

## **THE MARY DUKE BIDDLE FOUNDATION**

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### **Biddle Foundation grants celebrate 60 years of impact**

DURHAM, N.C. -- On September 14, 1956, when Mary Duke Biddle established her philanthropic foundation, inspiring the foundation's mission were lessons she had learned growing up in a family that believed in supporting causes and communities it cared about.

So she decided her new philanthropy would focus on making modest gifts that could multiply over time, providing access to education, enriching lives and communities through music and the arts, lifting up impoverished people through churches and congregations, and providing critical aid to communities.

In its first 60 years, The Mary Duke Biddle Foundation has awarded nearly \$43 million to those causes in North Carolina, where Mrs. Biddle was born and raised, and in New York City, where she lived for 20 years as an adult before returning to Durham.

Now, to celebrate its 60th anniversary, the Foundation has awarded five special grants totaling \$125,000 to support efforts in North Carolina and New York City to boost the arts and arts education, to use orchestral training to equip more underserved kids to thrive, and to prepare more at-risk kids to succeed in school and life.

"The philanthropic legacy of Mary Duke Biddle continues to advance the arts and improve the lives of youth, particularly those who are less advantaged, in the communities she loved," says Mimi O'Brien, executive director of the Foundation.

#### **Making an impact**

The five special grants -- \$25,000 each to the Durham Arts Council, Kidznotes and StudentU, all in Durham; the Asheville Art Museum; and UpBeat NYC in the South Bronx -- are designed to have a bigger impact on individual organizations and the people they serve. These awards are made in addition to the Foundation's regular annual giving, including approximately 40 grants of \$5,000 each in response to requests from nonprofits in North Carolina and New York City.

"Arts and youth education remain critical, ongoing needs in our community," O'Brien says. "These special grants represent an investment to help innovative nonprofits make an

even bigger difference expanding the impact of the arts and creating opportunities for young people to succeed."

With the help of the five grants:

\* Durham Arts Council will develop an online arts directory and continue to invest in career development for emerging artists, underscoring Durham's growing reputation as a hub for the arts.

\* Kidznotes will use orchestral training to equip more underserved students to succeed in school and life, continue its expansion into economically-distressed Southeast Raleigh, and consider expanding to other parts of the Triangle region.

\* StudentU will prepare more kids in Durham to graduate from high school, enroll in college and graduate, and then find ways to help their peers succeed in school and life.

\* The Asheville Art Museum will provide access to arts education and activities to more underserved children in Asheville, Buncombe County and three rural counties in Western North Carolina.

\* UpBeat NYC will provide free music training and orchestral instruction to more at-risk children in the South Bronx, along with hope for the future and a better chance to succeed in school and life.

### **Philanthropic legacy**

Mary Duke Biddle, the daughter of Benjamin Newton Duke and granddaughter of Washington Duke, attended public schools in Durham, and in 1907 graduated from Trinity College, now Duke University.

Her father and uncle, James B. Duke, using wealth generated from tobacco, textile and electric power industries they developed in North Carolina in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, gave generously to their community and became known for their philanthropy. Both were benefactors of Durham's Trinity College, and in 1924, through the newly chartered Duke Endowment, the college was named Duke University in honor of their father.

In establishing her own Foundation, Mary Duke Biddle designated that half the grant funding would go to Duke University, with the rest going to non-profit organizations that support a variety of causes in North Carolina and New York.

Mary Duke Biddle died in 1960 at age 73. For many years, the Foundation was led by her daughter, the late Mary Duke Biddle Trent Semans, and her husband, the late James H.

Semans, M.D.

"The Biddle Foundation continues its legacy of making the communities we serve better places to live and work," says Jon Zeljo, chair of the Foundation's board of trustees and great-grandson of Mary Duke Biddle. "We invest in programs that expand opportunities for everyone, connect and inspire diverse populations, and give people in need tools and hope for the future."

### **Model for future funding**

Including grants to organizations such as Duke University that it has funded for many years through long-standing relationships, the Foundation typically makes nearly \$1 million in grants a year.

With an endowment of about \$30 million, the Foundation continues to focus its funding on the arts and youth education, particularly in collaborative efforts that serve less advantaged populations.

The Foundation is using its 60th anniversary to examine how its grantmaking practices and programs can be more impactful to the organizations and causes it supports.

In addition to support for Duke and to grants it makes in response to applications, organizations the Foundation funds through long-standing relationships include, among others, the University of North Carolina School of the Arts; Durham Arts Council; American Dance Festival; Chamber Orchestra of the Triangle; and Full Frame Documentary Film Festival.

### **About The Mary Duke Biddle Foundation**

The Mary Duke Biddle Foundation seeks to effect positive change for the communities and people we serve. We maintain a grantmaking commitment to Duke University and to strengthen other organizations and programs in North Carolina and in New York City. Every grant aims to empower people and sustain their work in making a lasting impact in their communities. Now in its sixth decade, the Foundation funds arts and youth education programs, with a particular interest in those that serve less advantaged populations and in collaborative efforts.