



# NEWS RELEASE

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## **COCA HIRES JENNIFER STOFFEL AS DIRECTOR OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS AND STRATEGIC INITIATIVES**

*Key Addition Strengthens Leadership Team as Arts Organization Makes Plans for Future Growth and Success*

(ST. LOUIS, MO) – COCA-Center of Creative Arts announced that Jennifer Stoffel will join its senior leadership team as Director of External Affairs and Strategic Initiatives. In this newly created position, Stoffel will report directly to COCA Executive Director Kelly Pollock and provide leadership on key projects, programs and functions critical to COCA's success.

"Jennifer's extensive non-profit arts experience in strategic communications, change management, and community engagement will allow her to make significant contributions across the organization," said Pollock. "I look forward to working with her to further align COCA's internal, day-to-day operations with our external initiatives and long-term goals."

Stoffel comes to COCA from Shakespeare Festival St. Louis where she has been serving as the Deputy Director, working with the Board, donors, community partners, and staff, to leverage the milestones achieved during that organization's 15th Anniversary Year and maximize the visibility of the Festival's creative, collaborative programming.

Prior to joining the Festival, she served as Director of External Affairs for the Saint Louis Art Museum for 10 years where she led the communications, marketing and collaborative strategies through the museum's multi-year, \$160 million campaign and expansion project. Her experience also includes strategic communications, fundraising, and community engagement for such diverse not-for-profit organizations as the Playhouse Square Foundation in Cleveland, OH, Oberlin College, Community TV Network in Chicago, and the international cultural collaborative FRAME (French Regional American Museum Exchange).

"This position creates the opportunity for me to help one of St. Louis' best cultural organizations make an even greater community impact," said Stoffel. "It has been a privilege to work with the staff and Board at Shakespeare Festival, and I am proud of the role that I have played there, but I am excited to embrace new challenges. Kelly's vision for COCA is inspiring and exciting and I am thrilled that she has asked me to be a part of her team."

Stoffel will begin at COCA on April 6.

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### **About COCA**

COCA-Center of Creative Arts is a non-profit community arts center with a mission to enrich lives and build community through the arts. COCA connects our community to the arts through programs that emphasize social and artistic diversity, economic and cultural accessibility, hands-on experience of the artistic process, and the highest quality in our faculty. Founded in 1986, COCA is a national leader in innovative community arts education. COCA annually serves more than 50,000 area residents of all ages through multidisciplinary, multi-cultural arts programs that include educational classes, camps and workshops, both on-site and in community venues; outreach; COCAbiz; COCA Presents; and exhibitions of contemporary art in the Millstone Gallery.