

artsREACH

Media Release

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Capital Region children benefit from Retired Teachers of Ontario grant for artsREACH workshops

Victoria, BC - *The Octa Collective Society* (Octa) has received a "Project - Service to Others" grant from the Retired Teachers of Ontario (Victoria Unit) at a special presentation following a painting workshop at George Jay Elementary. The \$4000 grant will cover the cost of delivering ten **artsREACH** workshops in drawing, painting or theatre, in public elementary schools in School Districts 62 and 63 in the 2006/07 school year.

"The **artsREACH** project was a great fit for our "Project - Service to Others" grant, said Cliff Whitfield, President of the Retired Teachers of Ontario (Victoria Unit). "The intent of the grant is to raise the profile of retired teachers by visibly demonstrating to active teachers and to the public-at-large that retired teachers care about their communities and about public education, and are willing to do something to help those who need assistance. The **artsREACH** project eliminates the cost barriers to high-quality arts education and reaches children from low-income families through its delivery of workshops in public elementary schools. Our grant ensures that this valuable program reaches and benefits more children in our community."

"We were thrilled to receive this grant because it recognizes the importance of life skills development through participation in the arts – and supports the expansion of the **artsREACH** project beyond the Greater Victoria area", said Marilyn Sing, Board President of Octa. "Since the launch of the **artsREACH** project in January 2006, 50 workshops have been delivered in 16 public elementary schools and over 1,000 children have explored art skills development under the leadership and guidance of professional artists and actors. This grant means that approximately 250 children in School District 62 and 63 will have the opportunity to participate and benefit from an **artsREACH** workshop during the next school year".

A registered not-for-profit society, Octa will meet its goal to deliver 55 **artsREACH** workshops in the 2005/2006 school year. During the 2006/07 school year, its goal is to deliver 100 workshops. Funds to cover the cost of workshops are raised through grants, private donations, sponsorships and fundraising events.

For more information:

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Backgrounder:

The **Retired Teachers of Ontario/les enseignantes et enseignants retraités de l'Ontario** - commonly referred to as RTO/ERO - is a provincial, bilingual organization of retired Ontario teachers, administrators and other educational personnel. With 179 members, the Victoria Unit is one of four British Columbia units that make up District 42.

Project - Service to Others is a Provincial RTO/ERO program which provides grants to Districts for initiatives which support the concept of "Service to Others".