

ArtSmart Announces Its First \$1 Million Gift from Philanthropist and Patron of the Arts Maria Manetti Shrem

ArtSmart's national teaching artists will be named the Maria Manetti Shrem Mentors

LEXINGTON, KY, UNITED STATES, February 1, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- ArtSmart, a 501(c)3 national nonprofit, announced today that it has received its first million-dollar donation over five years, given by Philanthropist and Patron of the Arts Maria Manetti Shrem.

Maria Manetti Shrem's donation demonstrates her commitment to ArtSmart's successful program model, sustainability, scale, and impact. Together with Co-Founders Michael Fabiano and John Viscardi and the ArtSmart team, this transformative and historic donation will catapult ArtSmart's impact on a national scale. ArtSmart's mission is to transform the lives of youth in under-resourced communities across the United States through tuition-free music lessons and mentorship, by paid professional artists. ArtSmart's vision is to provide students with a pathway to academic, economic, and emotional stability through music mentorship.

"Maria Manetti Shrem has been a benefactor of the ArtSmart



Maria Manetti Shrem with ArtSmart mentors and students



Left: Maria Manetti Shrem, Right: ArtSmart students perform

organization since 2016. You can see right away that she knows without art in society, there really is no society," said Co-Founder and Executive Director Michael Fabiano.



Manetti Shrem's generous gift and long-term philanthropic commitment to ArtSmart, its mission, and arts education has allowed the organization

to prove measurable impact. In June 2023, ArtSmart concluded a two-year longitudinal study in partnership with the WCG Institutional Review Board to evaluate its impact on student social, emotional, and academic outcomes against a comparison group of nonparticipating students. Key findings showed the ArtSmart programs achieved their intended impact and had a causal effect on student outcomes beyond learning music.

“

When you support ArtSmart, you support an outstanding educational platform in the music world and contribute to forging better generations, better societies, and making this world a better place.”

Maria Manetti Shrem

ArtSmart students showed a statistically significant increase in: 1) planning to attend college, 2) developing a meaningful connection with an adult at school, and 3) feeling responsible for their actions

“When you support ArtSmart, you not only support an outstanding educational platform in the music world, but you are contributing to forging better generations, building better societies, and making this world a better place,” said Manetti Shrem.

Born in Florence, Italy, Maria Manetti Shrem moved to San Francisco in 1972. She became instrumental in the internationalization of some of the world's most iconic fashion brands, such as Gucci and Fendi.

But not without the support of her mentors. Manetti Shrem attributes much of her success to her mentor, who fostered her talent, and to her mother, who made financial sacrifices to provide Manetti Shrem with continuing education during a time when most working families sent their children to work after elementary school.

“Having a mentor and access to an education gave me the confidence to achieve and live life to the fullest. I was in touch with my mentor until her death. That is why every aspect of my charity is geared towards education. I am very proud that ArtSmart teaching artists will be called the Maria Manetti Shrem Mentors,” said Manetti Shrem.

Maria Manetti Shrem and her husband, Jan Shrem, have long contributed philanthropic support in the US, Italy, and the UK to more than 45 charitable programs through 30 foundations. In the

US these include UC Davis, the Metropolitan Opera in New York City, the San Francisco Opera, Festival Napa Valley, the San Francisco Symphony, SFMoMA, KQED, Cal Performances, SFFilm, and hospitals such as UCSF (neurology, orthopedics) and CPMC (cardiology). In Europe, Maria is one of the principal benefactors of the King's Foundation, Royal Drawing School, Friends of the Louvre, the Venetian Heritage, the Italian National Trust (FAI), Palazzo Strozzi Foundation, ArtSmart, Teatro del Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, and the Andrea Bocelli Foundation.

The Manetti Shrems are co-founders of the Jan Shrem and Maria Manetti Shrem Museum of Art at UC Davis. The museum's extraordinary architectural design was listed in ARTnews as "One of The World's 25 Best Museum Buildings of the Past 100 Years."

Maria has received numerous prestigious awards and recognition as an outstanding and influential cultural ambassador between Italy and the USA, and as a world-class philanthropist: Grand Officer of the Order of the Star of Italy; The Keys of the City of Florence; The Angels of the Arts Award from the Festival Napa Valley; The Spirit of the Opera Award from San Francisco Opera; the 2023 UC Davis Medal honors degree as the major philanthropist of the arts at UC Davis. The City and the County of San Francisco proclaimed June 22, Manetti Shrem Day for Philanthropy.

Through weekly one-to-one sessions over a full school year, ArtSmart students receive world class instruction and personalized mentorship from professional musicians. Using an evidence-based curriculum, ArtSmart teaching artists, known as mentors, work with their students to set goals, learn music, develop a healthy self-esteem and ultimately, chart a course for the rest of their lives.

"Having that one guiding light every single week, one mentor that they can relate to and say, 'this person cares about me,' provides direct inspiration in all of their other studies. Inspiration leads to personal growth, emotional growth, academic growth. Inspiration is the key to success in school," said Fabiano.

Fabiano continued, "It is an existential need. We know that music is eternal and essential. This is why Maria and I are deep friends and why she is ArtSmart's most consequential benefactor. We would not be where we are today without her."

[ABOUT ARTSMART](#)

ArtSmart was co-founded in 2016 by international opera singers Michael Fabiano and John Viscardi after extensive analysis of the United States education system and the economic landscape for artists living and working in the United States. ArtSmart was born out of these central ideas: to offer students in under-resourced communities an opportunity to pursue their dreams and develop holistically, while supporting working artists in accomplishing their own professional goals.

"It was important to me that ArtSmart not only help young people achieve their dreams but also provide income to performing artists. The Maria Manetti Shrem Mentors contribute to their professions by teaching young students and performing the art they love to perform."

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