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The Canales Project's *Finding Your Voice* Program Comes To

Boys & Girls Clubs of Tucson Through Generous Gift

(Tucson, Arizona) – Boys & Girls Clubs of Tucson (BGCT), a Tucson-based nonprofit that **provides building-centered programs, professional staff, and a safe environment for young people at six local Clubhouses**, is thrilled to announce that through a generous contribution made by Linda and Stuart Nelson, long-time supporters of BGCT of New York and Tucson, BGCT is partnering with The Canales Project to implement a new program – ***Finding Your Voice***.

The ***Finding Your Voice Program*** will make its debut on Monday, October 10th at the Boys & Girls Clubs of Tucson's Harold Ashton Resource Center on Grant Road and will run for three days from 10am – 4pm, concluding on Wednesday, October 13th. This program is the first of its kind to be offered for young people through The Canales Project. The program, designed by Carla Dirlikov Canales, award winning Mezzo-soprano opera singer, advocate and founder of The Canales Project, will focus on self-discovery, cultural celebration and performance. Young people across Tucson are invited to participate in a series of learning-intensive sessions over the three-day class. The sessions are designed to support its participants in exploring issues of identity, belonging, culture, perseverance-through-adversity, achievement, and more.

During each learning-intensive, the ***Finding Your Voice Program*** will connect participants with experiences that build their skills and increase their confidence related to navigating cultural divides through creating and presenting unique performances about their cultural heritage and traditions. Activities will incorporate self-reflection, cultural discovery, storytelling, and voice

training in order to prompt participants to explore their identities and define ways they can raise their voices to create stronger bonds between diverse communities.

“This program aligns perfectly with our mission to provide young people in Tucson, especially those who need us most, with a clear path to reach their full potential and pursue their dreams. With this program, our youth have the opportunity to gain new pathways and tools to develop and feel confident through their voices. We are so grateful to the Nelsons and Ms. Canales for providing this incredible opportunity and for debuting it at BGCT,” said Debbie Wagner, CEO of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Tucson.

About The Canales Project

Carla Dirlikov Canales

Mezzo-soprano Carla Dirlikov Canales has been praised by Opera Magazine for possessing a voice that “grabs the heartstrings with its dramatic force and musicality.” In 2014, she became the first singer ever to win the prestigious **Sphinx Medal of Excellence**, an honor bestowed upon her by Justice Sotomayor in a ceremony and concert at the **Supreme Court of the United States**. In 2015, she became the first opera singer to be named as one of **Foreign Policy's 100 Leading Global Thinkers of 2015**.

As an opera singer she has received worldwide acclaim, and is best known for her portrayals of Bizet's “Carmen” which she has performed over 80 times in a dozen countries. She has performed as a soloist at Lincoln Center, the Kennedy Center, Carnegie Hall and top international venues in Europe, Asia and Latin America. Recent engagements include the title role in Carmen with the Shanghai Opera (2016).

Carla Dirlikov Canales is the proud daughter of a Bulgarian father and a Mexican mother. For her advocacy work with under-privileged youth of over a decade, the **U.S. State Department** recently conferred upon her the title of **Cultural Envoy**. Ms. Canales is the first

opera singer to join the roster of the **President's Committee for the Arts and the Humanities'** **Turnaround Arts** initiative, which promotes arts education in public schools. She was also recently added to the prestigious roster of the **Americans for the Arts Artists Committee** and she is a board member of the **Artful Learning** model, established by Leonard Bernstein.

Ms. Canales was recently a guest speaker at **TEDxMidAtlantic** in Washington DC. She has also been a guest speaker and performer with the **White House Initiative for Educational Excellence for Hispanics** as well as with the **Aspen Institute Ideas Festival**. She is fluent in Spanish, French, Italian and English. She is the founder and CEO of **The Canales Project**, aimed at giving voice to issues of Identity and culture through music and conversation.

<http://carladirlikov.com/about/>

The Canales Project

The Canales Project (TCP) was created to give voice to issues of identity and culture through the arts and conversation. It is TCP's aim to explore stories of "the other" in society and to lead audiences on a journey from "the other to the all", seeking the connections that enable healing and a celebration of what we have in common. TCP's concert series, BETWEEN TWO WORLDS, will explore these ideas via music and interaction with artists who also understand the cultural divisions, which threaten our society today. The name "Between Two Worlds" is taken from the autobiography of U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor and frames the challenges that she like so many others have faced whose backgrounds or home lives or beliefs often have the effect of separating them from society at large.

TCP is deeply committed to educational programming as well as concert programming, with the mission of empowering youth. The group will also develop programs associated with cultural diplomacy—using the arts to help bridge the gaps that exist between nations and societies on the international stage today.

<http://thecanalesproject.com>

About The Boys & Girls Clubs of Tucson

For more than 50 years, the Boys and Girls Clubs of Tucson has helped kids, especially those who need us most, build a great future. Boys and Girls Clubs of Tucson provides affordable alternatives and after-school programming to over 6,000 youth across Tucson and serves over 4,000 active Club members each year at its six local Clubhouses. Using proven programs and resources, BGCT equips youth with pathways to success and as a result they have the resilience and support to face challenges and seek solutions. Membership is only \$10 per school year, while the true cost to the organization is \$600 annually per child. No child is ever turned away due to his/her inability to pay. BGCT is a trusted partner in empowering children and is a leading Tucson charity. For more information about volunteering or contributing to the Boys & Girls Clubs of Tucson, visit www.bgctucson.org or call (520) 573-3533.

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