



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Philadelphia Cultural Fund Names New Executive Director**

Philadelphia, PA (July 27, 2015): The Philadelphia Cultural Fund, a City-supported organization that provides operating funds to arts and cultural organizations throughout Philadelphia, is pleased to announce the appointment of Barbara Silzle as its new Executive Director.

Silzle brings a wealth of Philadelphia arts and nonprofit experience to the Cultural Fund. She comes to the organization after a two-year term heading Dress For Success Philadelphia, which promotes the economic independence of disadvantaged women by providing professional attire, a network of support and the career development tools. Before her time at Dress for Success, Silzle joined the board of directors of the Valentine Foundation, was elected councilwoman of the Borough of Lansdowne, and became senior associate with Valerie M. Jones Associates (VMJA), a consulting firm specializing in providing organizational development and philanthropy services to nonprofits, primarily arts organizations. Prior to that, she served as Executive Director of the Leeway Foundation, a private foundation that invests in women and trans artists who are committed to using their artistic practice to illuminate pressing social issues affecting their communities. She led the organization through a transformative period of growth, from 2001 through 2006. In addition, Silzle has experience working for several Philadelphia arts organizations, including the University of the Arts, Philadelphia Drama Guild, Prince Music Theatre, and Freedom Theatre.

“The Philadelphia Cultural Fund has a significant impact on the quality of life in our city, as it has become the premier funding entity that supports Philadelphia communities through the arts in such a broad and deep fashion”, said Silzle. “My passion and focus will be to build on the great history and important work the Cultural Fund has been doing.”

Silzle will have a nearly fully restored budget to work with, thanks to the arts and culture community’s advocacy effort. Led by the Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance’s GroundSwell program, the Mayor and City Council maintained the funding in this year’s City budget to match last year’s increase to near pre-recession levels. In 2015, 285 arts and culture organizations in all 10 City Council Districts received \$2.49 million in general operating support grants.

Silzle replaces June Washikita O’Neill, who left the Cultural Fund in March, and will begin her tenure on August 3rd.

“We are so excited to have Barbara on board, with her depth of experience in the arts, nonprofit, and political worlds”, said incoming Board President Ken Metzner. “ I know she will help drive the Cultural Fund’s mission to positively impact Philadelphia's neighborhoods through its support of the arts”.

Established in 1991 to support and enhance the cultural life and vitality of the City of Philadelphia and its residents, the Philadelphia Cultural Fund, through the combined efforts of the Philadelphia City Council and Mayor Michael A. Nutter, promotes arts and culture as engines of social, educational and economic development and has played a key stabilizing role for numerous organizations by providing much-needed operating funding. For more information on the Philadelphia Cultural Fund, please **contact Michelle Currica at 215-686-0343 or [michelle@philaculturalfund.org](mailto:michelle@philaculturalfund.org)**.