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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Wash Arts Receives Grant from Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation.**

WASHINGTON, Pa. –The Washington Community Arts and Cultural Center, well known as Wash Arts, has just received a grant in the amount of \$175,000 to partner with Office of the Mayor of Washington PA for an initiative to restore and beautify public spaces throughout the city. The project, which will involve developing and renovating a public space site into a Parklette in downtown Washington will be a collaboration with other partners as well including: Western Area Career and Technology Center (WACTC), Southwest Training Services, Inc. (SWTS), Highland Ridge Community Development Corporation, and Bricolage Production Company.

The City has long been storing the scrap metal and signage that will be re-purposed to create works of art. The Highland Ridge CDC will take this opportunity into the neighborhoods throughout Washington where youth are in need of training, both in the arts and advanced manufacturing areas. Brenda Davis, Mayor of Washington stated: **“My belief and goal as your Mayor is to always work towards the betterment of the lives of our residents and our entire community. This grant will be used to make our City a leader in the Fight Against Blight as well as bringing culture into the community. This is a great partnership! To continue to educate our youth is of utmost importance. Our youth’s valuable skills will be incorporated into our new Parklette and areas identified throughout our City. I am confident that their inestimable skills, time and efforts will not only be benefited by all who visit these areas, but will definitely provide our youth with the knowledge for their future and for their family’s future. I extend my gratitude, my heartfelt “thank you” to the fine people who made this possible. I promise you -- this is just the beginning – the beginning of steps in the right direction.”**

Students and instructors from Wash Arts, Resident Artists from Pittsburgh Filmmakers/Pittsburgh Center for the Arts Department of School & Community Programs, and WACTC will merge to create these art forms, while at the same time, students will learn a viable trade -- Welding Technology, which is fast becoming an industry with a great deal of opportunities available in Southwestern Pennsylvania. Jim Denova, Vice President of the Benedum Foundation also added: **“We believe that public art, especially in restored vacant lots, can be a significant contributor to the economic revitalization of Washington’s urban core, and I was very pleased to see public art as one of the recommendations of the Mayor and the City of Washington’s Comprehensive Plan. This project has the added value of engaging career & technical students from WACTC, giving them the opportunity to**

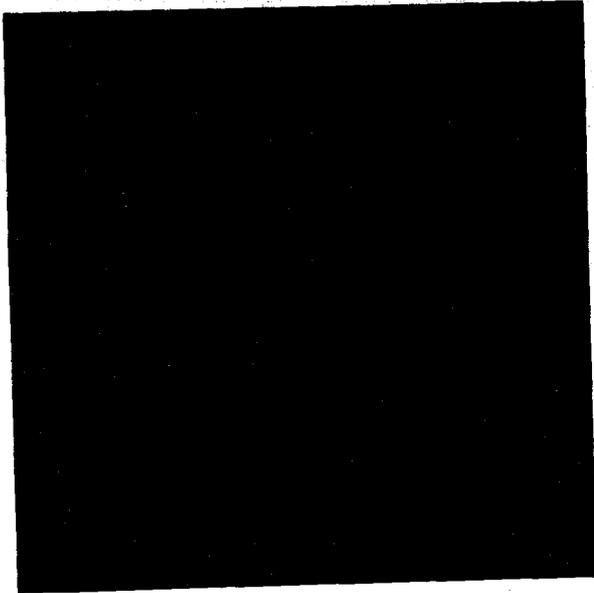
**showcase their skills and talents.”**

Programs incorporating enameling, fabrication, mosaic techniques and recycled art projects will provide a fertile ground for the development of collaborative projects and actual component parts for this project and more and will be held at both Wash Arts site and on the campus of WACTC.

**Program and Projects Director Becky Keck stated: “Our journey as an arts education organization has brought us to a place where art, technology, and community development have the opportunity to collaborate to make our city a culturally enriched environment in Southwestern Pennsylvania. We are both humbled and grateful that our programming will be a part of this project.”**

The Parklette is slated to be completed by July 2015. It will include metal sculptures, seating spaces and other enhancements to beautify and restore a space where residents can enjoy visiting with families, friends and colleagues.

**“A press conference will be held on Wednesday, June 25<sup>th</sup> at 10AM at the Parklette. Stay tuned for a Media Advisory”**



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