



RICHMOND
PERFORMING
ARTS
ALLIANCE

600 E. Grace Street | Richmond, Virginia | 23219

MEDIA ADVISORY

For Immediate Release

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Richmond Performing Arts Alliance names Abbi Leinwand Haggerty, Ph.D. as Executive Director

The Board of Directors of Richmond Performing Arts Alliance (RPAA) is pleased to announce Abbi Leinwand Haggerty, Ph.D. as the new Executive Director of the organization. Abbi has served as Interim Executive Director since August 2018 when former Executive Director Janet Starke was appointed by Governor Northam to lead the Virginia Commission for the Arts. Abbi returned to RPAA in 2016 as Director of Development, having previously served the organization during two prior time periods in other development roles.

With over 16 years of fundraising and nonprofit management experience, Abbi began her career at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts and has since served in senior-level positions with the Partnership for Nonprofit Excellence and John Tyler Community College. She has created and overseen comprehensive fund development strategies for these organizations, leading capital and major gift campaigns, annual fund and grant programs, and special events. Abbi will bring her fundraising expertise to the Executive Director position, focusing most immediately on the upcoming 10th Anniversary Celebration of the opening of Dominion Energy Center for the Performing Arts taking place on September 6, 2019.

RPAA Board of Directors chairman Rodney Willett shared “Abbi is a champion of the performing arts in Richmond. We are excited to have her leading the RPAA as we celebrate our 10th anniversary and look towards our next milestones.”

Abbi earned her bachelor’s degree in political science and history from Virginia Tech and earned both her master’s degree in public administration and doctoral degree in public policy and administration (with a concentration in nonprofit management) from VCU. She currently serves on the Board of the Association of Fundraising Professionals-Central Virginia Chapter as Vice President of Programs and is an adjunct professor at both University of Richmond and VCU. Abbi has a background and particular interest in serving community-based organizations, focusing on building a strong, positive internal culture as well as ensuring authentic conversations and relationships with community stakeholders.

Over the course of her career, Abbi has built meaningful partnerships with individual, foundation, and corporate investors as well as the nonprofit and arts community. She looks forward to ongoing opportunities to work collaboratively alongside RPAA’s supporters, patrons, and other key constituents. Having played a significant role in the campaign for the downtown performing arts center and being an integral part of the Grand Opening in 2009, Abbi is delighted to lead the organization in the celebration of the 10th Anniversary. She will work alongside the staff, Board of Directors, and Associates Board to implement RPAA’s current Strategic Plan as well as develop organizational priorities for RPAA’s next decade of service to the Richmond community.

Richmond Performing Arts Alliance (formerly Richmond CenterStage Foundation) is a 501(c)(3) organization whose mission is to provide diverse local and world-class performing arts, transformative arts education experiences for students of all ages, and inspirational venues—all to strengthen the cultural and economic vitality of the Greater Richmond region. RPAA venues include Dominion Energy Center for the Performing Arts, home to the historic Carpenter Theatre, Libby S. Gottwald Playhouse and Rhythm Hall, as well as Altria Theater – the largest performance venue between New York and Atlanta. RPAA’s BrightLights Education Initiatives operate out of the Genworth BrightLights Education Center and reach students of all ages in the City of Richmond and surrounding counties. RPAA launched Greater Richmond Wolf Trap this past fall—a proven model for early childhood arts integration that uses music, theater, and dance to teach early literacy skills in Richmond-area schools. RPAA works to SUPPORT the artists of today, NURTURE the artists of tomorrow, and provide spaces for the arts to THRIVE.

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