

The Virginia Arts Festival
Announces
Ground Breaking for New Headquarters
The Clay and Jay Barr Education Center
Monday, May 5, 2008 at 11:00 am

On Monday, May 5, 2008 at 11:00 am, The Virginia Arts Festival will host a ground breaking ceremony for the Clay and Jay Barr Education Center, its new administrative and education headquarters.

Thanks to the significant donation and vision of philanthropist, Clay Barr, the Festival has the exciting opportunity to establish its first permanent home since its inception 12 years ago.

Located in Norfolk on the corner of Bank and East Charlotte Streets adjacent to Chrysler Hall, it will be home to the Festival offices, a rehearsal hall, a 250 seat performance space, and an accessible street level box office.

Officiating at the event will be Norfolk Mayor Paul D. Fraim; Virginia Arts Festival Board President and the building's architect, Burrell Saunders; Festival Director Robert W. Cross ; Festival Board Capital Campaign Chair Susan Hirschbiel; and long time Festival Board member, Clay Barr.

“We are delighted to take this step,” said Cross. “The new building will provide our arts education programs room to expand and give much needed rehearsal area for visiting artists and regional arts partners. The adaptable performance space offers us yet another venue for chamber music, dance and intimate theater. Thanks to the efforts of Clay Barr along with other organizations and individuals, the Virginia Arts Festival will finally have a home in which to follow its dreams.”

About the Virginia Arts Festival

Established in 1997 as a cultural tourism initiative to promote travel to Hampton Roads, the Festival annually presents acclaimed artists from around the globe as well as the region's own professional arts organizations. Truly a regional collaboration, the festival features a notable line up of music, theater and dance in venues throughout the area. Now in its 12th season, the Festival has established itself as one of the premier cultural events in the mid-Atlantic region. Of the 104,944 people who attended in 2007, 29% (or nearly one third of attendees) were patrons from 41 states and 9 countries on 4 continents.

Beyond its mission of bringing world class arts to citizens and visitors, the Virginia Arts Festival is committed to creating outstanding educational programs for area school children. It offers special student matinees of Festival events, master classes with

virtuosos, and in-school programs that bring performing artists directly into classrooms – all part of its goal of reaching every student during their school years in Hampton Roads. More than 34,000 children experienced our education programs in 2007 and the new building will definitely broaden this opportunity.

The Festival also nurtures artistic endeavor in the region, commissioning and co-presenting new works. The new facility's flexible rehearsal and performance space will enable further development of new works in the realm of music, theater, and dance.

About the New Facility

Location: The new Virginia Arts Festival building will be constructed across from Chrysler Hall at the corner of Bank and East Charlotte Streets in Norfolk.

Design: The Virginia Arts Festival's new home has been designed by Festival Board President, Burrell Saunders, CEO and co-founder of CMSS Architects.

Construction: Clancy & Theys Construction, headquartered in Raleigh, N.C. with a division office in Newport News, will serve as general contractor.

Projected Completion: Construction is expected to begin in summer 2008 with completion by summer 2009.

Funding: A capital campaign to fund the facility is well underway. Naming and underwriting opportunities are available; for information, contact Cinda Ayers at (757) 282-2821 or cayers@VaFest.org.