For Immediate Release:
August 14, 2013
Release #0019

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ARTSPACE RECIEVES $2 MILLION GRANT FROM KRESGE FOUNDATION FOR BELL SCHOOL CAMPUS IN NEW ORLEANS

Artspace to create 73 units of affordable live/work space for artists as part of a two-block arts and cultural campus in Tremé

Artspace is pleased to announce a major grant from the Kresge Foundation that will advance the organization's Bell School Arts Campus project in New Orleans' Tremé neighborhood. Support from the Kresge Foundation will enable Artspace to begin construction on Phase 1 of the Bell School Arts Campus in early 2014.

"Community members have made clear that the renovation of the Bell School property is important to revitalization in the Treme/Iberville neighborhood," commented Kresge's Regina R. Smith, Senior Program Officer, Arts and Culture. "And the project has many of the elements we look for when we fund efforts that integrate arts and culture with community revitalization work: There are partners from many sectors, and the project advances a shared vision for revitalization, benefits vulnerable populations and builds on the area's rich cultural traditions and heritage and on the school's historic role as a community center."

The first phase of the project will transform the two largest buildings into 73 units of affordable live/work housing for low- to moderate-income artists, cultural workers and their families, using $1.5 million of the Kresge Foundation grant. It will also restore the Band Room and create a 45,000-square-foot green space for everything from community recreation, athletic practice and marching band rehearsals to open air markets for art and fresh food. The remaining funds from the grant are reserved for phase 2 of the project, which will include a community kitchen and renovation of the three additional structures.

For more than a hundred years, the two-block Bell School campus anchored New Orleans' Tremé neighborhood as a place for education, music training and cultural development. Abandoned since Hurricane Katrina in 2005, these six extraordinary buildings will be given new life in a $38 million two-phase project that will restore not only the bricks and mortar but also the Bell School's historic role as a center of community life.

Artspace, partnering with Tremé4Tremé and Providence Community Housing, will transform the campus into a vibrant, multi-faceted arts facility with affordable live/work space for artists and their families, green space to be shared by the entire community and nonprofit incubator space that will allow partner organizations to engage the neighborhood in opportunity-creating programming. The old Band Room will be restored to its historic role as a training ground for New Orleans musicians. The Chapel will be used as a job-training site, in partnership with the New Orleans Master Crafts Guild, for workers in traditional artisan crafts – brick masonry, plaster and metalworking. The result will be a community asset where the arts are a common thread weaving together affordable housing, education and job training opportunities.

The Kresge Foundation adds their support for the Artspace Bell School Campus to funding already received from the Ford Foundation, ArtPlace, the Greater New Orleans Foundation, and JPMorgan Chase.

"The Kresge Foundation has been a tremendous supporter of Artspace in the past and we're thrilled and grateful to have their partnership in bringing back the Bell School," said Artspace President Kelley Lindquist. "The restored Bell School Campus will take currently dead, vacant, fenced-off space and transform it into an arts and educational center in the heart of Tremé. The Kresge Foundation grant is the catalyst that will allow us to begin our work."

About Artspace

With headquarters in Minneapolis and offices in Los Angeles, New Orleans, New York, Seattle and Washington, DC, Artspace is America's leader in artist-led community transformation with 33 projects in operation in 13 states. To date Artspace has completed more than 1,500 affordable live/work units for artists and their families as well as a million square feet of non-residential space for artists, arts organizations and creative enterprises. Additional information is available at www.artspace.org.

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