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Sitar Arts Center Awarded 2009 Coming Up Taller Award by President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities

National award recognizes Sitar for providing high-quality afterschool arts education for youth

Washington, DC, November 4, 2009 – Sitar Arts Center, a multi-disciplinary arts center for children and youth in Washington, DC's at-risk communities, has been nationally recognized as a 2009 Coming Up Taller award winner by the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, distinguishing Sitar as one of the premier afterschool arts and humanities organizations serving youth in the country. First Lady Michelle Obama presented Sitar with the prestigious award during a special ceremony at the White House on November 4th honoring 15 winners from across the United States, including another DC award-winner, Higher Achievement.

The Coming Up Taller award identifies and supports outstanding out-of-school and after-school arts and humanities programs for children with great potential but limited outlets for creative expression. The organizations chosen for the award offer exceptional learning experiences in the arts and humanities and have a tangible effect on the lives of young people as evidenced through improved academic scores, enhanced life skills, and positive relationships with peers and adults.

"We are honored that Sitar Arts Center's multi-disciplinary arts program has been recognized by the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities," said Ed Spitzberg, Sitar's executive director. "The 2009 Coming Up Taller Award is a testament to the community we've built and the ongoing commitment of our students, parents, volunteers, and nationally recognized artistic partners who work together to help young people in Washington, DC achieve their dreams, whatever they may be. The honor also reinforces the importance of ensuring that no child's artistic talents or ambitions are ever limited by financial factors."

The Coming Up Taller award is presented by the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities (PCAH) in partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), and the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). Sitar Arts Center was nominated for the honor by NBC Universal and recommended by Target, both supporters of Sitar Arts Center and its mission to provide the youth in our community the opportunity to explore the arts and discover their artistic talent, regardless of their ability to pay.

Approaching its tenth year of bringing arts education to youth in its inner-city community, Sitar Arts Center has seen a 40 percent increase in enrollment since 2007. Most recently, Sitar's young artists have performed at the Kennedy Center's Millennium Stage with Grammy-winner Prince's rhythm section, made music at the White House Jazz Studio with the Marsalis family and First Lady Michelle Obama, had their art displayed in the Capitol building, and performed for Secretary of Education Arne Duncan at the national kickoff of Lights on Afterschool. The Center's students have gone on to study the arts at prestigious institutions like Duke Ellington School for the Arts, Michigan State University, Bryn Mawr College, and Bates College.

To become a volunteer, donate, or learn more about Sitar, please visit us at www.sitarartscenter.org or call 202-797-2145.

About Sitar Arts Center:

Sitar Arts Center provides multi-disciplinary arts education to the children and youth of Washington, DC in a nurturing, creative community where young people discover their inherent talents and gifts. Fostering personal

and artistic growth through the visual arts, music, drama, dance, digital arts and creative writing, the Center offers after-school, weekend and summer classes to more than 700 students a year, 80 percent of whom come from low-income households. More than 150 talented artists volunteer their time each week to teach and inspire the Center's students in a state-of-the-art facility. Together with a network of premier partnering arts organizations such as Arena Stage, Corcoran Gallery of Art, the Washington Ballet, the National Symphony Orchestra and Washington Performing Arts Society, our passionate volunteer faculty makes a lasting impact on our students' lives. Bringing high-quality arts education to families who would otherwise not have these opportunities, Sitar Arts Center relies on charitable contributions to ensure that no family is ever turned away because of inability to pay.

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