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November 10, 2014

Surdna Foundation
Attn: Grant Review Committee

Dear Committee:

It is my pleasure and privilege to recommend Jacque Tahuka Nunez for funding that would support her efforts in promoting Native American cultures. Since 2006, our organization has presented *Journeys to the Past*, a play created by Jacque Nunez for young audiences, fourteen times; each time with a waiting list in our theater of 1,320 seat capacity. In this play, a modern-time working mother who wishes her life was less hectic, dreams of her ancestors' way of life. At that moment, the curtain rises to unveil a re-created early California Indian village on stage with an all-tribal cast, leaving the audience in awe. Talented actress/storyteller Jacque Nunez serves as the audience's guide through the place and time when the beautiful Acjachemen Nation flourished along the California coast. The audience hears fascinating stories and learns about indigenous cooking, the art of weaving baskets, children's games, community celebrations, and much more. The story ends in present day with dancers from various tribes wearing magnificent traditional attires and performing dances that they perform in Pow Wows throughout North America. The beautiful scenery, the special effects, and Ms. Nunez's larger than life performance captivate the audience from beginning to end.

Jacque Nunez is uniquely qualified to promote Native American cultures. She is herself a ninth-generation Rios (the name given to the Acjachemen by the Spanish) whose ancestors helped build the Mission at San Juan Capistrano. She was a teacher for many years and her classroom management skills transpire in her ability, as a storyteller, to engage audiences. Her portrayal of her heritage is well researched, intelligent, dignified, sincere, and has helped educate thousands of people about Native American Cultures.

In addition to providing superb performances, Ms. Nunez also leads outstanding workshops during which participants of all ages can engage in Native American crafts, games, tool making, and other activities reflecting the way Acjachemen children learned mathematics (stick game), coordination (ring toss), or art (yucca paint brush). Throughout our arts education program, more than 600 teachers participated in Ms. Nunez's workshops and the feedback was extremely positive.

Jacque Tahuka Nunez is an excellent ambassador for her tribe, for all Native American tribes, and all nations and races, as her global message emphasizes the importance for each one of us as individuals to honor our heritage. Ms. Nunez is also a creative and talented artist and it is my hope that she finds a platform that will allow her to share her gifts with as many people as possible.

Sincerely,

Hélène Trudeau
Executive Director

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