

A Changing Arts Education Landscape May 2010

National Guild for Community Arts Education's New Name Reflects Changing Arts Education Landscape

Arts Education Providers Uniting to Meet Increased Demand

New York, NY--- The National Guild of Community Schools of the Arts has changed its name to the **National Guild for Community Arts Education** to better reflect the field that is uniting to increase access to arts instruction for all Americans.

"Community arts education today happens as much in cultural centers, theater companies and parks and recreation departments as it does in dedicated arts *schools*," said **Jonathan Herman, the National Guild's Executive Director**, "The sector is responding to increased public interest in arts instruction at the same time that resources are shrinking. In an effort to improve efficiency and increase impact, community arts education providers are coming together to share information, leverage resources and advocate for increased support."

[Pakachoag Music School of Greater Worcester](#) belongs to a national network which includes more than 5,000 community schools of the arts, arts and cultural centers, and arts education divisions of performing arts organizations, museums, parks and recreation departments, and conservatory preparatory programs. These organizations employ professional teaching artists to provide instruction in the arts to people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities. In addition to offering studio-based instruction (classes and lessons) in their own facilities, most also partner with public schools, senior centers, public agencies and other organizations, to further increase access to high quality instruction.

Several powerful forces are driving this movement, including:

1. **Americans' growing interest in *doing* versus *consuming*.** In January 2010, *The New York Times* reported that Americans are beginning to prioritize experiences over material spending. They are more interested in *doing* than *consuming*. Programs offered by Guild members enable Americans of all ages to engage in the arts, develop their creativity and build community among family, friends and neighbors. Examples include older adults enrolled in dance classes, toddlers and parents participating in early childhood music and movement programs, and school-aged children learning to paint, act or sing, whether intending to pursue a career in the arts or simply for the sheer joy of developing their artistic abilities.

2. **The chronic lack of arts education in many of our public schools, particularly those serving poor communities.** Many students in America's public schools have suffered from lack of access to arts education over the past several decades. Nearly 80% of Guild members partner with public schools in order to serve students who would otherwise go without arts instruction or to complement existing programs.
3. **A decrease in grants and charitable contributions to the arts.** The number of nonprofit arts organizations, has grown from 73,000 to 104,000 over the past decade. At the same time, the percentage of charitable gifts earmarked for the arts has shrunk. Economic pressures are driving organizations to develop new ways of doing business and improve their ability to serve the public.

As a member and active participant in the National Guild, Pakachoag Music School is staying abreast of national trends and best practices in the world of arts education. The School's own name change in August 2009 reflecting Pakachoag's increasingly regional presence and its recent alliance with the Worcester Youth Orchestras, formally announced in June 2010, are just some of Pakachoag's strategic initiatives signaling a vibrant, forward thinking organization.

And, for Pakachoag, just like the National Guild: "While our name has changed, our vision remains the same," said Herman, "The National Guild's new name and accompanying logo "many horizons, one vision," celebrates the diversity of the field and its unified commitment to ensuring all Americans have access to arts learning opportunities throughout their life spans."

The **National Guild for Community Arts Education** (www.nationalguild.org) supports and advances access to lifelong learning opportunities in the arts. We support the creation and development of community arts education organizations and programs by providing research and information resources, professional development and networking opportunities, advocacy, funding, and high-profile leadership. Our member organizations collectively serve one million students, employ over 16,000 teaching artists, and reach an additional five million Americans each year through performances and exhibitions in rural, suburban and urban communities across the nation. Their impact on the lives of the students and communities they serve is enduring and profound.

Pakachoag Music School is pleased to stand with the National Guild as together we work locally and nationally to change individual lives and our social fabric through the arts.