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**Madison Symphony Orchestra Awarded National Endowment for the Arts Grant**  
Grant to Support Renowned *HeartStrings*<sup>SM</sup> Community Engagement Program

National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Chairman Jane Chu announced May 10, 2016, that the Madison Symphony Orchestra (MSO) has been awarded an NEA Art Works grant of \$20,000 to support *HeartStrings*<sup>SM</sup>, an internationally-recognized, music therapy-informed community engagement program for individuals with special needs. The NEA has approved more than \$82 million total to fund local arts projects and partnerships in this second major funding announcement for fiscal year 2016.

HeartStrings uses live music to address the physical, emotional, cognitive, and social needs of individuals with disabilities, long-term illnesses, dementia, and assisted-living needs. Participants receive the *HeartStrings*<sup>SM</sup> program free-of-charge, and the MSO's Rhapsodie Quartet, a professional string quartet comprised of principal MSO musicians, performs the music live at various sites. The Quartet will facilitate a series of 9 group music therapy-informed sessions at 10 retirement communities, healthcare facilities, and state institutions across Dane County, reaching nearly 3,200 individuals --many of whom would not otherwise have access to the restorative effects of live music.

"The arts are all around us, enhancing our lives in ways both subtle and obvious, expected and unexpected," said Chu. "Supporting projects like the one from the Madison Symphony Orchestra offers more opportunities to engage in the arts every day."

MSO Director of Education and Community Engagement Kathryn Schwarzmann said, "HeartStrings is a signature program of the Madison Symphony Orchestra, which brings meaningful musical experiences directly into the lives of individuals with special needs throughout Dane County, Wisconsin. This nationally-recognized community engagement program combines the beneficial effects of live music with participatory, music therapy-informed activities designed to promote the well-being of traditionally underserved populations."

The NEA's Art Works grants support the creation of work, and presentation of both new and existing work, lifelong learning in the arts, and public engagement with the arts through 13 arts disciplines or fields. To join the Twitter conversation about this announcement, please use **#NEASpring16**. For more information on projects included in the NEA grant announcement, go to [arts.gov](http://arts.gov)

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