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Canadians value companies that support the arts

In a first-ever report released today by Business for the Arts, results show more than half of Canadians favour businesses that invest in arts and culture

(WINNIPEG - April 7, 2015) Business for the Arts (BftA) released an in-depth report conducted by the Strategic Counsel revealing high levels of engagement in the arts by Canadians and a commitment from business to invest in arts and culture. Local Winnipeg business and arts leaders joined Nichole Anderson, President and CEO of Business for the Arts; and co-chairs Jean Giguère, O.C., Chair Emeritus of the Royal Winnipeg Ballet and Board Member of Business for the Arts; and Gail Asper, O.C., President of The Asper Foundation, at a roundtable meeting to discuss the findings, which was moderated by Greg Reed, Board Member, Business for the Arts.

The report found that Canadians are heavily engaged in the arts; in fact they are more likely to choose arts and culture events over sports. Businesses are taking notice; since 2008, business investment in the arts has increased by 49 per cent.

The findings suggest an overwhelming belief by Canadian businesses that the arts can produce societal benefits, including:

- 82 per cent believe engagement with the arts leads to good health and well-being
- 95 per cent say arts education assists in the intellectual development of children
- 88 per cent believe youth engagement with the arts helps reduce youth crime and alienation

However, the report also shines a light on the complex interworking of arts funding in Canada. While Canadian businesses are increasing their investment in the arts, those surveyed emphasize that government support of the arts is essential and only 23 per cent of large companies stated that they would increase support if government cuts occur.

“The data illustrates the hybrid nature of arts funding in Canada, with the important role of public sector investment in providing stability for arts organizations as they continue to forge new partnerships with the private sector,” says Anderson.

“There is still work to be done as large Canadian companies note that in order to unlock further investment in the arts stronger linkages need to be made to demonstrate the social return on investment (SROI).”

BftA sees the data as a call to action for them to continue to bridge the gap between business and the arts. Matching funds and sponsorship training programs, like BftA's artsVest™ national program, are a step in the right direction.

To share the findings of this important report and have a dialogue with Canadian businesses, government funders and arts organizations, Business for the Arts is launching a cross-Canada roundtable tour in partnership with Aimia, Deloitte, Enbridge, the Canada Council and the Ontario Trillium Foundation. BftA will be visiting eight cities:

- Winnipeg – April 7th, 2015
- Calgary – April 17th, 2015
- Montreal – April 29th, 2015
- Ottawa – May 11th, 2015
- Vancouver – Summer 2015
- Saskatoon – Summer 2015
- Halifax – Summer 2015
- Toronto - Summer 2015

To access the full report, please visit: <http://www.businessforthearts.org/research-initiative/>

About Business for the Arts

Founded in 1974, Business for the Arts is Canada's only national charitable organization of business members who support the arts. Our vision is to inspire Canada's business community to partner with the arts to ensure a thriving cultural sector. We connect, educate and invest to bridge the gap between business and the arts. Visit www.businessforthearts.org.

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