



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** - 25 February 2019

## SAAC Expands Art Education Programs to J.L. King Center

### STARKVILLE, MS -

SAAC is excited to expand its art education programs to the J.L. King Center. This expansion is accomplished through SAAC's Community Grant award and SAAC's Art Partners program.

In January 2019, SAAC awarded a \$2,000 grant to support an arts project at the J.L. King Center conducted in collaboration with The Homestead Education Center. This project, Black History Through the Arts, is taking place during February and offers a number of art activities to engage community youth and their families. In addition, thanks to a grant from Atmos Energy, SAAC expanded its Art Partners after-school enrichment program to include the J.L. King Center. This 4th location expands art education into a community that often doesn't have access or resources for after-school programs. SAAC firmly believes that art education is one of several components that builds well-rounded, bright thinkers.

The J.L. King Center tackles poverty with a holistic approach, offering a number of education, job, and family wellness programs. The Center offers classes in GED study and testing, workkeys, high school credit recoup workforce development skills, active parenting, healthy cooking, exercise classes, computer skills, and other tutoring programs. Art education is simply one part of a broader tool kit to fight the cycle of poverty.

Past J.L. King Center Project Director Elmarie Brooks notes, "SAAC's financial and personnel support of the J.L. King Center added a positive aspect to an impoverished area that has not happened in the past. Exposure to the arts as an after-school, fun-loving, FREE activity will greatly impact the community. By involving the entire family, the art program hopefully will build a stronger bond, high self-esteem, appreciation for art and involvement in arts throughout the city and state."

The Homestead Education Center has been a recurring supporter of the J.L. King Center for the past three years. Says Executive Director Alison Buehler, "We believe the Center is one of the most effective programs in our community addressing root causes of poverty."

Says Executive Director John Bateman: "I met with Director Elmarie Brooks late last fall to explore interest of bringing Art Partners to the J.L. King Center. This January, we

The mission of the Starkville Area Arts Council is to build a strong, creative, connected community through the arts.

[www.starkvillearts.org](http://www.starkvillearts.org)

[www.CDAFestival.com](http://www.CDAFestival.com)

[www.starkvegasart.org](http://www.starkvegasart.org)



received a grant award from Atmos Energy that allowed us to add J.L. King as a fourth site partner in the Starkville area. This helps J.L. King use art education as one of many tools in fighting the cycle of poverty. SAAC's board is pleased to work alongside The Homestead Center in support of these programs. I am very optimistic about the longevity of SAAC's relationship with the J.L. King Center."

For more information about J.L. King Center and its programs, please visit <https://www.thehomesteadcenter.org/jl-king-center>.

### **About SAAC**

Now in its third decade, the Starkville Area Arts Council sponsors the Cotton District Arts Festival, runs various outreach programs, and awards almost \$25,000 each year in grants and scholarships throughout Starkville and Oktibbeha County in its mission to build a strong, creative, connected community through the arts. The Starkville Area Arts Council (SAAC) appreciates the support of the City of Starkville and the Greater Starkville Development Partnership, Oktibbeha County, National Endowment for the Arts, Mississippi Arts Commission, Visit Mississippi, Del Rendon Foundation, 4-County Electric Foundation, and various local businesses and individuals. Additional information about SAAC can be found at [www.starkvillearts.org](http://www.starkvillearts.org).

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