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MEMPHIS MUSIC INITIATIVE LAUNCHES MMI WORKS SUMMER YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

(MEMPHIS, TN) – Today a group of Memphis high school students will report for their first week of work at music and arts organizations across the city as part of MMI Works, a new youth engagement program focused on creating summer internship and professional development opportunities for young people around music and the arts.

MMI Works was established to jumpstart opportunities for youth to build valuable life skills by working as interns and apprentices within area music and arts organizations. The 20 students selected for the inaugural summer session are already engaged with Memphis Music Initiative, either through their schools (where they are taught by MMI Music Engagement Teaching Fellows) or through MMI grant funded programming at partner nonprofits.

“It’s really important for the MMI Works team to help create the space and give permission for our interns to dream,” says Brittney Boyd Bullock, MMI Youth Program Manager for MMI Works. “Letting them take ownership and direction of what success looks like for them helps to create trust among us all. It’s an imperative part of the process.”

Students began their MMI Works experience last week with an orientation focused on building and creating norms for the group and workplace professionalism. Through July 15, they’ll work 32 hours per week at their respective placements and spend one eight-hour day attending a professional development session with MMI staff. They’ll be paid \$7.25 hourly by MMI for their internship hours.

MMI Works interns have been placed with **Collage Dance Collective, PRIZM Ensemble, Harmonic South Strings, Streets Ministries, Opera Memphis, Memphis Black Arts Alliance, STAX Music Academy and STAX Museum.**

“Our young people have an understanding of what they need to be successful, we need to allow them to tell us then create the best opportunity for them.”

To learn more about all MMI programming, visit memphismusicinitiative.org.

ABOUT MEMPHIS MUSIC INITIATIVE

The Memphis Music Initiative was started in 2014 with funding from a private Memphis foundation. The initiative was inspired by earlier work from various youth and music organizations throughout the city to use community engagement to develop arts-focused activities that build on existing resources and assets to drive youth and community outcomes. The initiative’s strategic priorities and approach were defined through a five-month strategic development process which engaged low-income and communities of color

throughout Memphis and local and national youth development and arts leaders to identify the assets, process, and activities important to carrying out this work successfully. The five-year, \$20 million strategy is expected to run through 2020. The initiative was designed to focus on three critical areas of work: in-school (sustain existing in-school music education and expand instruction through partnerships with local musicians); extended learning (expand high-quality out-of-school time programs to reach more youth and remove barriers to youth engagement and participation); and innovation spaces (develop places to spur innovation where youth can hear, learn and play music). Learn more at MemphisMusicInitiative.org.

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