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National Grid Foundation Supports FirstWorks' New Environmental Program For Rhode Island Youth

Earth First initiative kicks-off at PVDFest with a Cycle Sonic spectacle

PROVIDENCE, RI – FirstWorks, a Rhode Island non-profit dedicated to building community through world-class arts, has received a grant from the National Grid Foundation to support their new Arts-Learning initiative, Earth First. The new arts and education-based program for Rhode Island youth will kick-off at PVDFest 2018 with Cycle Sonic, a bike-powered spectacle that celebrates green energy, the resurgence of biking and a reduced carbon footprint.

“This is a natural partnership for the foundation as we are consistently looking for ways to solve today’s educational and environment challenges and to improve the lives children in our neighborhoods,” said Ed White, Executive Director, National Grid Foundation. “By working with FirstWorks on Earth First, we will reach more students each year and strengthen the social fabric of RI and the broader New England region.”

National Grid Foundation's support of FirstWorks Arts Learning, that currently benefits over 4,000 Rhode Island students at 30 schools each year, will promote learning about sustainability, climate change and environmental stewardship. The multi-month program entitled, Earth First, kicks-off with the Cycle Sonic performance in front of City Hall on June 9th and 10th,

"Cycle Sonic's double-decker bike stage will captivate audiences. It is also the perfect vehicle to address the challenges of global climate change during our Arts Learning workshops in the run-up to the festival," said, Kathleen Pletcher, Executive Artistic Director of FirstWorks. "We are honored to be working with National Grid Foundation to help educate today's youth about global climate change, the environment theme is timely and urgent."

Cycle Sonic is a spectacular art-rock performance on human-powered stages by Philadelphia-based festival veterans SQUONK OPERA. As the Founding Creative Partner of the festival, FirstWorks provides a platform for its Arts Learning students to participate in the performances and activities. Other elements of Earth First will include public dance performances, in-school workshops, film screenings and lecture series for participating schools in FirstWorks Arts-Learning program which serves students in Providence, Pawtucket, Central Falls and Newport County.

About FirstWorks

FirstWorks is a non-profit based in Providence, R.I., dedicated to connecting art with audiences. Since 2004, FirstWorks' signature strengths - sustained partnerships and innovative strategies - have propelled their growth as the only First Night festival in the country to become a year-round arts organization. Their season includes The Artistic Icons Series, The Frontier Series, and Arts Learning benefiting

over 4,000 low-income students across Rhode Island. The FirstWorks engagement practice is hailed as a “national model” for developing new audiences with worldclass artists, having connected Rhode Island audiences with new works by Yo-Yo Ma, Urban Bush Women, and Paul Taylor Dance Company. FirstWorks is honored to partner with the City of Providence. Since the 2012 FirstWorks Festival on the Plaza, FirstWorks and the Department of Art, Culture, and Tourism have been awarded three prestigious “Our Town” grants from the National Endowment for the Arts. Learn more at First-Works.org.

About PVDfest

For the fourth year, Mayor Jorge O. Elorza, **the City of Providence's Department of Art, Culture+ Tourism** and founding creative partner **FirstWorks** will host **PVDfest**, Providence's signature art festival, June 7-10, 2018. Providence's world-renowned art, culture and culinary community join forces with artists from across the country and globe to deliver a once in a lifetime experience. Live music, dance, food, and visual art installations transform the city in a four-day, multi-arts take-over of public spaces, parks, and outdoor stages in the heart of Providence, Rhode Island. More info at <http://pvdifest.com>.

Listing Information:

WHO: SQUONK OPERA's “Cycle Sonic”

WHEN: Saturday, June 9, 2018 at 2:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.

WHERE: Kennedy Plaza, Downtown Providence

TICKETS: FREE – no tickets required

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