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HIGH CONCEPT LABS CHOSEN TO PARTICIPATE IN SMART GROWTH PROGRAM

The Chicago Community Trust honors hcl with organizational development, grant support

CHICAGO, IL — The Chicago Community Trust has announced that High Concept Labs (hcl) has been selected to participate in the 2015 SMART Growth Program. The SMART Growth program was established to help small arts and cultural organizations to engage their boards and staffs in strengthening management practices that effectively support their missions, enabling them to contribute to their communities and to the cultural ecology of the region.

"We're excited to have been selected to participate in the Trust's signature, capacity-building SMART Growth program," says hcl Board Chair Mónica Millán. "We believe that community is built through culture, and the SMART Growth program will help the hcl Board and staff further its mission of providing assistance to regional working artists, fostering collaboration and artistic development, while simultaneously honing our own management skills."

Small community-based arts and cultural organizations (those with an operating budget less than \$1 million) in Cook County were invited to apply for the SMART Growth capacity-building grant program. The 31 nonprofits chosen for participation in the program were chosen from a competitive pool of 136 applicants.

Through a grant to the Arts & Business Council of Chicago, SMART Growth provides an individualized assessment of each nonprofit, evaluating critical business functions, such as their financial management, income generation and board governance. This signature program of the Trust also provides organizations with valuable training in the SMART Growth methodology, which includes establishing outcomes that are Specific, Measurable, Actionable, Realistic and Timed. Organizations then receive three years of general operating grants, which range from \$15,000 - \$50,000 per year.

Established in 2006, past SMART Growth graduates include the Jazz Institute (2006), the Ukrainian Institute of Modern Art (2010) and Ensemble Espanol Spanish Dance (2010). A total of 70 cultural organizations are alumni of the Smart Growth program.

About High Concept Labs: High Concept Labs is an Illinois not-for-profit arts service organization dedicated to supporting working artists and engaging the Chicago community with arts and culture. Partnering with artists at every step of the creative process, hcl offers high-quality custom support services through its Sponsored Artist and Institution Incubation Programs. hcl also curates and hosts Cultural Conversations, artist showcases, presents special community events, and facilitates educational

arts partnerships. With a vibrant cycle of programs and process-support, High Concept Labs grows community alongside culture and fosters new audiences for the arts.

hcl is supported in part by the generosity of MANA Contemporary Chicago, the Chicago Community Trust, the Illinois Arts Council Agency, The Richard H. Driehaus Foundation, the Chicago Dancemakers Forum, and individual donors.

website: highconceptlabs.org

calendar of events: highconceptlabs.org/calendar/

facebook: facebook.com/highconceptlabs

hcl is based at Mana Contemporary Chicago in the Pilsen neighborhood, at 2233 S. Throop St. Chicago, Illinois 60608.

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