



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Karina Mangu-Ward, Director of Activating Innovation, EmcArts  
Phone: (212) 362.8541 x29 Email: kmangu-ward@emcartarts.org

## **Boston Children's Chorus selected as Winner of the ArtsFwd Business Unusual National Challenge**

**The organization will develop a strategy to integrate anti-bias and empathy training into their existing music education.**

December 18, 2013—**Boston Children's Chorus** has been selected as the Winner of the *ArtsFwd Business Unusual National Challenge*, a multi-phase online event hosted at ArtsFwd.org, which gathered pressing adaptive challenges from organizations across the country, crowdsourced ideas in response, and awarded one organization a package worth \$35,000 in grants and facilitation services to support them as they prototype an innovative new strategy over the next year.

The Challenge is designed, managed and funded by EmcArts as a part of the organization's *Activating Innovation* program, which aims to move the dialogue about the vital importance of innovation and adaptive change toward the center of discourse in the arts and culture field.

### **The Winner – Boston Children's Chorus (BCC)**

---

#### **About BCC's Adaptive Challenge:**

Because meaningful relationships don't automatically form just by bringing diverse people together or by physically locating programs in neighborhoods where the population is predominantly people of color, Boston Children's Chorus's adaptive challenge is to inspire a sense of belonging across social and racial lines by developing a strategy to integrate anti-bias, identity-discovery and empathy training into their existing music education curriculum and by maintaining a discourse on issues of race and class, in the context of their music, with their audiences.

BCC aims to inspire a sense of belonging across social and racial lines through heightened awareness of individual identities and relationships to "the other." By approaching their work through an anti-bias lens, and with choral education and performance as the frame, they will learn to acknowledge and move through the discomfort that arises when dealing with issues of race and class. As they find new ways of combining music education, leadership skills, and a common language that leads to trust and connection, they believe their singers, now and in the future, will be the agents of social change in their communities.

#### **About BCC:**

Called "Boston's ambassadors of harmony" by the Boston Globe, the Boston Children's Chorus (BCC) was founded in 2003 by Hubie Jones, a civic/community leader who, for nearly five decades, has worked to address the social problems facing Boston's more vulnerable children and communities.

In the recently completed 2012-2013 season, 450 youth representing 80 of Boston's urban and suburban neighborhoods participated in 12 different choirs in five Boston locations. In its brief history, BCC has already become a leader in the field. BCC was chosen as a 2013 Winner of the National Arts and Humanities Youth Program



Award by the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities. Presented by First Lady Michelle Obama at a White House ceremony, the award distinguishes BCC as one of the top arts and humanities-based programs in the country. BCC was also the 2011 recipient of the Margaret Hillis Award by Chorus America, recognizing BCC for artistic and organizational excellence and a commitment to outreach, education, and/or culturally diverse activities.

**Richard Evans, President of EmcArts**, comments on the *ArtsFwd Business Unusual National Challenge*:

*"We're thrilled to be working with Boston Children's Chorus as they explore this important topic. This question of how arts organizations might address difference by creating opportunities for authentic social bridging is a pressing one for many arts and culture organizations across the country – and the team at BCC has identified that this challenge of creating an authentic social curriculum requires an adaptive response. I look forward to seeing what their intensive exploration and prototyping yields for the organization, the Boston community, and beyond."*

### **About the ArtsFwd Business Unusual National Challenge**

---

From March through October of 2013, EmcArts gathered adaptive challenges from all corners of the country, invited the public to vote to determine five Finalists, sourced provocative new ideas from an exciting group of big thinkers, specialists, and ArtsFwd readers, and ultimately, awarded Boston Children's Choice a package of grants and resources worth \$35,000 to prototype an innovative new approach.

#####

### **About EmcArts**

Recognized as the leading not-for-profit provider of innovation services to the arts sector nationwide, EmcArts ([www.EmcArts.org](http://www.EmcArts.org)) serves as an intermediary for arts funders, and as a re-granting agency and service organization for the arts field around innovation. Our innovation programs support the development and implementation of mission-centered new strategies by arts organizations of all sizes. The programs range from directly incubating specific innovation projects to introductory programs that enable new thinking and build a culture of innovation across local arts communities. EmcArts is a 501(c)(3) organization.