

May 15, 2018

Media Contact:

Tami Wroath, Director of Marketing and Public Relations

Harn Museum of Art

352.294.7067

twroath@harn.ufl.edu

Note, video available for use:

<https://youtu.be/eQGQXAayrg0>

Early Learning at the Harn Reaches 500 Alachua County School Children and their Families

GAINESVILLE, FL, May 15, 2018—As the K-12 school year is coming to a close so is the Harn Museum of Art’s first Early Learning at the Harn program. Reaching more than 500 Alachua County students in Head Start (age 4) and kindergarten classes, the Harn Museum of Art at the University of Florida partnered with Duval Early Learning Academy, Fearnside Family Services Center, Terwilliger Elementary and Wiles Elementary to offer a multi-part program promoting visual literacy, vocabulary development and individual expression among young children, including those from low-income families who face an educational achievement gap.

Early Learning at the Harn connects an informal learning environment—the Harn Museum of Art—with early learning centers in the Gainesville area. The Harn provided educator workshops to introduce teachers to the museum and offered lesson plans which included an activity to prepare students for their visit. Each class took a field trip to the Harn organized around the theme “The Language of Art,” which incorporated standards developed by the Florida Office of Early Learning. The tour encouraged students to investigate how images are related to words and how pictures tell stories. It also provided a foundation for investigating the elements of art, such as line and color, and basic math concepts, such as shapes and quantities. In addition to an age-appropriate gallery exploration, students created art during their visit. Following the field trip, teachers led students in a lesson plan reflecting on their experiences.

Early Learning at the Harn invited families to get involved in the program by visiting each school/center for a parent engagement program featuring art-related activities and an exhibition of their child’s work. Each child received an “ABC: Art by the Letter” book, developed by the Harn, to take home. The book promotes vocabulary development and encourages parent-child interaction.

“Early childhood education is critical in establishing a strong foundation for lifelong learning and success,” said Brandi Breslin, Harn Museum of Art Coordinator of Gallery Interpretation and School & Educator Programs. “This program uses art to support classroom concepts and educational standards while capturing children’s attention in a creative way.”

Early Learning at the Harn grew out of the museum’s longtime successful family program, Tot Time, designed for children ages 2-5 and their caregivers. The development into a school-based partnership began when the Harn partnered with Duval Early Learning Academy during the 2016-2017 school year. This first collaboration was made possible thanks to the generous support of Mark and Stacy Avera and an anonymous donor.



PO Box 112700
SW 34th Street and Hull Road
Gainesville, FL 32611-2700
T 352.392.9826
F 352.392.3892
www.harn.ufl.edu

For the 2017-2018 school year, the program was named “Early Learning at the Harn”; gained a program assistant, Jill Schnortz, to help coordinate activities; and expanded to more schools through grant support from four sources: an anonymous foundation; Bank of America Charitable Foundation; an anonymous private donor; and the Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs, the Florida Council of Arts and Culture and the State of Florida. The “ABC: Art by the Letter” books, created by the Harn, were printed with support from Jamie Betz through EAD Corporation.

“We are overjoyed to be working with both schools and local funders to create a successful program incorporating art in the classroom while also encouraging family interactions based on their child’s visit to the Harn,” said Rebecca Nagy, Harn Museum of Art Director.

In addition to partnering with Alachua County Public Schools, Early Learning at the Harn also benefited from the contributions of curriculum consultation and program evaluation by the University of Florida Anita Zucker Center for Excellence in Early Childhood Studies.

Plans for the 2018-2019 school year include expansion of Early Learning at the Harn to all Head Start classes in Alachua County Public Schools. For more information about the program, contact Eric Segal, Director of Education, esegal@harn.ufl.edu.

A video providing an overview of the program and available for use is located here: <https://youtu.be/eQGQXAayrg0>

Images are also available upon request.

About the Samuel P. Harn Museum of Art

Founded in 1990, the Harn Museum of Art is an integral part of the University of Florida. The Harn contributes to an interconnected, international community by integrating the arts and culture into curricula throughout the university’s system of colleges and centers. Its holdings include more than 11,100 works in five main collecting areas: Asian art, African art, photography, modern art of the Americas and Europe, and international contemporary art. The museum also has noteworthy collections of Oceanic and Ancient American Art and works on paper. In addition to rotating installations drawn from its permanent collection, the Harn organizes traveling exhibitions, public lectures, panel discussions, academic symposia, and educational programs for adults, students, and children.

The Harn Museum of Art, at 3259 Hull Road in Gainesville, Florida, is part of the University of Florida’s Cultural Plaza, which is also home to the Florida Museum of Natural History and the Phillips Center for the Performing Arts. Admission is free. Hours are 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday and 1 to 5 p.m. Sunday. The museum is open until 9 p.m. the second Thursday of every month for Museum Nights. The Camellia Court Café is open Tuesday through Saturday 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. For more information call 352-392-9826 or visit harn.ufl.edu.

###