



NEWS RELEASE

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COCA MEETS & EXCEEDS \$5 MILLION BERGES FAMILY FOUNDATION CHALLENGE

\$1.5 Million from The Monsanto Company is lead gift among 83 given as part Challenge

COCA-Center of Creative Arts announced today that 83 community donors stepped up with just over \$5.2 million raised to both meet and exceed a \$5 million Challenge Gift pledged by the Berges Family Foundation. A \$1.5 gift from The Monsanto Company was the lead gift to the Challenge bringing the total raised for COCA's Create Our Future Campaign to just under \$36 million towards a \$40 million goal.

"This organization has been doing vital work for our community for 30 years – using arts to impact our schools and to create pathways of success for thousands of young people," said Jim Berges. "We wanted to make a bold statement in support of COCA and to help the organization grow. It is a solid investment in the future of an organization that is critical to St. Louis."

The Monsanto Company's capital gift comes in addition to the award of a \$25,000 grant from the Fund to support COCA's nationally recognized Pre-Professional Division.

"COCA is dedicated to expanding access, and it has a tremendous track record of delivering results," said Al Mitchell, president of The Monsanto Company. "In this case, it was an easy decision. Put simply, COCA has provided opportunities that have profoundly impacted the lives of more kids through arts and education, especially those who otherwise would not have had access. That's why Monsanto made this investment."

Announced by COCA early in 2017, the \$40 million Create Our Future Campaign will raise \$27 million for the capital renovation and expansion of COCA's historic building in University City and \$13 million to fund the organization's endowment and reserves. The Berges Family Foundation promised this past summer to match dollar for dollar gifts made to COCA's Campaign by September 30, 2017.

"We are incredibly grateful to the Berges family, The Monsanto Company, and the entire community for this profound statement of confidence in our project and in COCA's future, and we are thrilled we were able to rise to the challenge, thanks to an amazing group of supporters and volunteers," said COCA Executive Director Kelly Pollock.

Other lead gifts to COCA's Campaign include \$5 million from Alison and John Ferring, a \$3 million lead corporate gift from Centene Charitable Foundation, \$2 million from Cheryl Holman, David Joyner and Bill Lawton, and Carol and Michael Staenberg, and \$1 million from Jennifer and Tom Hillman, Jane and Dave Peacock, and Edward Jones.

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About the Berges Family Foundation

The Berges Family Foundation supports the institutions and organizations that make Saint Louis a great place to live, visit, and invest, with contributions for cultural engagement; STEM preparedness; youth empowerment; and support for our heroes and first responders. Visit www.bergesfamilyfoundation.org to learn more.

About The Monsanto Fund

The Monsanto Fund is the philanthropic arm of the Monsanto Company. It is a nonprofit organization dedicated to strengthening the communities where farm families and Monsanto Company employees live and work. Visit www.monsantofund.org to learn more.

About COCA

Founded in 1986, COCA is the fourth largest multidisciplinary community arts center in the country and a national leader in innovative arts education. With a mission to enrich lives and build community through the arts, COCA serves 50,000 people of all ages and skill levels, from enthusiastic amateurs to emerging professionals — all taught by a faculty of distinguished arts educators. We provide meaningful arts experiences in our own studios, gallery and theatres as well as in schools, community centers and corporate settings in order to build a vibrant St. Louis that is creative, connected and inclusive. Visit www.cocastl.org to learn more.