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MEDIA CONTACTS:

Amanda Brannum, 303-865-8143
abrannum@groundfloormedia.com

Shadia Lemus, 720-913-0096
slemus@denverartmuseum.org

Partnership Between Denver Art Museum and Bellco Credit Union Provides Access to the Arts to Record Number of Front Range Youth *Youth visitation to the museum increased by 51 percent in first year of two-year partnership*

DENVER – March 14, 2018 – More than 200,000 children and youth visited the Denver Art Museum (DAM) in 2017 thanks to a partnership between Bellco and the DAM in support of the museum’s [Free for Kids](#) program. This is an astounding 51 percent increase in youth visits to the museum in comparison to the previous year.

The Free for Kids program initially launched in March 2015 with a generous five-year gift from longtime museum trustee, Scott Reiman, and offers free general admission to all museum youth visitors ages 18 and under. Bellco became a presenting sponsor of Free for Kids in 2016, bringing additional support to the program, including enhanced learning and engagement opportunities and materials for youth visitors, as well as funding for outreach to underserved communities.

The program also offers free general admission for school tours and other youth group visits, such as summer camps and community-based youth programs, and includes bus transportation funding support for Title I schools. In addition, Free for Kids enables the museum to cap youth pricing for all special ticketed exhibitions like *Degas: A Passion for Perfection* at \$5.

“Thanks to Bellco’s financial support, the Free for Kids program has provided hundreds of thousands of kids and teens with access to the arts,” said Christoph Heinrich, the Frederick and Jan Mayer Director of the DAM. “Bellco’s commitment to ensuring that young people have the opportunity to experience the transformative power of the arts is truly inspiring. It is because of this commitment that we were proud to nominate Bellco for a 2018 Business for the Arts Award through the Colorado Business Committee for the Arts.”



Highlights of the DAM/Bellco partnership have included:

- Commissioning muralists Jaime Molina and Pedro Barrios to paint a new mural at 15th and Market Streets in downtown Denver promoting the Free for Kids program.
- The DAM's first-ever Teen Day with Jaime Molina on Oct. 21, 2017, which featured a Q&A session with Molina moderated by members of the Teen Council of the Scientific & Cultural Facilities District (SCFD), along with a hands-on artmaking workshop with the artist and an Insta/Snapmeet at the museum.
- Over 750 schools visiting the DAM in 2017 to participate in school tours that focus on Colorado Academic Standards and 21st Century Skills.
- Expanded outreach to teachers through teacher listening sessions, curricula review and postcards with information on the Free for Kids program mailed to every teacher in Colorado.
- Increased visibility for the Free for Kids program on bus backs, bus shelter ads, bulletin board flyers and posters advertising Free for Kids in the community.
- Brochures highlighting fun things for families to do at the museum.



“Research has proven that exposure to the arts expands a child’s critical-thinking capabilities, as well as their ability to be creative and innovative – especially among those from less advantaged backgrounds,” said Doug Ferraro, president and CEO of Bellco. “Supporting the Denver Art Museum’s focus on providing access to the arts to kids of all socio-economic backgrounds is a true honor and delight for Bellco, and we are proud that this partnership is having such a significant impact.”

In the second year of its partnership with Bellco, the DAM will engage families, teens, schools, and community groups and youth organizations from across Colorado through the museum’s learning and engagement programs that leverage exhibitions and collections to educate youth visitors. Additionally, in conjunction with Free for Kids, the DAM will continue to enhance its outreach programs in local Denver neighborhoods through offsite experiences for schools, community groups and teens that take working artists, art objects and programming into underserved communities.

About Bellco Credit Union

Bellco is one of Colorado’s largest financial institutions, with more than \$4 billion in assets and 24 branches in Colorado. Founded in 1936, Bellco offers a full range of financial products and services including mortgages, auto loans and checking accounts. Today, Bellco has more than 300,000 members who benefit from the advantages of a credit union, including lower interest rates on loans, higher yields on savings, and access to thousands of ATMs nationwide. Connect with Bellco on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#). Bellco is Federally Insured by NCUA and is an Equal Housing Opportunity Lender.

About the Denver Art Museum

The Denver Art Museum is an educational, nonprofit resource that sparks creative thinking and expression through transformative experiences with art. Its holdings reflect the city and region—

and provide invaluable ways for the community to learn about cultures from around the world. Metro citizens support the Scientific and Cultural Facilities District (SCFD), a unique funding source serving hundreds of metro Denver arts, culture and scientific organizations. For museum information, call 720-865-5000 or visit www.denverartmuseum.org.

Media Resources

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Image 1: Bellco-sponsored mural created by artists Jaime Molina and Pedro Barrios for the Denver Art Museum's Free for Kids program is located at the corner of 15th and Market Streets in downtown Denver.

Image 2: Bellco supports first Teen Day at the Denver Art Museum. Artist Jaime Molina stands with Scientific and Cultural Facilities District Teen Council youth.