

City of Dallas News Release

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City of Dallas

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City of Dallas Office of Cultural Affairs Celebrates 20 Years of Art and Culture

On April 12, 2009, the Office of Cultural Affairs (OCA) celebrates the 20th Anniversary of City Council's approval of the ordinance that created the Office of Cultural Affairs and an advisory board of citizens, the Cultural Affairs Commission. In its two decades of existence, OCA has worked to foster a vibrant arts and cultural environment for Dallas citizens and visitors. OCA facilitates cultural programs, develops new cultural opportunities and partnerships, oversees 18 city-owned arts facilities, coordinates public art projects, supports Dallas' diverse arts and cultural organizations, operates the City's classical music station WRR 101.1 and City Channel, and promotes public awareness of the City's role in the arts.

In honor of this exciting milestone, the Office Cultural Affairs is planning a month-long celebration aimed at further raising the awareness of the City's varied cultural offerings and setting the stage for the next 20 years of cultural excellence. The celebration will include free open houses at Dallas Cultural Centers and the program *20 Days, 20 Deals: Celebrating 20 Years of Excellence in Dallas Arts and Culture*. From April 13 through May 8, Dallas citizens and visitors can visit the OCA website, www.dallasculture.org, to get exclusive discount deals to Dallas' coolest arts and cultural events as well as additional information on OCA's 20th Anniversary.

Maria Muñoz-Blanco, director of the Office of Cultural Affairs, explains, "The arts are a critical part of the spirit and identity of a community. The Office of Cultural Affairs is well aware that the arts also support creative business industries, cultural tourism, and the academic success of our children, who will lead this city in the future. We are thrilled to celebrate this milestone in our history, as it gives us the opportunity to reflect on our past successes as well as plan for continued growth and accomplishments in the future."

In 2008, over 2100 diverse programs were offered and more than 400,000 citizens and visitors were served by the Bath House, Ice House, Latino, and South Dallas Cultural Centers. The Office of Cultural Affairs also facilitated the national program, Free Night of Theater, and partnered with Thriving Minds and Dallas Independent School district for a groundbreaking arts education initiative that provided over one million hours of creative arts instruction. In addition, the Public Art program owns and maintains a collection of more than 300 works of art, most of which are in spaces accessible to the public, and the OCA also supports approximately 150 of Dallas' finest artists and organizations with multiple funding programs.