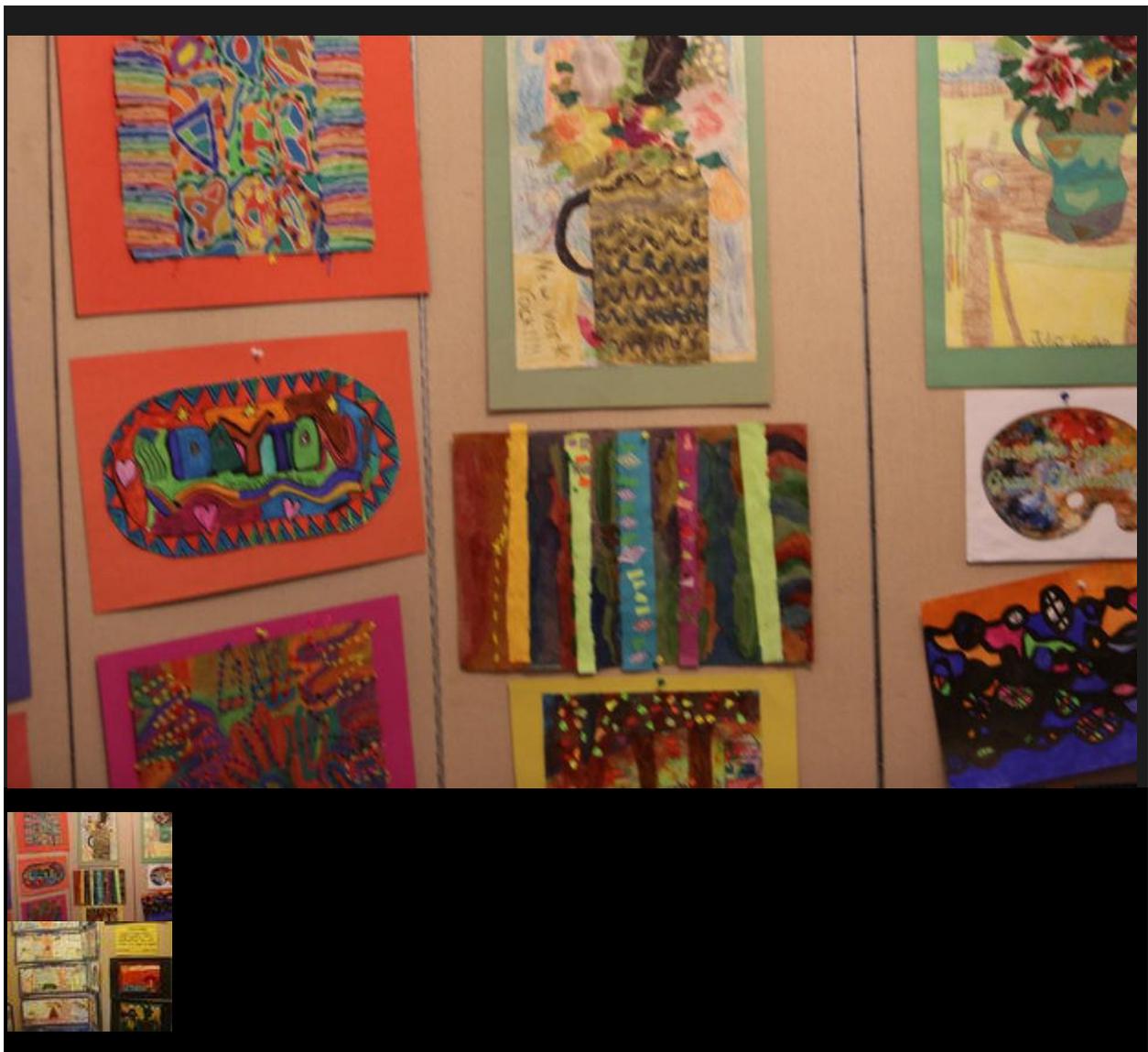
Both city and school officials said they looked forward to working with the community to bring the plan to fruition.

"The Kennedy Center's Any Given Child grant offers a wonderful opportunity for our school children and the City of Trenton," Mayor Eric Jackson said. "It will showcase the talent of our

children and teaching staff, and highlight the rich and diverse artistic and cultural community which calls Trenton home."

The program has found success in cities across the country since starting in 2009 in Sacramento, California. Districts have been able to hire additional arts teachers, expand arts offerings and establish new sources of funding, among other things.

*Cristina Rojas may be reached at [crojas@njadvancemedia.com](mailto:crojas@njadvancemedia.com). Follow her on Twitter [@CristinaRojasTT](https://twitter.com/CristinaRojasTT). Find **The Times of Trenton on Facebook**.*







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