

HERMITAGE CREATES "STAR" PROGRAM FOR STATE EDUCATORS

The **Hermitage Artist Retreat** in Englewood, FL has just initiated a new artist residency for arts teachers in the state of Florida. State Teacher/Artist Residencies (STAR) will provide five public school educators with the opportunity to pursue their artistic work with a four-week summer residency at the Hermitage.



This newly formed program is a collaboration with **The Florida Alliance for Arts Education** (FAAE), a statewide service organization that works to ensure that all Florida students have a complete education that includes the arts. FAAE coordinated the selection process of the teachers in visual arts, writing and music.

The first recipients (pictured above) of this annual gift of time and space to devote to their personal artistry are musician **Tim Ostrow**, L.A. Ainger Middle School, Charlotte County; visual artist/writer **Melissa Pranke**, Winter Park High School, Orange County; visual artists **Patricia Cummins**, Palmetto Elementary School, Miami-Dade County and **Andrea Huffman**, McArthur High School, Broward County; and writer **Alan Sincic**, Osceola County School for the Arts, Osceola County. The residency will take place during their summer break, July 11 through August 14.

"The State of Florida is filled with talented, dedicated artists who are also dedicated public school teachers," explained **Bruce E. Rodgers**, executive director of the Hermitage Artist Retreat. "The STAR Program was designed to honor and nourish the artist in the educator with the hope that this personal time for concentration in a community of other artists will be a rewarding time to create, share and learn from others."

In April, FAAE notified all eligible school districts of the opportunity. Criteria for selection were based on two areas: position as full-time Florida public school teacher and artistic quality of work samples. Priority was given to Arts Achieve! model schools and counties with Network Partner Coalitions for their continued use of arts education as an important component of their curriculums.

According to **Susan Burke**, executive director of Florida Alliance for Arts Education, "When Bruce came to us with this idea we were thrilled at the opportunity we could offer

to our arts teachers. Today's teachers are burdened with increasing administrative duties in addition to their teaching responsibilities. The STAR program allows these talented teachers to re-engage with their art. We have no doubt that when they return to their schools, they will be excited and energized with a new enthusiasm for teaching the next generation of writers, painters and composers.”

Five STAR residences will be awarded each spring. The breakdown of arts disciplines will always be one in music, two in writing and two in visual arts. For more information on the application process, contact Susan Burke, at the Florida Alliance for Arts Education by calling 407-488-9951 or online at www.faae.org. For more information on the Hermitage Artist Retreat, contact Bruce E. Rodgers at 941-475-4075 or online at www.HermitageArtistRetreat.org.