

# MIAMI TODAY



WEEK OF THURSDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2005

SOUTH FLORIDA'S MOST IMPORTANT AUDIENCE

## ArtSpring Inc. hosts luncheon forum on role of community arts in region

ArtSpring Inc. hosted a luncheon discussion and community forum last week on the role of community arts in South Florida as part of the Reflections In Excellence program at the Conrad Miami, sponsored by the Conrad and Miami Today.

ArtSpring is a unique not-for-profit charity whose mission is to support self-growth and effective life skills through art making for underserved and institutionalized women and girls. The organization is a true reflection of excellence in South Florida and prides itself on servicing a previously unmet need.

Miami leaders, philanthropists, grant-making organizations and human service providers were in attendance. ArtSpring was excited for the opportunity to educate a new

audience about Community Arts, which includes activities that educate, inspire and mobilize individuals and groups and nurture and improve communities.

Attendees discussed the power and ability of art to transform the lives of incarcerated and formerly incarcerated women and girls and at risk youth, as well as the growing recognition by the Florida Department of Corrections and Juvenile Justice systems of the need for enhanced gender-specific programming. With 80% of female offenders returning to their communities, the opportunity to transform these lives becomes even more crucial.

Two of the organization's successful programs, Breaking Free and Inside Out, were also highlighted. Both programs cen-

ter on the premise that each individual is inherently creative and that social meaning and expression can be found in every community.

ArtSpring, with a faculty of 13 artist facilitators, offers specifically designed creative workshops that encourage participants to re-connect to their own creativity, explore their inner imagination and form their own creative ideas. ArtSpring's board president proposed the opportunity for local educational institutions to collaborate with ArtSpring to offer a Community Arts Program to train South Florida artists in this field.

ArtSpring is currently hosting a membership drive. If you are interested in Community Arts and how it can help our community, please contact ArtSpring at (305) 278-1601.



Photos by Sergio Alsina

Deborah Hoffman, ArtSpring Executive Director Nicole Bible and Founder and Artistic Director Leslie Neal at Conrad Miami lunch.



Nicole Maristany; Abbey Chase; Suzette Harvey of Knight Foundation.



Wansley Walters and Gloria Romero Roses, the Esther Mendoza and Vanessa Beltran of Conrad president of ArtSpring Inc.'s board of directors. Miami flank Beth Czeskleba of Miami Today.



Teddy Wright, Claudia Kitchens, Simon Frank at ArtSpring lunch.