



**Community Art Center, Inc.**

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## **Community Art Center awarded \$100,000 Cummings grant**

*CAMBRIDGE, MA nonprofit receives 2 years of funding from Cummings Foundation*

CAMBRIDGE, MAY 23, 2022 – COMMUNITY ART CENTER is one of 140 local nonprofits to receive grants of \$100,000 to \$500,000 each through Cummings Foundation's \$25 Million Grant Program. The CAMBRIDGE-based organization was chosen from a total of 580 applicants during a competitive review process. It will receive \$100,000 over 2 years.

Founded in 1937, the Community Art Center is a neighborhood institution committed to its mission: to cultivate an engaged community of youth whose powerful artistic voices transform their lives, their neighborhoods, and their worlds. The organization centers the voices of the most historically excluded population in Cambridge, and works in partnership with the community to fuse art with action. Children understand the power of their creative expression and gain valuable exposure to art-rich experiences. Youth in the Art Center's Teen Public Art and nationally recognized Teen Media Program learn how art contributes to culture and can shape movements. Community Art Center's Teen Media Program operates the longest-running youth film festival in the country, *Do It Your Damn Self!!* National Youth Film Festival.

Community Art Center is elated to have received a grant through Cummings \$25 Million Grant Program. The generosity of this grant will allow Community Art Center to invest in a vehicle to assist in day-to-day operations and will help to offset the insurance costs tied to transportation of children to and from its programs.

The Cummings \$25 Million Grant Program supports Massachusetts nonprofits that are based in and primarily serve Middlesex, Essex, and Suffolk counties.

Through this place-based initiative, Cummings Foundation aims to give back in the areas where it owns commercial property. Its buildings are all managed, at no cost to the Foundation, by its affiliate, Cummings Properties. This Woburn-based commercial real estate firm leases and manages 11 million square feet of debt-free space, the majority of which exclusively benefits the Foundation.

"We are so fortunate in greater Boston to have such effective nonprofits, plus a wealth of talented, dedicated professionals and volunteers to run them," said Cummings Foundation executive director Joyce Vyriotes. "We are indebted to them for the work they do each day to provide for basic needs, break down barriers to education and health resources, and work toward a more equitable society."

With the help of about 90 volunteers, the Foundation first identified 140 organizations to receive grants of at least \$100,000 each. Among the winners were first-time recipients as well as nonprofits that had previously received Cummings Foundation grants. Forty of this latter group of repeat recipients were then selected to have their grants elevated to 10-year awards ranging from \$200,000 to \$500,000 each.

"Our volunteers bring diverse backgrounds and perspectives, which is so critical to our grant selection process," said Vyriotes. "Through this democratized approach to philanthropy, they decide more than half the grants every year."

This year's grant recipients represent a wide variety of causes, including food insecurity, immigrant and refugee services, social justice, education, and mental health services. The nonprofits are spread across 45 different cities and towns.

The complete list of 140 grant winners, plus more than 900 previous recipients, is available at [www.CummingsFoundation.org](http://www.CummingsFoundation.org).

Cummings Foundation has now awarded more than \$375 million to greater Boston nonprofits.

### **About Community Art Center**

Founded in 1937, the Community Art Center is a neighborhood institution committed to our mission: to cultivate an engaged community of youth whose powerful artistic voices transform their lives, their neighborhoods, and their worlds.

Community Art Center focuses its work in one of the most under-resourced neighborhoods of Cambridge, the Port. The neighborhood is also rich in culture and diversity, vibrant, and wildly eclectic. It is a hub for artists, and is part of the designated Central Square Cultural District of Massachusetts. As such, the Art Center's students reflect the population of our community. The Art Center proudly serves a student population that is largely Black, Brown, and/or the children of immigrants.

The Art Center has established an excellent track record of providing creative and challenging learning opportunities to youth. It aims to develop the next generation of civically engaged, community-minded leaders and problem-solvers. The Art Center's programs include a School Age Child Care program for children ages 5-12. This program offers comprehensive after-school and out-of-school time arts activities and instruction, and up to 3 meals daily. As part of this program, children participate in performing arts, visual & media arts and dance.

Teens matriculate into one of two tracks: Teen Public Art Program or Teen Media Program. Community Art Center's Teen Public Art Program introduces concepts of urban design and works with teens and community members on large-scale public art installations; Art Center murals can be found throughout Cambridge! The Art Center's Teen Media Program is nationally recognized for its work building competent story-tellers who learn to produce and edit films. Teen Media Program participants organize and produce **the longest-running youth film festival in the country: *Do It Your Damn Self!!*** National Youth Film Festival. The festival originated when 6 Community Art Center youth felt underrepresented and misrepresented in the media, and decided to pick up cameras and tell their own stories. The festival now draws young filmmakers from all across the country to Cambridge, MA to share their work.

### **About Cummings Foundation**

Woburn-based Cummings Foundation, Inc. was established in 1986 by Joyce and Bill Cummings and has grown to be one of the largest private foundations in New England. The Foundation directly operates its own charitable subsidiaries, including New Horizons retirement communities, in Marlborough and Woburn, and Cummings Health Sciences, LLC. Additional information is available at [www.CummingsFoundation.org](http://www.CummingsFoundation.org).

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