

MEDIA CONTACT

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The Hermitage Artist Retreat

Receives \$100,000 Matching Pledge in Response to COVID-19 Crisis

The Manasota-based Cook family rises to the challenge of these critical times with a matching pledge that lasts through June 30.

(April 6, 2020) Andy Sandberg, the artistic director and CEO of the Hermitage Artist Retreat, today announced a generous dollar-for-dollar pledge from the Manasota Key-based Cook family. According to Sandberg, the Cooks have committed to matching every donation the organization receives up to \$100,000 until June 30.

“Amidst challenging times, it is wonderful to have champions,” says Sandberg. “We are delighted and heartened by the Cook family’s extraordinary support, and all of us at the Hermitage are truly grateful.” Through this match, the Cooks are doubling the impact of every gift in this critical time.

“We are sensitive to the fact that the work that we and our artistic colleagues do, however vital and impactful, may seem less urgent when compared to matters of life and death amidst this horrible pandemic,” Sandberg adds. “Still, the arts and the creative spirit are part of what make our lives so meaningful and special. We are fortunate to be part of a community in which the arts are such an important player, and we look forward to rolling out our plans for the upcoming season.

“We are hopeful the Cooks’ overwhelming generosity will inspire others to show their support for the Hermitage, as we rally behind the artists and the creative process that fill the stages, the museums, and the concert halls that we all know and love. In

addition, as you open your hearts to make a difference in our community, we hope you will consider not only the Hermitage, but also our fellow arts organizations who are struggling in this difficult time.”

A number of celebrated Hermitage Fellows, including Pulitzer Prize winners and past winners of the prestigious Hermitage Greenfield Prize, have been speaking out about the importance and meaning of the organization in this critical time, noting the transformative and inspirational nature of this unique program and environment. These alumni have shared statements and videos raising their voices in support of the organization. **These can be viewed at**

<https://HermitageArtistRetreat.org/Hermitage-Fellows-Responses/>

The Hermitage will also be participating in the Community Foundation of Sarasota County’s 24-hour Giving Challenge (April 28-29), in which the first \$100 of every gift will be matched by the Patterson Foundation. Those who participate in the Giving Challenge will see their contributions matched by both the Cook family (dollar-for-dollar) and the Patterson Foundation (the first \$100 of every gift).

To make a contribution to the Hermitage Artist Retreat, please visit **www.HermitageArtistRetreat.org** or call 941-475-2098, Ext. 2.

Hear from Two Hermitage Artists...

“At the Hermitage, I was afforded solace, hospitality, and natural beauty to write. I was able to sit with my thoughts and forge them like raw clay into something approximating art – that’s the great gift of the Hermitage. It gives the necessary time and solitude for artists to do their best work. The Hermitage is reliant on its supporters to stay in operation and continue to contribute to the American cannon. These are difficult times. The future of art is uncertain at the moment, and institutions like the Hermitage – which

are so vital – are questioning their futures in profound ways. I beg you to support the Hermitage. Artist like me all over this country and beyond will be lastingly grateful.”

*–Doug Wright, Pulitzer Prize-Winning Playwright
President, Dramatists Guild of America.*

“The quiet of this stretch of coast and the long hours of self-directed time were phenomenal. Dreamy and productive, it was the perfect balance of interaction with the other artists and time to write and think. It was like a little window of heaven had opened up for a brief time. I came here not sure I had been particularly productive for the last few years. My time at the Hermitage gave me an opportunity to look carefully and collectively at my work. I completed my next book of poetry, started on my next major project, and even dabbled in a few creative endeavors I would never have the time or liberty to undertake at home. I worked for hours every day and still had time for long walks on the beach at sunrise and sunset. This residency was an amazing gift.”

--Camille T. Dungy, Author, Poet, American Book Award Receptient.

Additional Artist Testimonials at: HermitageArtistRetreat.org

About the Hermitage Artist Retreat:

The Hermitage is a nonprofit artist retreat located in Manasota Key, Florida, inviting accomplished artists across multiple disciplines for residencies on its beachfront campus, which is on the National Register of Historic Places. Hermitage artists are invited to interact with the local community, touching thousands of Gulf Coast residents and visitors each year with unique and inspiring programs. Hermitage fellows have included nine Pulitzer Prize winners, along with multiple Tony, Emmy, Grammy, Oscar, and MacArthur Fellowship award winners. Works created at this beachside retreat by a diverse group of Hermitage alumni have gone on to renowned theatres, concert halls, and galleries throughout the world. Each year, the Hermitage awards the \$30,000 Greenfield Prize for a new work of art, and the Aspen Music Festival awards the annual Hermitage Prize in Composition. For more information about The Hermitage Artist Retreat, visit www.HermitageArtistRetreat.org.

The Hermitage is supported by:

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