Community MusicWorks and WaterFire Providence received national recognition today from ArtPlace, a philanthropic collaboration of the nation’s top foundations in partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts and other federal agencies. Both organizations are embarking on innovative initiatives to strengthen the Providence community through the arts.

**ArtPlace**

ArtPlace, a new national collaboration of 11 major national and regional foundations, six of the nation’s largest banks, and eight federal agencies, including the National Endowment for the Arts, works to accelerate creative place making across the U.S. To date, ArtPlace has raised almost $50 million to work alongside federal and local governments to transform communities with strategic investments in the arts. ArtPlace received nearly 2,200 letters of inquiry from organizations nationwide seeking a portion of the $15.4 million available for grants in 2012. 47 projects were funded in 33 communities nationwide.
The Award
CMW will receive a $100,000 grant to curate a season-long series of musical and community-building events in the neighborhood where the organization’s storefront headquarters is located. The monthly series will combine exceptional musical performances with neighborhood-building activities. The project will offer diverse audiences distinctive experiences that integrate music and community, while drawing resources, people, and ideas to Providence’s West End.

This experimental series of free events, taking place in a number of locations within a targeted area (a triangle bounded by John Hope Settlement House, West End Community Center, and West Broadway Neighborhood Association), will offer designed experiences involving music, food, and conversation. Events will take place in unusual locations, will involve exciting visiting artists and commissions by locally and nationally known composers, and will be co-designed with various partner organizations, including the West End Community Center, John Hope Settlement House, West Broadway Neighborhood Association, Community Works Rhode Island, and Providence's Department of Art, Culture + Tourism.

ArtPlace’s interest in creative place-making aligns well with CMW’s interest in rethinking the typical Classical concert experience: How can a concert be as much about who is sitting next to you as who is performing? How can CMW’s artistic programming help to attract a mix of constituencies that will increase economic and cultural vibrancy?
Community MusicWorks

Founded in 1997, CMW is a “revolutionary organization” (The New Yorker) that creates cohesive urban community—through music education and performance—that transforms the lives of children, families, and musicians in Providence. In 2010, CMW’s founder was awarded a MacArthur Foundation Fellowship for "forging a new, multifaceted role beyond the concert hall for the twenty-first-century musician," and CMW was selected as one of the top 15 after-school arts programs in the country by the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities.

CMW is anchored by a team of musicians-in-residence who staff CMW’s youth programs, rehearse in CMW’s storefront, and perform throughout the neighborhood, as well as further afield. When asked about this unusual neighborhood-based residency model, longtime CMW cello student Carolina Jimenez responded, “I don’t think it’s strange to have a string quartet in the neighborhood. I think it’s perfectly normal because I grew up with it.”

CMW’s impact has been profound. In a community where only 50% of youth complete high school, 95% of CMW graduates enroll in college. A 2009 evaluation found that CMW’s youth programming helps children forge a curious and engaged inner life, and fosters qualities of persistence, personal agency, and participation in a wider world. The evaluation saw CMW students learning habits of hard work, investment, and mutual responsibility: the building blocks of a strong community.

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www.communitymusicworks.org

High resolution photographs are available
Please direct inquiries to Heath Marlow, Managing Director (401) 861-5650 or hmarlow@communitymusicworks.org