

****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****



Diablo Regional Arts Association

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Leshler Center for the Arts

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Diablo Regional Arts Association Announces Pave the Way for the Future Campaign and an Immediate Investment of \$150,000 in Virtual Technology and Artistic Programming

WALNUT CREEK, CA, May 27, 2020 – In response to the financial hit caused by COVID-19, Diablo Regional Arts Association (DRAA) is stepping-up to support the Leshler Center for the Arts in partnership with the City of Walnut Creek. In the City Council Special Meeting on Thursday, May 21, President of the DRAA Board of Directors, Catharine Baker, announced DRAA’s bold initiatives contributing to the vitality of the arts at the Leshler Center and the rebound of the local economy. “The DRAA believes in being a good neighbor for our community,” says Baker, “and these initiatives will enhance our quality of life and be a major spark of economic activity for our city and downtown.”

The DRAA committed an immediate investment of \$150,000 to adapt performances at the Leshler Center to the current circumstances and virtual experiences, including at-home enjoyment. This early funding, which includes \$50,000 from the Dean and Margaret Leshler Foundation, will allow the Leshler Center to continue providing quality arts and cultural experiences to the region and to revitalize the economy.

“We are always proud to collaborate with the DRAA, especially during these challenging times. Through our partnership, we believe that our downtown economy and the Leshler Center for the Arts will come out of this stronger than ever.”

– Barney Fonzi, President of Walnut Creek Downtown Board of Directors

The DRAA and the Leshler Center also will capitalize on the newly renovated and expanded space in the Rudney Plaza for outdoor performances—theatre, dance, music—that accommodate social distancing requirements. Baker stated, “the plaza space is a perfect opportunity to experience the joy of the arts in a new outdoor setting.”

“The City of Walnut Creek will recover and DRAA’s Pave the Way campaign is a compelling opportunity to support this cornerstone of our community.” – Loella Haskew, Mayor Walnut Creek

Baker also announced the DRAA will be launching its *Pave the Way for the Future* campaign in support of the Leshler Center’s 30th anniversary. Donors from around the region can honor a special person or occasion through multiple naming opportunities, including custom, laser-engraved pavers that will be prominently located on the new Rudney Plaza outside of the Leshler Center. All campaign gifts made through the *Pave the Way for the Future* campaign will be allocated to innovative programming and the delivery of arts throughout the community.

“DRAA’s Board of Directors is 100% behind our Pave the Way for the Future campaign, and we’ve already received generous support from Walnut Creek’s present and past Mayors and City Council

members. This historic effort will leave a legacy that will serve generations to come.”

– Peggy White, DRAA Executive Director

To learn more about Pave the Way for the Future, please subscribe to DRAA’s newsletter at www.draa.org, contact info@draa.org, or call (925) 457-2000.

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Diablo Regional Arts Association (DRAA) As the nonprofit partner of the Leshner Center for the Arts (LCA), DRAA enriches the lives of thousands of East Bay residents every year by raising funds to support the full spectrum of arts and entertainment at the LCA. DRAA is committed to serving all incomes and ages by providing joy, inspiration, and hope through education and outreach programs. Learn more at www.draa.org or follow DRAA on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#): [@DRAAattheLCA](#).