



## News Release | December 11, 2018

CONTACT: Kelly Smith, Public Relations Manager, [ksmith@floridaorchestra.org](mailto:ksmith@floridaorchestra.org); 727.362.5448

Leslie Farrell, Publicist, University Area CDC, [lesliebethfarrell@hotmail.com](mailto:lesliebethfarrell@hotmail.com); 813.493.1805

# Grant extends violin lessons through Prodigy Cultural Arts, Florida Orchestra partnership

*University Area CDC, Hillsborough funding aims to teach life skills to children*

[Watch Video: Partnership empowers kids through music](#)

ST. PETERSBURG, FL – The Hillsborough County Board of County Commissioners has approved more funding to extend and expand a groundbreaking partnership between The Florida Orchestra and the University Area CDC's Prodigy® Cultural Arts Program to provide free violin lessons and other musical experiences to children who might not have the opportunity any other way.

"The Prodigy-Florida Orchestra partnership has been a big success," said Mike Trepper, Prodigy® director. "It has brought new and exciting cultural arts opportunities to youth and adults across Hillsborough County. From violin classes to performances, the more exposure to a variety of arts, the more of an impact we all can make. Our community benefits from solid partnerships that enrich lives."

Thanks to a new \$100,000 grant, the University Area CDC and Hillsborough County jointly are providing funding for the program, including instrument rental and other class supplies. The grant also allows the orchestra to hire a violin instructor and a part-time coordinator dedicated to the partnership.

The partnership began over the summer when the orchestra taught group violin classes twice a week to kids at Roy Haynes Recreation Center in Tampa – a first for TFO and Prodigy®. The orchestra also performed chamber concerts, hosted Prodigy students and families at a TFO Masterworks concert at the Straz Center and offered the Instrument Petting Zoo at various venues, giving students the opportunity to see, touch and play instruments. Thanks to an initial \$80,000 grant, also from the University Area CDC and Hillsborough County, all was provided for free.

During this fall session, the free violin lessons expanded to Cyrus Greene Community Center in addition to Roy Haynes. The renewed funding will allow the partnership to explore providing lessons and other activities at more Prodigy® locations throughout Hillsborough County. The grant goes through September 2019. More information is available at [www.uacdc.org/prodigy](http://www.uacdc.org/prodigy).

"We're excited about the Prodigy® partnership because we already see that it works," said Erin Horan, TFO's community engagement director. "Kids are working hard and feeling so proud of what they've

## Grant extends violin lessons through Prodigy Cultural Arts, Florida Orchestra partnership

accomplished. Learning an instrument teaches life skills, such as responsibility, leadership, and problem-solving. All of that transfers to other parts of their lives, at home and in school.”

Prodigy®, a research proven diversion and prevention program, uses an innovative approach to empower, educate and enable eligible youth, providing a doorway to a better world. Kids ages five to 18 experience performing and visual arts, taught as a tool for self-expression, to learn communication, exploration, problem solving and conflict resolution skills. Now celebrating its 18<sup>th</sup> year, Prodigy® is transforming young lives and reaches across 10 counties.

The Prodigy® activities are a key component as TFO builds a strong structure of community and education programs as part of its core mission, guided by Music Director Michael Francis. The orchestra performs free hospital, park and school concerts, and works with schools and youth orchestras through side-by-side concerts and more. In Pinellas County, this is the second year of TFO’s teaching artist program, which has helped build and guide strings programs in schools. Last season, TFO served 80,000 people through community programs – most for free.

The Prodigy® activities are in addition to the orchestra’s season of 130 concerts, performed by 66 full-time professional musicians as the premier – and largest – orchestra in Florida, marking its 51<sup>st</sup> season. TFO performs series of classical, popular, and morning coffee concerts in Tampa, St. Petersburg and Clearwater.

For more information about the Prodigy® Cultural Arts Program, please visit [www.uacdc.org/prodigy](http://www.uacdc.org/prodigy).

For more Florida Orchestra news and features, [click here for the TFO Blog](#).

### **About The Florida Orchestra**

*The Florida Orchestra is recognized as Tampa Bay’s leading performing arts institution, the largest professional symphony orchestra in Florida, and one of the most vibrant and innovative orchestras in America. Its 51<sup>st</sup> season runs through May. Under the leadership of Music Director Michael Francis, it performs more than 130 concerts a season, with series of classical, popular, and morning coffee concerts in Tampa, St. Petersburg and Clearwater, as well as free Pops in the Park. Dedicated to bringing music to all people, connecting to the community is a priority, with pre-concert talks, family and youth concerts and other educational activities. Kids and teens get in free to Masterworks concerts with Classical Kids tickets. FloridaOrchestra.org and 727.892.3337 or 1.800.662.7286.*

### **About University Area CDC**

*Celebrating its 20<sup>th</sup> year of serving the community, University Area CDC offers support for thousands of Tampa residents through youth programs, adult education and resource assistance. Its primary mission is the redevelopment and sustainability of the at-risk areas surrounding University of South Florida’s Tampa campus. For more information about University Area CDC, visit [www.uacdc.org](http://www.uacdc.org) or call 813.558.5212.*

XXX