

Gallen.Neilly

Market Positioning & Media Strategies
1981 North Broadway, Suite 400, Walnut Creek, CA 94596
Tim Gallen . Andrew Neilly

Contact:

Nancy Amaral
Gallen.Neilly
(925) 930-9848
nancy@gallen.com

Bergman Named To Head Emeryville Center for the Arts

Emeryville, CA (May 24, 2010) -- The much-anticipated new Emeryville Center for the Arts moved another step closer to reality today with the announcement that Sheila Bergman, a leader in the arts for more than two decades, has been appointed to head the non-profit organization.

No doubt Bergman is well qualified to lead this start-up. She has had a distinguished career in arts programming, fundraising and communications. Bergman has directed the initial development and expansion of regional arts organizations and has raised tens of millions of dollars for these institutions. Most recently, she served as executive director for UCLA Arts, overseeing all external affairs and development operations for the UCLA School of the Arts and Architecture, which includes the Fowler Museum, Hammer Museum and UCLA Live. Prior to that, Bergman was the Executive Director of the Los Angeles County High School for the Arts Foundation. She has also held professional management positions with P.S. Arts in Santa Monica, CA, the San Francisco Zoological Society, Zeum Arts & Technology Museum in San Francisco, the Anthology Film Archives in New York, and the M. Harriet McCormack Center for the Arts in Boston.

More than four years ago, Emeryville's Redevelopment Agency invested \$3.66 million to acquire a 30,000 square foot building adjacent to City Hall to provide a home for the arts. Since then, there has been an active strategic planning process spearheaded by the Agency that engaged many Emeryville residents, business leaders, artists, and other stakeholders to envision the development of this arts center. In July 2009, seven Emeryville citizens and business owners came together and have formed an active board of directors to guide the newly formed Emeryville Center for the Arts non-profit 501(c)3 organization.

In addition to the acquisition of the building, the Redevelopment Agency is providing \$3.5 million towards the development costs of the new arts center. Emeryville-based Pixar Animation Studios has generously provided a \$2 million dollar grant to the new arts center and PG&E has provided a \$25,000 capital grant. With this substantial initial funding, the new ECA Executive Director, Bergman, is expected to guide the group with immediate plans to engage an architect, and develop the programming and systems needed to build out the space at 4060 Hollis Street.

“I am joining this distinguished board and the Emeryville community with a sense of awe at what they have already accomplished,” said Bergman. “Our ultimate goal will be to raise the remaining \$8.5 million that will be needed to complete the center and fund a \$2 million reserve for start-up programming and operations during the first two years after its completion.” Emeryville, she says, has already earned a reputation as “a center of innovation”. “The artistic community has grown to the point where it deserves a center for the arts, and we are all determined to make that happen,” says the new ECA Executive Director.

Bergman earned her Master of Arts from San Francisco State University, Executive Certificate in Non-Profit Leadership (Arts) at Stanford School of Business, and Bachelor of Arts in Fine Arts and Theatre from Immaculate Heart College. She is currently working on her PhD at Fielding Graduate University in Santa Barbara, focusing on the building and sustainability of arts institutions.

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