



Exciting developments about

**MINDS WIDE OPEN: *Virginia Celebrates Women in the Arts***

~ **First Lady Maureen McDonnell** has joined all of her living predecessors as Honorary Chair of the celebration, bringing to ten the number of current and former first ladies who are actively supporting our efforts, including Anne Holton, Lisa Collis, Roxane Gilmore, Susan Allen, Jeannie P. Baliles, Lynda Johnson Robb, Eddy Dalton Phillips, Virginia “Jinks” Holton, and Katherine Godwin. This is the first time that they have lent their collective voices to a single cause.

~ March 1, 2010 was the first official day of **MINDS WIDE OPEN**. To date **over 4,500 performances, exhibitions and other opportunities** to attend **over 537 separate events** have been registered on our website. These events showcase the outstanding work being produced by **200 different cultural agencies** in every area of the state. Additional events are being added at an average rate of **a dozen per day**. Haven't registered your event(s)? It is not too late! Visit the [Participant Registration](#) page for registration instructions.

~ The website has just been upgraded to be more accessible and user-friendly. Please visit [www.ArtsVA.com](http://www.ArtsVA.com) to see for yourself. Remember, there are FREE resources for participants at the [Participants Toolkit](#) including downloadable ad templates and tips for publicizing through social media.

~ The **Virginia Tourism Corporation** has awarded a major grant to help us promote **MINDS WIDE OPEN** in neighboring states with spots on NPR stations in North Carolina, West Virginia, Maryland, and Washington DC. A second VTC grant will enable us to put an eight-page insert into 180,000 copies of *Richmond Magazine*, *The Roanoker Magazine*, *Hampton Roads Magazine*, *Bethesda Magazine*, and *The Metro Reader Magazine*, which serves the Research Triangle area of North Carolina.

~ In order to drive the general public to our website and, by extension, the thousands of opportunities contained therein, **MINDS WIDE OPEN** has launched the **Ovation Vacation Sweepstakes** inviting arts lovers to register to win one of **12 weekend arts getaways** across the Commonwealth. Visit [www.ArtsVA.com](http://www.ArtsVA.com) to register for your chance to win one of these fabulous vacations.

~ A series of Regional Launch Events will take place in each media market in Virginia, with festivities planned for Orange (3/4), Roanoke (3/5), Abingdon (3/6), Lorton (3/7), Martinsville (3/8), Alexandria (3/11), Richmond (3/20) and Norfolk (3/21). The first launch events took place in Stanton (2/27 and 2/28).

~ **The House of Delegates** and the **Senate of the Virginia General Assembly** have issued joint resolutions honoring **MINDS WIDE OPEN**. This type of recognition by our elected officials is just the type of public recognition that we hoped to achieve when we first began this journey three years ago. The joint resolutions are available for download on our website in the [Government Proclamations](#) section of the Participants Toolkit.

~ We would like to have as many Virginia cities, counties and towns issue proclamations in support of the statewide celebration of the arts. Please approach your local government and request that they issue such a proclamation honoring **MINDS WIDE OPEN**. Congratulations to Sharron Kitchen Miller who successfully approached Mayor Joe S. Frank to adopt the proclamation in the City of Newport News on February 23. You can download a copy of the draft language for the proclamation [here](#). Remember to [report back](#) to us if the proclamation is adopted in your area.

~ The Steering Committee comprised of the **21 major arts organizations** who first conceived this collaboration have determined the theme for the next celebration of **MINDS WIDE OPEN** for 2012. We are pleased to announce that the topic will be *Virginia Celebrates Children and the Arts*.

~ Finally, we wish to THANK YOU for joining the celebration! After three years of planning, yesterday – March 1, 2010 – marked the first official day of this unprecedented collaboration which now involves over 200 cultural organizations. The Planning Team would like to thank each of you who embraced this dream and have helped make it a reality. Congratulations.

Sincerely yours,

The **MINDS WIDE OPEN** Planning Team  
Peggy Baggett, Susan Hirschbiel, Keith Martin, & Melinda Scott  
Questions? Please contact us via email at [vamindswideopen@gmail.com](mailto:vamindswideopen@gmail.com)

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