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AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATER AWARDED GRANTS TOTALING \$750,000
FROM CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO'S
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN, YOUTH AND THEIR FAMILIES

Grant to support funding for A.C.T.'s ACTsmart Intensive Residencies
over the next five years

SAN FRANCISCO (March 23, 2018) – **American Conservatory Theater (A.C.T.)** announced today that it has been awarded grants totaling \$750,000 over the next five years to support **ACTsmart Intensive Residencies**, which provide in-depth arts education to youth from systemically marginalized communities at a variety of schools and community sites throughout San Francisco, with a broad focus on providing opportunities for those who have traditionally had limited access to the art of live performance and theater-based arts education. The grant is part of \$377 million in new funding support announced recently by San Francisco **Mayor Mark Farrell** and the **Department of Children, Youth and Their Families (DCYF)** for youth programs over the next five years. The new funding is made possible by Proposition C, a voter-approved initiative which increased the Children and Youth Fund to 4 cents of every \$100 of assessed property tax revenue. DCYF administers the fund to community-based organizations that provide services to children, youth, transitional age youth (TAY), and their families, prioritizing the lowest-income neighborhoods where children and youth are likely to have the greatest level of need for services as well as specific populations that would benefit from targeted programming. DCYF received 693 proposals from 248 agencies in response to a request for proposals issued to determine which programs would receive funding.

Through the DCYF funding—providing \$150,000 a year for five years—A.C.T. will be able to deepen and strengthen the residency program, continuing A.C.T.'s mission of providing diverse young people and educators with opportunities to experience the transformative potential of dramatic storytelling—developing creativity, critical thinking, empathy, and collaborative spirit while fostering the artists, audiences, and engaged citizens of the future.

Says **Elizabeth Brodersen**, A.C.T.'s Director of Education & Community Programs: "We are thrilled and honored to be the recipient of DCYF support, which helps make it possible for A.C.T. to make theater-based arts education accessible to thousands of young people each year. San Francisco's youth are the future of our great city, and we have much to learn from them. The students in the ACTsmart Intensive Residencies have powerful and important stories to tell, and it is a privilege to provide them opportunities for creative learning and to bring those stories to theatrical life."

Launched in 2011 with a year-long pilot residency program with Downtown Continuation High School, a project-based public school in the San Francisco Unified School District dedicated to serving teenagers who have not experienced success in traditional comprehensive high schools, ACTsmart Intensive Residencies provide in-depth arts education to systemically marginalized youth at a variety of schools and community sites in San Francisco, with a broad focus on providing opportunities for those who have not traditionally had access to the art of live performance and theater-based arts education. These in-depth year-long intensive residencies provide ongoing instruction in theatrical writing, performance, and production; opportunities to perform on A.C.T. stages; tickets to A.C.T. shows; and master classes with guest faculty and M.F.A. Program Citizen Artists—all at no cost—to SFUSD schools and community-based organizations serving socioeconomically disadvantaged youth. Since its inception, ACTsmart Intensive Residencies have expanded to eight sites, including Ida B. Wells High School (where A.C.T.'s residency has been funded by DCYF since 2013), Bessie Carmichael PreK–8 School/Filipino Education Center and Galing Bata, AccessSFUSD: The Arc for TAY with developmental disabilities, Boys & Girls Clubs of San Francisco (Tenderloin and Columbia Park sites), Hilltop Special Services Center for pregnant and parenting teens, and Mission High School.

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ABOUT A.C.T.'S EDUCATION & COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

Under the leadership of Director of Education & Community Programs Elizabeth Brodersen, A.C.T.'s community-based educational efforts bring diverse groups of young people and adults from across the Bay Area together with the A.C.T. community to experience firsthand the transformative potential of dramatic storytelling. The ACTsmart arts education programs—which serve 15,000 students each year—include our Student Matinee (SMAT) program, which offers low-cost and complimentary tickets to mainstage and A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program performances; Will on Wheels, the annual tour of a Shakespeare classic performed in schools and community venues; ACTsmart workshops and tours for school and community groups; and the ACTsmart Intensive Residency program, which provides instruction in writing and performance for youth with the least access to theater education.

A.C.T. also offers Back to the Source, an immersive summer institute for educators who use theater techniques in the classroom, as well as ongoing professional development during the school year. In addition, A.C.T.'s community programs connect with communities that have historically had the least access to theater performance and education, particularly the Bayview and Tenderloin neighborhoods, to offer a variety of opportunities to experience live theater: workshops, free tickets to mainstage and M.F.A. Program shows, community dinners and events with cast members, and other special events. The annual Every 28 Hours Black Arts Festival brings community members and students in our ACTsmart Intensive Residencies together with students in A.C.T.'s Young Conservatory and M.F.A. Program to highlight police brutality and oppression against Black communities and celebrate the resilience of the Black community. The Citizen Artist curriculum, a partnership with the A.C.T. M.F.A. Program, trains M.F.A. students to be socially conscious teaching artists and provides them direct experience working in our various school and community programs.

For more information, visit www.act-sf.org/education.