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The Arts Step Up For Furloughed State Employees

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Arts organizations across the state are once again, embracing their role in One Maryland by joining together to offer free tickets and special discounts to the 67,000 State employees who have been furloughed in order to keep the state's budget in balance through the "Arts Step Up" program created by Maryland Citizens for the Arts (MCA). The "Arts Step Up Program" was originally established last year when furloughs were first announced. The arts community then came together to provide opportunities for state employees, and also show its appreciation to the Governor and General Assembly for their support of the Maryland State Arts Council.

Douglas R. Mann, MCA Chair, explained: "Leaders of arts organizations across the state are dealing with furloughs and cutbacks in their own staffs due to the recession. They know firsthand the impact such actions have on people's lives, and they feel this is one small way the arts community can help fellow Marylanders during these hard economic times. MCA, which is a grassroots organization advocating for the arts throughout Maryland, seemed to be the natural choice to lead this initiative. We're thrilled with the outcome, which we hope will offer State employees more opportunities to take advantage of the rich and diverse range of arts experiences available in Maryland."

Over 25 arts organizations have already established special promotions for State employees. Theaters, museums, orchestras, festivals, and other artistic institutions across the state will be offering free and discounted tickets, family events, 2-for-1 offers, gift shop discounts and giveaways. MCA is coordinating this program and expects the list of organizations participating to expand in the days ahead.

"In the midst of a national recession, it can be easy to overlook the positive impact that the arts can have on our lives particularly in difficult times," said Governor O'Malley. "I want to thank the arts community for this thoughtful gesture. Our State workforce – the best team of public servants in the nation – certainly appreciates it and looks forward to taking advantage of the opportunity."

To find out about these special arts opportunities for State employees, go to the Maryland Citizens for the Arts' website (www.mdarts.org) and click on the "The Arts Step Up" icon to enter a portal to the websites of participating arts organizations. State employees will need to show their State identification cards to take advantage of these offers.

MARYLAND CITIZENS FOR THE ARTS

Maryland Citizens for the Arts (MCA) is a statewide arts advocacy organization, founded in 1977 to represent all Maryland artists and arts organizations of every discipline. Its principal mission is to promote adequate funding for the Maryland State Arts Council and to advocate for the arts at the state and federal levels. MCA, along with its companion organization, Maryland Citizens for the Arts Foundation, implements effective strategies to enhance the arts in Maryland by building partnerships, advocating for funding stability, and promoting the visibility of the arts in our state.

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