

PRESS RELEASE - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Chagrin Arts awards performing arts scholarships to two high school seniors

CHAGRIN FALLS, OHIO – In honor of its 10th Anniversary, Chagrin Arts established two \$500 scholarship awards to be presented to high school seniors whose activities have demonstrated a passion for the performing arts. The scholarship was open to students who lived in the following communities: Auburn, Bainbridge, Bentleyville, Burton, Chagrin Falls, Chardon, Chester, Gates Mills, Hunting Valley, Moreland Hills, Munson, Newbury, Orange, Pepper Pike, Russell, S. Russell, Solon, Woodmere, or those currently enrolled in the Cleveland Metropolitan School District.

After a rigorous selection process, the scholarships were presented to their recipients at Chagrin Arts' 10th annual "Fire Up!" Benefit on May 17. *The Chagrin Valley Times Performing Arts Scholarship* was presented to **Vishal Sundaram, a senior at Solon High School** who will be attending Cornell University in the fall, and the *Stephen G. Thomas Performing Arts Scholarship* was presented to **Nijah Holliday, a senior at Cleveland School of the Arts** who will be majoring in music education when she enters college in the fall.

"Chagrin Arts strives to bring the power of the arts to as many as possible and the deserving recipients truly exemplify how encompassing that power is when combined with their own passion for the arts," said Karen Lazar, Executive Director of Chagrin Arts.

Vishal Sundaram is a cellist in the Solon High School Sinfonia Orchestra and has served as the Vice President of his orchestra program for the 2016-17 school year. "I find the creative aspect of the performing arts highly appealing," said Vishal. "Unlike most other academic disciplines that seem to dominate the high school experience, music and the arts give students an emotional outlet to create something that is uniquely their own. Even when playing the works of another composer, students are given the liberties of expression and interpretation to communicate an individuality that is often beyond words. I also enjoy the collaborative element of the performing arts...music making requires effective compromise, real time adjustment, and reconciliation of opposing views in order to move forward".

Both Vishal and Nijah credit their teachers as having a major influence in their love and pursuit of the performing arts.

Nijah Holliday is an orchestra major at Cleveland School of the Arts. She plays the double bass and has had the opportunity to play in chamber music groups, perform in the CSA orchestra as well as the Contemporary Youth Orchestra.

"Music has taken over a huge part of my life and being able to share that passion with other musicians and audiences is what I love most," said Nijah. "After I graduate high school, I am going to college to major in music education. My amazing teachers and mentors, along with my love for music and performing, have inspired me to want to give back and inspire others."

MORE

In addition to these two deserving students, Mayor Bill Tomko presented the *Chagrin Valley Times* with the Joan Brown Campbell Award for Arts and Culture, which was established in 2015 by Chagrin Arts.

CHAGRIN VALLEY TIMES PERFORMING ARTS SCHOLARSHIP

The Chagrin Valley Times Performing Arts Scholarship was created via funding provided by the *Chagrin Valley Times*, whose staff has played a leading role in bringing arts and culture to thousands, providing cost-effective advertising, editorials, catalogs and shout-outs for every arts and culture organization in Chagrin Falls and beyond. This \$500 scholarship was open to students who live in Auburn, Bainbridge, Bentleyville, Burton, Chagrin Falls, Chardon, Chester, Gates Mills, Hunting Valley, Moreland Hills, Munson, Newbury, Orange, Pepper Pike, Russell, S. Russell, Solon, or Woodmere.

STEPHEN G. THOMAS PERFORMING ARTS SCHOLARSHIP

The Stephen G. Thomas Performing Arts Scholarship is named in recognition of Steve's ongoing dedication to Chagrin Arts as one of its founding members and current Board President. Funding was provided by Chagrin Arts and was open to high school seniors currently enrolled in the Cleveland Metropolitan School District.

JOAN BROWN CAMPBELL AWARD FOR ARTS AND CULTURE

Established in 2015 by Chagrin Arts, the Joan Brown Campbell Award for Arts and Culture honors an individual or organization in recognition of outstanding leadership in promoting arts and culture. Past recipients have included community leader, Jean Hood, and Rev. Dr. Joan Brown Campbell who played an instrumental role in establishing *Chautauqua-in-Chagrin™*, the Chagrin Arts summer lecture series.

TO OBTAIN ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For more information about the performing arts scholarships or Chagrin Arts, call Chagrin Arts at (440) 247-9700 or visit ChagrinArts.org.

ABOUT CHAGRIN ARTS

Chagrin Arts, currently celebrating its 10th anniversary, is a community 501(c)(3) organization whose goal is to enrich life through the presentation of inspiring performances and stimulating conversations. The organization's most visible programs are its *Chautauqua-in-Chagrin™* lecture series and the *Performing Arts Series*.

Chagrin Arts receives public support with local tax dollars from Cuyahoga Arts & Culture, to preserve and enrich our region's artistic and cultural heritage. Additional sponsorship provided by the Ohio Arts Council, Huntington Bank, Chagrin Valley Times, and The Inamori Center for Ethics and Excellence at CWRU.

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ATTACHED IMAGES

1. Vishal Sundarum and Ken Douthit (CVT) with Dr. Meyyappan Somasundaram (Vishal's Father)
2. Nijah Holliday and Steve Thomas