

Press Release



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NEWARK MUSEUM EXPLORERS PROGRAM RECOGNIZED BY FEDERAL ARTS AND CULTURE AGENCIES WITH NATION'S TOP HONOR

Cited as one of the best creative youth development programs in the country

NEWARK, NJ – Samantha Joseph, 17, of West Orange was in the Nation's capital today to receive an award from all three federal arts and culture agencies—the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), and the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS)—on behalf of the Newark Museum Explorers Program. The program was recognized for its effectiveness in promoting learning and life skills in young people by engaging them through creative youth development programs. The after-school program received the 2017 National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award, the nation's highest honor for these programs.

The award recognizes the country's best creative youth development programs for using engagement in the arts and the humanities to generate a wide range of positive outcomes, such as increases in academic achievement, graduation rates, and college enrollment. The awardees—chosen from a pool of 350 nominations and 50 finalists—were also recognized for improving literacy and language abilities, communication and performance skills, and cultural awareness.

First presented in 1998, the 2017 National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award were presented through a partnership between the agencies, in cooperation with the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA).

"These 12 creative youth development programs represent the best of the best," said Pam Breaux, president and chief executive officer of the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies. "They are living proof of the power of the arts and the humanities to build the skills young people need to succeed in school and in life."

The Explorers Program is a three-year, year-round experience that serves 30-35 students in grades 10-12 annually. Explorers participate in a variety of learning activities including small group instruction, student-led projects involving different aspects of running a museum, workshops on an array of art topics, field trips, personalized college guidance, "life skills"

workshops focusing on themes ranging from etiquette to financial literacy, and mentoring relationships with Museum staff and other professionals representing a wide range of fields.

Over the past several years, 100% of Explorers have graduated high school and gone on to attend four-year colleges or universities. Recent Explorer graduates are attending institutions that include Wellesley College, Penn State University, Rutgers University, Parsons School of Design, Lehigh University, Cornell University and American University. In the Class of 2017, two Explorers received full scholarships: Arif Uddin will be majoring in Engineering Science at NJIT and Inique Bristol will be majoring in Computer Science at Rutgers University.

Joseph was selected as the youth speaker for the NAHYP award and in her speech she reflected upon her experiences as an Explorer. “This program has brought me so many different opportunities that I wouldn’t have had the opportunity to experience if I had not taken a chance and applied. The Newark Museum is a place that welcomes every person. The diversity that I’ve experienced walking through the galleries and working in different areas of the Museum has opened me up so much,” she said.

In addition to the national recognition bestowed by receipt of the prestigious award, the Explorers Program will also receive \$10,000 to support its programming and engage more young people from the community.

“The Newark Museum has long been a national leader in arts education, and we are committed to using our resources and renowned art and science collections to improve the lives of the people we serve,” Steven Kern, Director and CEO of the Newark Museum, said. “Since its inception in 1995, the Explorers Program has provided Newark area high school students with a range of experiences that give them valuable skills that will aid them in college and beyond.”

Major support for the Newark Museum’s Explorers Program has been provided by the PSEG Foundation; The Walton Family Foundation; The New York Community Trust, Wattles Family Charitable Fund; The Provident Bank Foundation; the AT&T Foundation; United Airlines; and the Laura J. Niles Foundation. Additional generous support has been provided by the Victoria Foundation; the Prudential Foundation; the Charles E. and Edna T. Brundage Charitable Scientific and Wild Life Conservation Foundation; The Eleanor Upton Charitable Foundation; the Aviation Development Council; and Rochelle and Ronald Karp.

For more information about the Museum and the Explorers, please visit www.newarkmuseum.org. For more information about the National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Awards, visit <http://www.nahyp.org/>.