

ADVOCACY ALERT

## **Orange County Commission Debates FY10 Cut to United Arts and Orange County Office of Cultural Affairs**

At the Orange County FY10 budget worksession on Thursday, July 23, Commissioner Fred Brummer made two motions to redirect funding from Orange County Arts & Cultural Affairs and United Arts of Central Florida.

Commissioner Brummer's first motion asked that \$178,326 be taken from Orange County Arts & Cultural Affairs to fund the Pecan Clinic, \$100,000 of which would be allocated for dental services. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Mildred Fernandez. Commissioner Tiffany Moore Russell asked if this action would eliminate a staff position, and Commissioner Brummer confirmed that it would eliminate the division's two current office positions (Terry Olson and Maritiza Gonzalez). Mayor Crotty stated that we've had "pretty good successes" with Arts & Cultural Affairs programs. Commissioner Bill Segal added that they are a "vital mission of this county," and that he opposed the measure.

The motion was defeated 4-3, with Commissioners Brummer, Fernandez and Boyd voting in favor of the motion and Mayor Crotty, Commissioners Segal, Moore Russell and Stewart voting against.

Commissioner Brummer made a second motion to remove \$525,000 from United Arts' general fund allocation to give to the Citizens Commission for Children for after school band and choral music programs in 26 Orange County middle schools. Commissioner Fernandez seconded the motion. Mayor Crotty asked if the program exists today. Commissioner Brummer replied no - it would be used to start the program. Commissioner Moore Russell asked what programs would be cut and the impact of the move. Commissioner Segal noted that this was the first they were hearing of a half-million dollar budget transfer and questioned who would run it and the impact of the rest of the budget.

Commissioner Linda Stewart stated that it was "an extreme amount

of money to take out of a budget item without testing its effectiveness in a small number of schools". Mayor Crotty said it sounded like a great program but he was not inclined to "take from a program that we are very familiar with and very involved with." Commissioner Brummer emphasized that this would be resoundingly supported by the middle schools. He said it's similar to what they do now with the Boys and Girls Clubs and the YMCA afterschool programs. He also said the issue is a matter of priorities and asked if we care more about making sure that young people are exposed to music arts than grants to a few "well-to-do community groups."

The motion was defeated. Commissioners Brummer and Fernandez voted in favor, and Mayor Crotty and Commissioners Boyd, Segal, Moore Russell and Stewart voted against.

### **What You Can Do:**

Will you take a moment to thank the Commissioners for their support of the work of United Arts and Orange County Arts & Cultural Affairs? The organizations that United Arts helps to fund provide 2.4 million cultural experiences for Lake, Orange, Osceola and Seminole residents and visitors. In 2007-08, our funded organizations provided 343,893 arts and culture experiences for Orange County public school students and another 287,532 student experiences in the other three counties we serve.

Email links:

Mayor - [Richard T. Crotty](#)

District 1 Commissioner - [S. Scott Boyd](#)

District 2 Commissioner - [Fred Brummer](#)

District 3 Commissioner - [Mildred Fernandez](#)

District 4 Commissioner - [Linda Stewart](#)

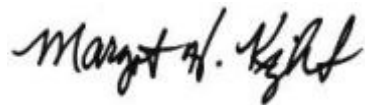
District 5 Commissioner - [Bill Segal](#)

District 6 Commissioner - [Tiffany Moore Russell](#)

We applaud the idea of providing more opportunities for our children to experience and participate in arts and culture. However, we are concerned that new initiatives not jeopardize the exceptional afterschool, in-school and summer programming already provided by the 40+ orgs supported by United Arts grants

United Arts will continue to share with the Orange County Commission and other elected officials the substantive arts and arts education opportunities provided by local cultural organizations. And, as Mayor Crotty said, when the economy improves there may be more opportunities to take on new initiatives such as Commission Brummer's proposal.

Thank you for your advocacy efforts.  
Your voice *does* make a difference.



Margot H. Knight  
President & CEO



Minda Logan  
Director of Grants &  
Government Affairs