



PRESS RELEASE

Thursday 14 February 2008

Contact: Simon Bennett, Knowledge Development Director, Tel: 0121 631 5821
Mob: 07866 409288 Email: simon.bennett@mlawestmidlands.org.uk

Museums Libraries and Archives Council and Arts Council England to help young people in the West Midlands discover their creative talents

The Government announced today a new scheme designed to give young people in the West Midlands the opportunity to experience at least 5 hours of high quality arts and culture every week.

The 'Find Your Talent' project will be piloted initially in 10 locations across the country and will explore the best methods of helping young people discover and develop their creative talents and personal skills through direct exposure to high quality arts and culture.

The new scheme is co-funded by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council and Arts Council England through the financial support they receive from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and the Department for Children Schools and Families.

The project will give young people in West Midlands the chance to curate exhibitions and engage creatively with libraries and archives. They will also have the opportunity to gain hands-on experience of acting, playing a musical

MLA West Midlands: the regional council for museums, libraries and archives
Grosvenor House, 14 Bennetts Hill, Birmingham B2 5RS
Tel: 0121 631 5800 Fax: 0121 631 5825
www.mlawestmidlands.org.uk

instrument, making broadcast programmes and digital art. They will also get the chance to work with professional writers and to attend first class performances.

£25 million has been allocated over the next three years to support 10 pilot projects and the Government is now seeking expressions of interest from those wishing to pilot the programme in various parts of the country.

In addition, the Government has also announced £110 million of funding for Creative Partnerships, who will be managing the launch and administration of the pilot programme.

Roy Clare Chief Executive of the **Museums, Libraries and Archives Council** said:

"This is a fantastic opportunity to ensure that every child in the West Midlands is engaged with culture at an early age and that their horizons at school are widened. Culture should inform every child's experiences in life whether it is through the wondrous collections in our museums, by meeting authors and bringing literature to life at their local library or discovering their family's and community's histories through our extensive archives. Our aspiration should be that through this offer our children will develop a lifelong passion for culture"

Jon Finch Chief Executive of the **Museums, Libraries and Archives Council West Midlands** said:

"Find your Talent will enable museums, libraries and archives in the West Midlands to bring together and develop some of the exciting cultural programmes that already support children and young peoples learning. This programme increases the opportunities for young people to investigate their own identity, culture and heritage in imaginative and creative ways. They will

learn new skills, gain new knowledge and most of all have enjoyable and memorable new experiences."

Alan Davey, Chief Executive of **Arts Council England** said:

"We are delighted that the government recognises the value of introducing art and creativity into every child's life. Great art enriches lives and helps us understand the world around us, no matter what age we are, and creative skills are essential no matter what career we choose to pursue. Exposure to art is a gift for life.

"'Find Your Talent' will enable us to bring that up-close experience of art and culture to children and young people across the whole country."

Paul Collard, National Director, **Creative Partnerships**, said:

"This is a great opportunity to involve far more young people in seeing and making great art and culture. Activities as diverse as seeing an opera, making a film or helping curate an exhibition should be part of every child's experiences. Unlocking children's talents and engaging them in the wonders of art and culture is something Creative Partnerships is passionate about and has a strong track record in doing through thousands of schools."

Ends

Notes to Editors

MLA Partnership

The Partnership is the government's agency for museums, galleries, libraries and archives. We deliver strategic leadership in England and in each of its regions and we collaborate with partners across the UK. Our research identifies good practice, which we use to promote improvement. We offer advice, support and resources to funding bodies and other groups to incentivise innovation. Our aim is to raise professional standards and champion better services for users and readers of all ages and backgrounds, whether residents or visitors.

Find Your Talent

For further information see: <http://www.creative-partnerships.com/offer>