



SANTA BARBARA COUNTY  
 ARTS COMMISSION  
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## P R E S S R E L E A S E

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

# Children’s Creative Project receives 2015 Leadership in the Arts Award from the Santa Barbara County Arts Commission

The Children’s Creative Project and its long-time Executive Director were recognized by the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors at their December 8th meeting with a Resolution acknowledging the 2015 Leadership in the Arts Award recipient. Second District Supervisor and Board Chair Janet Wolf made the presentation on behalf of the Board recognizing Kathy Koury and Children’s Creative Project for their significant contributions to arts education and community outreach.

The Arts Commission’s presentation of the 2015 Leadership in the Arts Award took place on December 3rd at the annual holiday gathering in the Channing Peake Gallery during 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday in Downtown Santa Barbara. The Leadership in the Arts Award was established in 2006 as an annual award to honor and recognize individuals or organizations that have made a significant impact on the arts and culture of our region through innovative thinking and exemplary commitment to promoting, sustaining, and advancing our quality of life through the Arts.



Children’s Creative Project has served as an arts education nonprofit program of the Santa Barbara County Education Office since 1974, collaborating with school districts, artists and arts organizations to develop arts education programs. Since its inception Children’s Creative Project has grown from providing visual and performing arts from 200 students to more than 50,000 underserved students each year at approximately 100 schools in both Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo Counties.

Kathy Koury has served as the Executive Director since 1977, creating the concept of the *I Madonnari*, Italian Street Painting in 1987 after a trip to Italy for a street painting competition. The now iconic Festival

that takes place each Memorial Day weekend generates funding support for arts enrichment, focuses on the value of arts, and showcases local talent.

County Superintendent of Schools Bill Cirone had this to say about the award. “Kathy Koury has been a giant in arts education in Santa Barbara County for over 40 years. She is a visionary and creative genius with incredible organizational skills, who also created and produced *I Madonnari* as a vehicle to support the Children’s Creative Project, which she also founded and still directs. She is a tenacious, skilled leader whose work has set the standard statewide and nationally.

Since 1981 Children’s Creative Project has provided free world renowned professional multicultural performances events to 4,000 elementary school children each year at the Arlington Theatre and the Santa Barbara Bowl through strategic partnerships with key arts supporters including the Santa Barbara Bowl Education Outreach, UCSB Arts & Lectures and others. In 1999 Children’s Creative Project received “The Creative Ticket Schools of Excellence” award from the California Alliance of Arts Education, a member of the Kennedy Center Alliance for Arts Education Network.

For more information visit [www.sbartcommission.org](http://www.sbartcommission.org).

PHOTO CREDIT: Nell Campbell

Caption: From left to right: Barbara Burger, 2<sup>nd</sup> District Arts Commissioner, Karen Evangelista, 3<sup>rd</sup> District; Celeste Weidman, Bill Cirone, Superintendent of Schools, Kathy Koury, Children’s Creative Project Executive Director, Maiza Hixson, Visual Arts Coordinator/Curator of Collections; Catherine Boyer, 3<sup>rd</sup> District Arts Commissioner; Hannah Rubalcava, Grants Contract Manager; Gera Ayala, 1<sup>st</sup> District Arts Commissioner and Chair and Ginny Brush, Executive Director.

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