Monarch School Receives Major Gift to Launch Center for the Arts

Monarch School, a K-12 school that has served San Diego County for 30 years by providing a comprehensive educational program for youth experiencing homelessness, recently received a $1.5 million contribution from an anonymous donor to support the Center for the Arts in the Barrio Logan community and its Creative Youth Development Program. The Chrysalis: Monarch Center for the Arts, named by students at the school, will provide dedicated performance and visual arts spaces for K-12 students, families and the community to cultivate their own resilience through the power of creative expression.

Monarch operates through a partnership between the San Diego County Office of Education and the Monarch School Project, a 501(c)3 that relies on private support to provide students facing homelessness with quality educational opportunities. Monarch began in 1987 as a drop-in center for homeless youth staffed by a single teacher from the San Diego County Office of Education. The nonprofit Monarch School Project was formed to provide support for the school. The unique public-private partnership on behalf of students experiencing homelessness has been embraced by the San Diego community, as donations such as this indicate.

With news of this major support, Afira DeVries, Monarch School’s CEO stated, “We are beyond thrilled with this new philanthropic support that will help us complete our Center for the Arts facility renovations, retain arts instructors and collaborate with community arts organizations to begin instruction in the new facility in December.” Monarch will deepen and expand their dance and visual arts programming, while creating and launching programs for theatre, music, media arts, poetry and creative writing, and student entrepreneurial programs. In addition, Monarch plans to provide community arts partners and organizations much needed rental space for their own arts programming, expanding its arts network and creating mutually beneficial partnerships that serve the greater community. Last September, Monarch School celebrated the opening of the Center for the Arts with a ribbon-cutting ceremony and program, which included opening remarks from Mayor Todd Gloria, followed by student performances and ribbon cutting with Supervisor Nathan Fletcher, San Diego County Office of Education leadership, members of the Board of Directors, senior staff of the school and students.

A grand opening celebration is being planned for this spring. Over a three-day period, Monarch will showcase their first annual Monarch Metamorphosis Art Exhibition featuring art from local artists, Monarch students, alumni and staff. This will include a family-friendly Flutter Art Fest, a black-tie
optional dinner, and a cocktail reception event in which the works of art from the exhibition will be auctioned to support Monarch’s art programs. The call for artists for the exhibition will be posted in early January.

To find out more about Monarch, visit online at monarchschools.org.