
For Immediate Release

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**Fuquay-Varina Parks, Recreation & Cultural Resources Department
Wins NC Recreation and Park Association Arts & Humanities Award**

At the November 7th Town Board meeting, Mayor John W. Byrne and the Fuquay-Varina Board of Commissioners recognized the Town's Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Department for being awarded the prestigious North Carolina Recreation and Park Association's 2016 Arts & Humanities Award for innovative and effective cultural arts and humanities programming for the Arts Inspired program offered through the Fuquay-Varina Community Center.

Over the past 3 years, the Fuquay-Varina Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Department (PRCRD) has experienced a significant boost in cultural arts programs offering 826 individual programs with over 2,619 hours of programming in art, dance, music, gymnastics, yoga, and culinary arts. Programming has drawn from a diverse age and demographic population with more than 5,500 participants in three short years.

The mission of the Arts & Humanities Award Arts is to recognize communities that provide quality, affordable arts education and performance opportunities for area youth that inspire a passion for education, development and community enhancement in the cultural arts.

The PRCR's Arts Inspired Program, under the direction of Michelle Hankins, has grown to include 20 classes a week, many of which have wait-lists. Arts Inspired reaches over 200 students of all ages with a variety of socio-economic backgrounds, cultural beliefs and a desire to participate in cultural arts activities. Low income students can participate free of charge or at a discounted rate. In addition, shoes and dancewear are provided when necessary to insure that no student is turned away because of the burden of finances.

A variety of performance opportunities allow students to set goals, obtain confidence and a sense of achievement. Semi- annual and annual recitals featuring original choreography, exciting themes, professional costumes and staging provide performers a professional training experience at little cost to the participants. Collaborating with art instructor, Christina Myatt, performances also feature an exhibit of art work created by FVPRCR students.

"While education is a main component of the daily work at Parks, Recreation & Cultural Resources, Arts Inspired has also inspired our community by providing students an opportunity to develop empathy, compassion and appreciation. Students have collected hundreds of pounds of food for the local food pantry, toys to support our Marines, collected money and gifts to support a local camp for at risk children," said PRCR Director Jonathan Cox.

Mayor John W. Byrne commended the staff and Ms. Hankins for their hard work in making the Arts Inspire program a state recognized program in excellence. "I am extremely proud of this award. The Town is making exceptional inroads into offering high quality cultural arts programming. These quality of life amenities are important for citizens and in high demand. Fuquay-Varina is the only town with a population of 25,000 or fewer to receive this annual award in the state. I'd say that's very significant."

Attached: Photo PRCRD with Town Board at Nov. 7, 2016 Town Board Meeting.