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Arts Council Executive Director to Step Down in June 2019

SANTA CRUZ, CA — March 22, 2019 Arts Council Santa Cruz County's board of directors announces Michelle Williams' planned departure on June 14, 2019, to join her husband and children in Tampa Bay, Florida. The Arts Council will begin a national search for a new executive director within the next few weeks.

Williams joined the Arts Council in 2009 and has led the organization through a period of transformation. During her tenure, she increased the Arts Council's grantmaking by 60%, increased the number of children and youth served through the Council's arts education programs by 460%, and reworked the Open Studios business model to make the beloved program more accessible to the greater community. She launched Ebb & Flow, an arts and environmental movement, and helped build powerful collaborations with non-arts organizations to support health, public safety, economic development, and the community at large. She also oversaw the Council's move to the Tannery Arts Center, secured the upcoming opening of a new satellite office in Watsonville, and over the last ten years, increased the organizational budget by 155%.

"Michelle has played a critical role in the success of this organization, and in the vitality of the Santa Cruz County arts environment as a whole." said Jeff Galipeaux, Chair of the board of directors. "We will all be enduringly grateful to Michelle for her inspiring leadership, her ceaseless dedication, and her trusting & humane approach

to her work. She leaves behind a stellar staff, thoughtful board, and an organization on excellent financial footing. As we move into a search for our next executive director, our board and staff will continue with the organization's important and evolving work."

"I feel profoundly grateful and lucky that I got to call Santa Cruz home for nearly a decade," said Williams. "The Arts Council is an extraordinary organization, and while I'll miss this team and the whole community terribly, I know great things are ahead."

The board, senior staff and Williams are working together to ensure a smooth and successful transition.

About Arts Council Santa Cruz County

The Arts Council generates creativity, vibrancy, and connection in Santa Cruz County. For 40 years, we have fueled our creative community, supporting individual and collective artistic expression and building bridges and bonds between people throughout our county. We know that art changes lives. In Santa Cruz the arts are also an economic driver (\$32 million of economic activity annually), contribute to civic pride, and are one of the most powerful vehicles for bringing people together, creating community dialogues, and strengthening relationships.

Through grants to artists and arts organizations, arts education programs that serve more than 17,000 youth across Santa Cruz County, and community initiatives such as Open Studios and Ebb & Flow, we help Santa Cruz County thrive. Learn more at artscouncilsc.org.

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