

NJ.com/Trenton Times

March 14, 2016

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TPEF Receives Donation from Princeton Artist



Sydney Neuwirth Courtesy photo

The very generous artist Sydney Neuwirth, of Princeton, believes in instilling an appreciation of the arts in young people and has donated a collection of 15 acrylic paintings to the Trenton Public Education Foundation (TPEF) for fundraising purposes to enhance the lives of Trenton public school students. On Tuesday, April 12 from 5:30 to 8 p.m., there will be an Art Sale and Wine Tasting with the opportunity for guests to meet Sydney Neuwirth and purchase her colorful pieces. It will take place at The Mansion at SAVE Animal Shelter, 1010 Route 601, Skillman. The ticket price of \$35 includes a sampling of wines from around the world and hors d'oeuvres and can be purchased at tpef.org, by e-mailing info@tpef.org, or calling 609-656-4900 #5604.

The proceeds from the Art Sale will support the Trenton Public Education Foundation's arts education initiative which is the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts' program called Ensuring the Arts for Any Given Child, being administered by TPEF on behalf of the Trenton public schools. Through a competitive process, the TPEF was accepted, making Trenton the 19th Any Given Child partner city in the nation. The primary goal of the Kennedy Center's Any Given Child program is to assist communities in developing and implementing a plan for expanded arts education in their schools, ensuring access and

equity for all students in Pre-K through 8th grade. Although the initiative provides a structure for work to be accomplished, the Kennedy Center understands that every community is unique, and tailors the consultation and facilitation to each site. In Trenton, the plan will be expanded to include an arts education plan in the high schools as well. A prestigious 35-member Community Arts Team, representing the school district, the Office of Mayor, the arts and education communities, business leaders and philanthropy, has been working with representatives from Kennedy Center throughout the year to create the strategic arts education plan for the Trenton public school students.

For Sydney Neuwirth, this project is the ideal match for her personal philosophy. She said, "Art is such an important part of a child's growth. It helps children view the world. It gives them self-confidence and a sense of curiosity about life. How great if a child appreciates more of what he sees because of art! To me, a world without art is barren."

Neuwirth, a lifelong New Jersey resident, values her earliest memories with the arts. She was born in Belleville, a suburb of Newark, where her family had a paint business. As a child she lived in an apartment above her family's paint store, which was a gift in her life. She explained, "I was indulged mightily with art supplies – wallpaper samples, paints and glass supplies -- and I was able to experiment with everything. It was a great basis for my interest in art." She went to West Orange High School and then got a BA Degree from NJ College for Women, now Douglas College at Rutgers University. She studied art and majored in English. Neuwirth began her career as a writer and editor, but it was art that grabbed her.

After she married her husband, Lee, a mathematician, they moved to Princeton and raised their family there, as he was the Director at The Institute for Defense Analyses. When they were married, Neuwirth took water color classes locally; life classes drawing models. She also took dance and encouraged her daughter, actress Bebe Neuwirth, to dance as well. She said, "I'd take Bebe to dance class and sit back and draw." Between dancing and painting, Sydney Neuwirth has always been immersed in art. She instilled that in her own child too. Bebe has done pottery since high school. She laughed, "Recently Bebe would design pottery and I'd paint it! It was great fun!"

For 40 years, Sydney Neuwirth has been showing and selling her art in galleries in New York, New England, NJ, CA, NY and New Hope. She amassed such a collection of art that she is happy to make donations. When her daughter, a member of the Board of The Actor's Fund, created the Dancers Resource to assist professional dancers in many areas when they have problems, Sydney supplied paintings of dancers, and Bebe supplied photographs she had taken for a benefit to launch it.

Neuwirth, who also has a son Peter, an Actuary now living in California, hopes that more people get involved with art. She said, "I hope that people who see my art would want to try it themselves and keep at it. The personal reward is well worth it."

Ellen Mushinski, Executive Director of the Trenton Public Education Foundation, was overwhelmed when Georgeanne Moss, a New Jersey member of the National Committee for the Performing Arts of the John F. Kennedy Center, told her that Sydney Neuwirth was interested in donating her art to the TPEF. Mushinski said, "This is such a generous gift and Sydney is so kind to donate her art to help the TPEF do its work. The sale of her work can help us raise money to ensure we can implement the programs the Community Arts Team is developing as part of Any Given Child. How wonderful that funds raised through the sale of Sydney's art will be able to expand children's opportunities to explore the arts! We'll be selling art to enhance art education and art experiences." For more information about Trenton Public Education Foundation, visit tpef.org.

