



**Excerpt from Remarks by National Endowment for the Arts
Chairman Jane Chu
October 13, 2017**

To date, I have visited 50 states with you. Together, we have been to 156 communities, we've made 381 site visits. In some states, we have held public events meetings, where we open up to the community to talk about the arts and answer questions from the public. We've had 31 of those public meetings.

Every state has its own special characteristics, and when you've seen one state, you've only seen one state. But every single state has a wide array of arts programs and offerings. It's kind of like a food system. We have five-star restaurants, and diners, and food trucks, and home cooked meals. There's really something for everyone.

And there are some areas where we're all participating together. For example, this summer, 2,122 museums from all 50 states participated in the Blue Star Museums program, as well as museums in Puerto Rico and American Samoa. And this year, more than 310,000 students from all 50 states, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands participated in Poetry Out Loud. And, all 50 states have NEA grants in the *Our Town* grant program.

And to our regional arts organizations, thank you for your work with us to support performing arts programs, educational activities, international presenting, and reaching the neighborhoods and communities that have fewer opportunities. From Shakespeare in American Communities and the NEA's Big Read to Creativity Connects, Poetry Out Loud, and Southern Exposure, including disaster preparedness and technical help with our on-line application process—this is just some of the work we've been doing together with our regional arts organizations.

There will come a time when the arts will be recognized by all, as a way of life. Where the general public will understand that the arts include the five-star restaurants and the diners and the food trucks and the home-cooked meals. That it isn't one type of art versus the other, but instead, there's something for everyone.

There will come a time when someone will be in a pickle on how to unite people. How to bring them together, how to best attend to societal differences in cultures, skin color, religion, language, ethnicity and heritage and they will say, "Let's bring in an arts project to help us," because they will know that the arts are the easiest, most obvious entryway into understanding other perspectives.

There will come a time when the arts are a standard line item in city budgets, because the presence of the arts will be synonymous with community vitality and meaning, and the places where people want to live and work.

Where mayors immerse themselves into design thinking in order to showcase the beauty of their city and the efficiency of the infrastructure, the gathering places of the locals, the community sites that best embrace visitors, and the rejuvenated areas of town that were once blighted and previously ignored.

And artists will be employed in more health care systems, employed on the hospital staff, providing activities for patients. And, hospitals will note that medicine combined with art provide therapeutic qualities far greater than medicine alone.

And every student will be able to adopt an art form that belongs to him or her, not only to give them more skills and options to express themselves beyond the use of words in linear, everyday conversations, but because they will know what it's like to create.

And arts leaders will be the key leaders in the community because you know how to create. You know how to stand in the midst of ambiguity without shrinking back; that's part of the creation process. You know how to move away from being stuck because you understand that there isn't really a set of finite resources for which we all compete, but instead, you can figure out how to open the door to new possibilities, where we discover even more resources that we didn't even realize were waiting for us, because arts leaders can solve old and tired problems in new ways.

That's what you're already doing, in so many different ways. You're helping us think bigger, dream bigger about what America can be, because of the arts.

Keep doing it.