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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**CMA FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES 2017 MUSIC EDUCATION GRANT RECIPIENTS
ON GLOBAL DAY OF GIVING**

Record \$3.1 Million to be Awarded to 44 Programs

NASHVILLE – Thanks to the generosity of Country artists and fans who attend CMA Music Festival, the CMA Foundation announced its annual donation for music education as well as grant recipients for 2017 with 44 charitable groups receiving a record \$3.1 million.

The grants bring CMA’s total contributions since 2006 to more than \$17.5 million for this important cause. The announcement was made via a video celebrating Giving Tuesday, a global day of giving.

“If it weren’t for the artists, who all perform for free during CMA Music Festival, and the thousands of fans who support the event each year, these donations would not be possible,” said **Sarah Trahern**, CMA Chief Executive Officer. “The CMA Foundation donates to causes that are important to our community, but every dollar is given on behalf of the artists and fans that support Music Fest each June.”

Programs were announced today by CMA staff in a “Mannequin Challenge” video with visiting artist **Cam**, which was shared to CMA’s social pages. “Mannequin Challenge” videos have been a viral hit the past few weeks including videos published by sports teams, celebrities, TV show casts including “Saturday Night Live,” and even one featuring First Lady Michelle Obama at The White House.

Facebook: <<TBD link to CMA’s page>>

Twitter: <<TBD link to CMA’s page>>

Programs benefiting from the CMA Foundation in 2016 include:

Austin Ed Fund

Austin Independent School District (AISD) is among the largest urban school districts in Texas serving nearly 84,000 students across 130 campuses. Over the past several years, AISD has prioritized arts education as an integral part of ensuring all students are prepared for college, career, and life. In doing so, AISD committed in 2012 to make all district schools “arts-rich” by 2023, which includes nine components such as sequential fine arts instruction, community arts partnerships, after-school opportunities, and professional development.

Bay Area Children's Theatre (BACT)

Bay Area Children's Theatre's mission is to inspire young audiences by introducing children to the excitement of live theater. Beginning in the fall of 2017 and continuing through spring 2018, Bay Area Children's Theatre will present the third year of the Disney Musicals in Schools (DMIS) program, which provides musical theater access to low-income schools in Oakland and Richmond, Calif.

Camp Southern Ground

The vision for Camp Southern Ground in Peachtree City, Ga. is that of CMA Award-winning artist Zac Brown. Inspired by his experience as a camp counselor, Brown has created a state-of-the-art facility that will serve children ages 7-17 with both typical and special needs. Camp Southern Ground is a place for children and their families to learn healthy life skills through an advanced program involving superior nutrition, physical exercise, music and arts, technology, and embracing the outdoors. Camp Southern Ground will have activities to challenge, educate, and inspire children with diverse abilities, and from all socioeconomic backgrounds, races, and religions.

Charlie Worsham/Follow Your Heart Arts Program

Charlie Worsham's Follow Your Heart Arts Program exists to enrich and empower the lives of young people living in Grenada County, Miss. through music education. The program provides the opportunity for young people from Worsham's hometown to learn, play, create, and share music in collaboration with Delta State University professors and students alongside individuals from the Grenada Public Schools system. Follow Your Heart places instruments in the hands of students and then connects them with teachers.

Country Music Foundation, Inc./Country Music Hall of Fame® and Museum

The Country Music Hall of Fame® and Museum collects, preserves, and interprets the evolving history and traditions of Country Music. Words & Music is their curriculum-based program that creates in-school educational opportunities that address Common Core standards in language arts and music for 9,000 Middle Tennessee students. The program also provides out-of-school programs to at-risk youth; trains more than 100 classroom teachers in the curriculum; and connects students and teachers with professional songwriters.

Education Through Music

Education Through Music (ETM) partners with inner-city schools to provide all students with music as a core subject and to create school communities that value the arts. ETM's mission is to promote the use of music in schools as a means of enhancing students' academic performance and general development. The ETM model is anticipated to serve nearly 29,000 children at 50 elementary, middle, and K-8 schools in the Bronx, Queens, Manhattan, Brooklyn, and Staten Island.

Education Through Music LA

Education Through Music-Los Angeles (ETM-LA) is committed to provide and promote the integration of music into the curricula of disadvantaged schools in order to enhance students' academic performance and creative and general development. The partnership with the CMA Foundation will allow ETM-LA to further strengthen long-term partnerships with elementary and middle schools throughout Los Angeles County who would otherwise be unable to afford comprehensive music instruction in schools. By working closely with each principal, ETM-LA will address the critical needs of the school through an individualized, long-term plan for sustainability. ETM-LA will be serving approximately 12,500 children at 25 partner schools.

Girls Rock Santa Barbara

Girls Rock Santa Barbara (GRSB) is a non-profit organization that empowers female-identified youth and fosters self-confidence, creativity, and teamwork by using music and female mentorship as tools for social change. GRSB brings girls together from diverse backgrounds and gives them the opportunity to expand their cultural awareness, develop life skills, and tell their unique group story. It is less about playing an instrument and more about finding one's voice through music. GRSB is driven by one simple motto: love the music you make, and love yourself for making it.

Guitars in the Classroom

Guitars in the Classroom (GITC) is dedicated to improving the quality of education for all students by expanding the role of learning through music in every kind of classroom. GITC improves musical access in public education through ongoing teacher training, mentoring, and in-classroom coaching, as well as access to musical and instrumental resources. GITC teachers learn to lead hands-on music integrated with English language arts, math, science, social studies, character development, and special education. GITC's work promotes teacher effectiveness, student literacy, and academic success in K-12 by boosting student engagement, communication skills, critical thinking, and the capacity for creative collaboration.

Harmony Project

Harmony Project offers music instruction to Los Angeles children with the greatest needs and the fewest resources. Founded in 2001 with only 36 students, Harmony Project now commits to more than 2,000 students for their entire childhood to ensure they receive the support necessary to graduate high school and continue to college. Their mission promotes the healthy growth and development of children through the study, practice, and performance of music; builds healthier communities by investing in the positive development of children through music; and develops children as musical ambassadors of peace, hope, and understanding amongst people of diverse cultures, backgrounds, and beliefs.

Indiana Music Education Association Foundation

The mission of IMEA is to advance music education in Indiana by advocating for the best musical interests of all students by providing quality programs, professional development, and services. The funding includes support for six specialized workshops throughout the state for music educators working in various disciplines and diverse geographic settings. In addition, IMEA's annual Professional Development Conference each January serves more than 1,000 music teachers.

John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts

Turnaround Arts at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Arts leverages the unique power of the arts in education to accelerate transformations in the nation's most underserved public schools: chronically struggling schools at the elementary and middle school level that are ranked among the lowest five percent in their state. Through ambitious and strategic arts investments, Turnaround Arts empowers whole-school transformation.

KIDsmART

KIDsmART's mission is to engage children in dynamic, creative, and rigorous learning through the arts. Any Given Child's mission is to ensure that every K-8 child will receive pervasive, abundant, and resource-rich arts learning experiences that are connected to New Orleans culture and to support excellence and best practices in education.

Little Kids Rock

Little Kids Rock transforms lives by restoring, expanding, and innovating music education in schools including their Modern Band Teacher Professional Series – including Modern Band 101, Modern Band 102, and Modern Band Rockfest. The program also provides 29 professional development hours, and provides curricular resources including teacher manuals, song books, chord charts, regular lesson plans, and access to an online library of materials.

Metro Nashville Public Schools

A joint effort of Metro Nashville Public Schools, the Mayor's Office, and music industry and community leaders, the Music Makes Us® initiative aspires to be a national model for high quality music education. With a focus on music literacy and student participation, Music Makes Us is strengthening traditional school music while adding a contemporary curriculum that embraces new technologies and reflects the district's diverse student population.

Monroe Harding, Inc.

Monroe Harding, which provides a nurturing environment for Nashville children in foster care, is developing and implementing a year-round music education program for youth in their Cooperative Living (CL) program. "Soundtracks" will create a much needed opportunity for creative self-expression for at-risk teenage boys, who at this critical developmental stage need to be heard. Access to music gives them a positive experience of healing.

Murfreesboro Symphony Orchestra

The Murfreesboro (Tenn.) Symphony Orchestra Education Outreach Program provides events and activities that help encourage children to work hard within their school programs to make the most of their musical talents. These include Master Classes with professional musicians working with students and free family concerts.

Music and the Brain

Music and the Brain is a project of the 42nd Street Development Corporation designed to teach public school students to read and play music through classroom keyboard instruction, linking cognitive development and early music instruction. The program includes professional development training of music teachers in partner schools across all the regions they serve including New York City, New Orleans, and Ferguson, Mo.

Music For Everyone

Music For Everyone is a non-profit charitable organization dedicated to raising awareness and resources to strengthen the role that music plays in their schools and communities. MFE provides instruction, student community performances, access to professional performances, and summer learning opportunities for students across Lancaster County, Penn., reaching nearly 300 students per week. Additionally, they recently doubled the number of students in their summer camp program from 60 to 120 and after-school programs have doubled as well.

MusicAlliance, Inc.

Based in Mentor, Ohio, the goal of the MusicAlliance is to keep high quality, affordable instrumental music education and performance programs available to students who attend schools that do not otherwise provide their own such programs. They believe that studying a musical instrument plays an essential role in the academic, emotional, and social development of all students and contributes to helping them reach their full potential.

Nashville Symphony Association

The Nashville Symphony is the largest performing arts nonprofit in Tennessee and a major contributor to music education in Middle Tennessee. Music education and community engagement have been at the heart of the 83-member orchestra's mission since its founding in 1946. Through concerts, classroom presentations, curriculum materials, instrument lessons, and other hands-on learning opportunities, the Symphony's free education and engagement programs reach and engage tens of thousands of adults and children in Middle Tennessee every year.

National 4-H Council

The 4-H Mission is to empower youth to reach their full potential, working and learning in partnership with caring adults. National 4-H Council exists to support this through a direct mission: to increase investment and participation in high quality 4-H Positive Youth Development. Through investment in promising, scalable programs nationwide, Council promotes replication of life-changing experiences and outcomes for youth. The CMA Foundation is proud to support the inaugural Music Education Matters Summit in Atlanta.

New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Foundation

The mission of the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival and Foundation, Inc. (Jazz & Heritage Foundation) is to promote, preserve, perpetuate, and encourage the music, culture, and heritage of communities in Louisiana through festivals, programs, and other cultural, educational, civic, and economic activities.

Notes for Notes

Notes for Notes® is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that designs, equips, and staffs after-school recording studios inside Boys & Girls Clubs offering youth the opportunity to explore, create, and record music for free. Notes for Notes studios are packed with professional instruments (guitars, basses, drums, keyboards/synths), equipment (DJ gear, digital music workstations), and full recording facilities. Beyond providing access to equipment and resources, they educate youth about careers both on the stage and behind the scenes.

Paris Community Unit School District No. 4

The hometown of Country star Brett Eldredge, Crestwood School and the Paris Community Unit School District is nestled in a rural community with a population of less than 9,000, which is removed from any major cities and the resources they offer. Crestwood School and the community have placed a high priority on the fine arts and hopes to improve music instruction and give more students access to vocal and instrumental music programs in the district.

Paris Cooperative High School

Paris Cooperative High School's plan is to help develop students into life-long music participants who can discuss and engage in a wide variety of music. The school will use funds to repair and replace instruments needed for the continued growth of the band program. Many of the school-owned instruments used by students are 25-40 years old.

Phoenix Conservatory of Music

The Phoenix Conservatory of Music unleashes the power of music by providing high-quality music education and experiences to students and families that is affordable and accessible. They provide community education programs and classes, after-school programs for at-risk populations, private music instruction, and a unique college preparatory program in affiliation with Berklee College of Music's Berklee City Music Network.

Rainey Institute

Rainey Institute is dedicated to positive growth for Cleveland's youth through education and participation in the performing and visual arts. El Sistema@Rainey provides 90-minutes of daily instrumental music instruction to underserved Cleveland children in grades 2-8. El Sistema focuses primarily on children with the fewest resources and the greatest need.

Rocketown of Middle Tennessee

Founded by contemporary Christian music artist Michael W. Smith in 1994, Rocketown in Nashville serves children and teens through innovative and one-of-a-kind programs. Their vision is to be the place of peace, purpose, and possibilities for youth. All young people are welcome at Rocketown, and they regularly interact with those who are underserved, unsupported, disconnected, and feel isolated and hopeless. They believe young people grow and learn more readily in a community that is welcoming, diverse, and challenges them to think.

Rosie's House: A Music Academy for Children

Rosie's House in Phoenix is dedicated to the long-term success of Arizona students and utilizes music as a method of inspiration, motivation, and intervention for youth. Rosie's House free after-school music lessons for underserved youth acts as a method of prevention by providing a "second home" for more than 500 children vulnerable to drug and gang violence. In Arizona, at a time when the average per-pupil expenditure on arts instruction is less than \$1, they are a beacon of opportunity for youth that need a safe after-school "home." Overall, they serve 500 youth annually through their string, wind, brass, piano, choir, and mariachi programs.

Seattle Theatre Group

For the past two years, Seattle Theatre Group has focused on expanding musical theater arts education at nine Title 1 schools as an affiliate partner of the Disney Musicals in Schools program. The aim of the program is to build sustainable theater programs at under-resourced public elementary schools. Since 2014, the program has reached 300 students giving participating schools free performance materials and professional development training.

Seegerstrom Center for the Arts

Seegerstrom Center for the Arts exists to present a wide variety of the most significant national and international productions of music, dance, and theater to Southern California. The Center provides four underserved Title 1 elementary schools lacking access to the arts with the Disney Musicals in Schools program: a 17-week musical theater residency that develops sustainable theater programs.

St. Paul's Foundation's Ryan's Guitars Project

Ryan's Guitars Project, one of the works of St. Paul's, seeks to provide quality guitars and music instruction to poor and refugee children throughout the Middle East and the world so that they may learn positive ways to express themselves regardless of circumstance and heal themselves and others through that expression. The program is focused on reaching students in grades 3-12.

Tennessee Performing Arts Center

TPAC's Disney Musicals in Schools is a free semester-long, after-school musical theater program that inspires students and their school communities to organize around the challenging work of mounting a 30-60-minute musical production. Guided by TPAC Teaching Artists, this program utilizes active partnerships that combine school, professional, and community resources to create rich avenues for student learning while providing teachers with the training and tools needed to strengthen their arts programs. DMIS is expected to reach nearly 1,600 Metro Nashville Public Schools students in 30 elementary and middle schools this school year.

The Mr. Holland's Opus Foundation

The Mr. Holland's Opus Foundation keeps music alive in schools by donating musical instruments to under-funded music programs, giving young people the many benefits of music education, helping them to be better students, and inspiring creativity and expression through playing music. The Foundation was inspired by the acclaimed motion picture "Mr. Holland's Opus," the story of the profound effect a dedicated music teacher had on generations of students. In nearly 20 years, the foundation has donated to 1,412 schools nationwide.

The People's Music School

The People's Music School's mission is to deliver access to the benefits of high-quality, tuition-free music education. Through intensive instruction and performance, students achieve excellence in music that transfers to other areas in life. They grow musically, socially, emotionally, and intellectually, and develop a foundation of responsibility, self-esteem, resilience, and purpose. TPMS delivers more than 100,000 hours of free music education to more than 600 at-risk youth across the Chicago metropolitan area.

The Quest Center for Art & Community Development

The Quest Center is a 501(c)(3) non-profit music education and resource center located in Dickson, Tenn., a largely rural and lower income community 35 miles west of Nashville. The Center offers programs and a curated environment for music education, enrichment, and community development. The program serves children grades pre-K-12, including at-risk youth; those with behavioral, social, and emotional issues; and developmental delays.

The Roots of Music

The Roots of Music empowers youth in New Orleans through music education, academic support, and mentorship while preserving and promoting the unique musical and cultural heritage of the city. Each year, they strive to improve the quality of services offered while expanding the number of students they serve. Their goal is to implement a streamlined infrastructure that will diversify the programming and increase their outreach in Orleans parish schools.

The Young Americans

The Young Americans in Corona, Calif. is a non-profit 501(c)(3) performing arts and educational company with no political or religious affiliations. The group was founded in 1962 by Milton C. Anderson and is credited with creating the very popular “glee” and “show-choir” concepts in the early ‘60’s. The Young Americans serve as the oldest and largest youth music advocacy group in the world, whose main focus is to help strengthen music education programs in schools and communities and to inspire people through music and the arts.

VH1 Save the Music Foundation

VH1 Save the Music is committed to ensuring that music instruction is a core component to a complete education, giving children the tools and confidence to excel in academics and in life. Launched in 2016, VH1 Save the Music Foundation is offering a special Encore Grant specifically to past, full instrumental grant recipients, who have shown their continued commitment to music and building thriving programs. Schools that have had their original VH1 STM grant for three or more years can apply to add instruments to their growing programs.

Virginia Tech Foundation, Inc.

The Virginia Tech String Project, established in 2007, is the signature outreach program for the School of Music at Virginia Tech. Their mission is twofold: to provide affordable string instrument lessons to students in the community and to prepare Virginia Tech's undergraduate music students for success in the field of music education. They fill a significant gap in the public school system curriculum by providing low-cost beginning lessons in string instruments to students in the third and fourth grades. The students are taught by undergraduate music students, who are overseen, evaluated, and given critical feedback by the conductors and directors.

W.O. Smith/Nashville Community Music School

Since 1984, W.O. Smith Music School has provided music instruction to low-income students in the metropolitan Nashville area. Their vision is simple: transform lives through music. They strive to offer the best music education possible for their students, and do so through private instruction, classes, and ensemble opportunities, as well as master classes and performances by both local and national artists. The children are provided an instrument, necessary musical materials, and a volunteer teaching artist for their instruction. Lessons are offered for fifty cents and no student is turned away due to an inability to pay fees for any school programs.

Youth Empowerment through Arts and Humanities

YEAH! provides a conservatory-style learning atmosphere in which students are immersed for one week in the art of making music. Established 14 years ago in Murfreesboro, Tenn., YEAH! provides music programming that is accessible and engaging for young women because of its emphasis on pop, rock 'n' roll, and Country Music. Girls participate in instrument instruction, music industry workshops, social justice workshops, ensemble practice, and guest artist performances. Participating students form a band and learn in an ensemble setting using popular music to build music fundamentals. Students are taught how to play instruments, work together, write original songs, and market their bands.

Youth on Record

Youth on Record in Denver, Colo., values equity and the power of music, and they are committed to ensuring that the youth they serve through their music programs graduate from high schools and are ready to enter the workforce, and transition to college, or enter advanced technical training and careers. They are an independent contractor within Denver Public Schools, Colorado’s largest district focused on engaging low-income students, who have lower graduation rates – sometimes less than 20 percent.

Studies show students who participate in the arts are more likely to graduate, have better attendance rates, and higher GPAs than students not enrolled in arts classes. The CMA Foundation recognizes the importance of music education in keeping kids engaged and in school as well as providing access to higher education through scholarships and supporting music educators.

CMA created the non-profit 501(c)(3) CMA Foundation in 2011. Guided by the generosity of the Country Music community, the CMA Foundation focuses on improving and sustaining music education programs everywhere while supporting worthwhile causes important to the Country Music Association.

For more information, visit CMAfoundation.org.

.@CountryMusic takes on the #MannequinChallenge on #GivingTuesday to announce \$3.1m granted to 44 programs! #CMAfoundation <<link>>

****Suggested Tweet****:.@CountryMusic takes on the #MannequinChallenge on #GivingTuesday to announce \$3.1m granted to 44 programs! #CMAfoundation <<link>>

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