



Organizational Overview

COCA is the largest multidisciplinary arts institution in the St. Louis region and one of the premier community arts centers in the country. Housed in a 60,000 square foot building designed by world-renowned architect Eric Mendelsohn, COCA serves 50,000 area residents each year through on-site programs and an extensive outreach program. These include performances in COCA's 400-seat Founders' Theatre; educational classes, camps, and workshops serving individuals aged 6 months through adult; artists' residencies; exhibits of contemporary art in the Millstone Gallery; and the nationally recognized Urban Arts Program.

Mission

COCA enriches lives and builds community through the arts.

History

COCA was founded in 1986 by Richard Baron, President of McCormack Baron Salazar Inc., in conjunction with the late Dorothy Dubinsky, Mark Twain Banks, Robert Orchard, the Sachs Fund and Trivers Associates. A \$2 million renovation in 1985-86 transformed the former B'nai Amoona Synagogue in University City, designed in 1946 by renowned architect Eric Mendelsohn, into an ideal site for a community based arts center. The building is on the National Register of Historic Places.

Financial Information 2009-2010

Total operating budget: \$ 4.1 million

Earned income: \$1.6 million | Contributed operating income: \$ 2.5 million | Endowment value: \$1.8 million

Commitment to Accessibility

Education Program Enrollment (2008-2009):

At COCA's University City facility: 7,200 students

In St. Louis County (40+ locations): 4,400 students

In St. Louis City Schools (8 locations): 3,200 students

Staff

45 full-time, part-time, faculty/staff positions, 300 artist-instructors

Core Programs

Arts Education: offering 500 classes in dance, music, drama, the visual and culinary arts taught by a distinguished faculty of 150 professionally trained artist-instructors, both on- and off-site.

COCA Family Theatre: presenting internationally acclaimed music, theatre and dance performances to 12,000 children, teens and adults each year.

Millstone Gallery: presenting innovative exhibitions and educational programs featuring the work of regional, national, and international artists.

Urban Arts Programs: offering multi-faceted outreach programs, free of charge, which include:

- After-school Arts Classes
- Pre-Professional Dance Program
- Summer Arts Camps
- Art & Technology Program
- Scholarship Fund
- SchoolTime Arts Residency Program

Awards and Recognition

- 2009 • COCA was selected as one of 19 nationally recognized arts institutions to participate in a study on *The Qualities of Quality* by Harvard's Project Zero.
- 2007 • COCA selected to receive a third Ford Foundation grant to support programming through Interchange, an arts education collaborative founded on the Urban Arts model.
- 2006 • COCA was selected as one of twelve case study sites nationally for *Qualities of Quality: Excellence in Arts Education and How to Achieve It*, a research study conducted by Harvard University's Project Zero. This study aims to better understand what it takes to create and sustain high-quality arts learning and teaching, both in and out of school.
- 2004 • COCA selected to receive a second Ford Foundation grant to continue planning a major expansion of its Urban Arts Program model.
- 2004 • COCA's Urban Arts Program received the 2004 New Light Award from St. Louis for Kids for its outstanding program model.
- COCA selected to receive one of six planning grants for school reform initiatives nationwide from the Ford Foundation; the award is helping COCA to plan for a major expansion of its Urban Arts Program model.
- 2003 • COCA was one of twenty-two organizations nationwide to receive a Leadership and Excellence in Arts Participation (LEAP) grant from the Wallace Foundation.
- COCA's Pre-Professional Dance Program selected a "Coming Up Taller" award recipient from the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities. Presented at the White House by Laura Bush. Semi-finalist awards received in 2002, 2000 and 1996.
- COCA and McCormack Baron Salazar Inc. received "Bridge Builders Award" from Partners for Livable Communities for their exemplary partnership aimed at using culture as a bridge to community improvement. COCA's Urban Arts program noted as exemplary site for affordable arts and education programs for youth and family in the St. Louis community.
- 2002 • COCA selected as "Best Arts Organization" in the Riverfront Times *Best of St. Louis* edition.
- 2002 • COCA selected by the Ford Foundation as one of two institutions to participate in nationally recognized study to evaluate the role of arts education in shaping children's views of adults and society.
- 2001 • COCA received "Creative Communities: Challenge America Grant", one of twenty institutions nationally.
- 2000 • *Excellence in the Arts Award* from the Arts & Education Council of St. Louis.

COCA Alumni

COCA continues to place its students in prestigious post-secondary programs including The Juilliard School, State University of New York at Purchase, Tisch School for the Arts, University of Michigan, and North Carolina School for the Arts. COCA students have been offered positions in nationally known dance companies such as Dance Theatre of Harlem, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Philadanco, Trisha Brown Dance Company, Houston Ballet, Ballet Hispanico and the Joffrey Ballet.