

## **Creativity Matters: Arts & Aging Core Training for Teaching Artists**

A project of the National Center for Creative Aging

Supported by the National Endowment for the Arts

The National Center for Creative Aging (NCCA) announced the roll-out of the Arts & Aging Core Training program in winter and spring 2012. With support from the NEA, this pilot program taught artists in three states to engage older adults in learner-centered arts education by drawing upon their life experience through story. Selected for excellence in their current arts education services, the partners invited participants from their rosters of teaching artists who had a history of delivering a top-notch arts education experience in the community.



NCCA collaborated with the Arts Council of Princeton (NJ), Pinellas County Cultural Affairs/Hoffman Institute for the Performing Arts at Ruth Eckerd Hall (FL), and the North Carolina Arts Council. The North Carolina Arts Council worked closely with Creative Aging Network-NC to promote and coordinate the event. This event served as a unique teaching opportunity in lieu of our traditional Symposium.

Responding to the needs of a “graying” America, the project extends pioneering work in the fields of gerontology and the arts and supports a vibrant cultural democracy which values older people as the keepers of culture. It is a groundbreaking step toward realizing a vision of teaching artists in every locale in the U.S. with the skills and knowledge to engage older adults in high-quality arts education and participation in the arts.

### **North Carolina Training, May 4 – 5**

Creativity Matters: Arts & Aging Core Training for teaching artists was held at The Music Academy of NC, Greensboro. Head trainer Susan Perlstein, founder of the National Center for Creative Aging and Elders Share the Arts, in collaboration with teaching artist Jorge Merced, associate artistic director at Pregones Theater in New York, shared skills necessary to engage older adults in high-quality participation in the arts. The training provided an overview of the principles of learner-centered education, and offered skill development in the use of life review, reminiscence and story as a basis for engaging older adults in meaningful arts activities. At the end of the month, a follow-up conference call was held with instructor Susan Perlstein for the teaching artists who participated in the earlier training. The sessions provided



guidance on how to embed a creative aging program in communities and addressed questions related to skills learned at the training. The sessions culminated with a national forum to pilot a training template and curriculum that can be replicated at the city, county and state levels, serving as a professional development tool for artists across the nation.