

## MEDIA CONTACT

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**The Hermitage Artist Retreat  
Meets \$150,000 Matching Challenge  
Raising Over \$300,000  
In Response to COVID-19  
and  
Achieves First Million-Dollar Fiscal Year**

(July 6, 2020) Andy Sandberg, Artistic Director and CEO of the Hermitage Artist Retreat, today announced that the Hermitage has exceeded its \$150,000 matching challenge, raising a total of \$302,000 through this campaign in response to COVID-19. This spring fundraising initiative launched with a generous \$100,000 pledge from the Manasota Key-based Cook family on April 7<sup>th</sup> to match every gift dollar-to-dollar through June 30<sup>th</sup>. The original \$100,000 challenge was met in just four weeks, and an additional group of Hermitage supporters contributed \$50,000 to extend the match. On Tuesday, June 30<sup>th</sup>, the Hermitage surpassed its goal.

“We cannot express our gratitude enough to everyone who helped us reach this milestone,” Sandberg stated. “I must recognize that this campaign was supported generously by *all* members of our community: our Hermitage Fellows and artists, our audiences, our longtime supporters, our artistic colleagues, the community foundations, our board of trustees, our staff, our volunteers, and many new champions of the Hermitage.”

In addition, the funds raised through this campaign enabled the organization to achieve its first million-dollar fiscal year, which concluded on June 30<sup>th</sup>.

Sandberg, who officially started in his role at the Hermitage earlier this year, added that the Hermitage, like many arts and cultural institutions, faced questions of how to weather the pandemic, but indicated that this campaign has given the organization new hope for the future.

“The generosity of our artists, our donors, and our community has helped to ensure the future of this truly vital institution. Without this essential support for artists and the creative process, without this space and freedom to shape and develop great works of the future, we would be staring down empty stages and empty pages long past the ramifications of any virus. No doubt, there are still many question marks and challenges ahead, but together, we can continue to support bold, impactful, and diverse works of art, theater, music, literature, and more that feed our souls and shape our cultural landscape.”

The Hermitage resumes its core residency operations this week, commencing with the STARS teaching artist program, in partnership with the Florida Alliance for Arts Education. The organization has implemented a number of social-distancing practices and policies to ensure the safety of artists, staff, and guests. Invitations have recently been issued by the Hermitage Curatorial Council for the 2020-2021 season. Hermitage Fellows will continue to engage in free community programs, and a number of these will be made available digitally until live programs resume.

To support the program initiatives in the upcoming season, it was recently announced that the Gulf Coast Community Foundation granted the Hermitage \$40,000 to help expand the Hermitage's programming throughout the region, supported with an additional \$45,000 from Flora Major and the Kutya Major Foundation.

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 Hermitage 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 [www.HermitageArtistRetreat.org/Hermitage-Fellows-Responses](http://www.HermitageArtistRetreat.org/Hermitage-Fellows-Responses).

To learn more about the Hermitage and ways to get involved or support the organization, please visit [\*\*www.HermitageArtistRetreat.org\*\*](http://www.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, reaching 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 Hermitage 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 [HermitageArtistRetreat.org](http://HermitageArtistRetreat.org).

**The Hermitage is supported by:**

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