

An Interview with Newly Elected CAE Board Chair **Jill Braufman** By Catherine Massey, Associate Director of Development



Last month, **Jill E. Braufman** succeeded Laurie Tisch as Chairman of The Center for Arts Education's Board of Directors. Ms. Braufman, who was elected Board President in March 2007, has served on CAE's Board of Directors since 2004. As a leader in the New York City cultural and political arenas, and as a parent of two school-aged children, Jill brings a wealth of experience in nonprofit management, fundraising, education, and advocacy.

Jill spoke with me about her passion for arts education, her plans for CAE, and the unique skills she brings to the organization's helm.

Photo at Left: Jill Braufman

Massey: Why do you think arts education is important for New York City?

Braufman: Arts education is important for a myriad of reasons, both developmental and economic. I strongly believe in educating the whole child, which can't be done without the arts. The arts have been shown to foster literacy and math skills, as well as strengthen verbal and nonverbal communication, intercultural understanding, team building skills, and self esteem. Arts education reinforces curriculum and builds critical thinkers, leaders, engaged students, and strong educational environments. Simply put, it's good for both students and schools.

In addition, there is an economic rationale for supporting arts education. In New York, the creative industries have a \$21 billion impact on our economy and generate over 160,000 jobs. Our public school students must have access to this sector of the economy, yet many public schools do not offer adequate arts education to prepare our students for these jobs or for advanced degrees in programs focused on the arts like Cooper Union or Parsons. Furthermore, our city's cultural organizations will suffer if our schools fail to provide high quality arts education for its students. We want our city's students to be the audiences, employees, and supporters of these great institutions in the future. Their involvement will ensure that New York City remains one of the great arts capitals of the world.

Massey: What are your plans for CAE as the newly elected Board Chairman?

Braufman: As Board Chairman, I will be continuing the work of our founding Chairman, Laurie Tisch, in leading the charge to restore and revitalize arts education for every public school student. I realize that adjusting to a changing environment requires transitions in staff, board composition, and emphasis. Therefore, I plan to work with The Center for Arts Education's extraordinary staff to initiate a new public engagement campaign, foster relationships with influential elected officials, create resources and professional development events for educators and principals, develop initiatives that will inform policy makers about the importance of arts education, and create meaningful relationships with business leaders who rely on the public schools to prepare students for the 21st century workplace.

The Center for Arts Education is undergoing some exciting transitions and the organization is excellently positioned to make strides in returning high-quality arts education to all of New York City's classrooms.

Massey: What advice do you have for parents who are seeking arts education in their child's school?

Braufman: First, I would encourage parents to reach out to other parents, teachers, and principals to see what they can do to support arts education in their child's school. However, in many schools throughout New York, parents may have to bring the arts to the schools themselves.

The Center for Arts Education has many resources that can assist parents who feel their child or children are not receiving quality arts education at school. Most parents believe that arts education is central to a well rounded education and most want more arts education in the schools. For this reason, CAE published a Parent Guide for grades Pre-K-2 that gives parents the information they need to support arts education in their child's school. CAE also maintains its popular Parents As Arts Partners grant program, for which any school in New York City may apply. CAE has years of experience developing partnerships between schools and cultural organizations and can help parents learn how to take advantage of the City's cultural resources. Additionally, parents can contact CAE, or go to our website, to learn more about what they can do to advance arts education in their children's schools.

Finally, I would recommend that parents let their public officials know that arts education is a priority and that they want New York City to comply with the State's minimum standards. Most people don't realize that New York City is not in compliance with these basic standards and we want to build an army of voices that not only expect the arts to be a part of children's education, but demand at least the minimum level of arts education mandated by the State.

Massey: What relevant experiences will you bring to this new position at CAE?

Braufman: By serving on this and other boards, I've had a range of experiences that will be important to the day-to-day management of CAE. I will focus on bringing best practices to my board service and will encourage other board members to do the same. I have been deeply involved in advocacy initiatives and appreciate the need for strategic approaches to communication, development, and outreach in order to maximize their effectiveness. I believe that complex problems require interdisciplinary, collaborative solutions. Therefore, I will encourage various departments and committees at CAE to work together more actively.

My professional experience in advertising, retailing, and the decorative arts has given me enormous respect for the economic power of creative people, and I've seen first hand the advantages they have in the workplace. My experiences with my daughters' schools have proven to me that the best kind of teaching engages the complete child. That kind of teaching simply can't be done without the arts—without sound, color, and movement to reinforce concepts and bring pleasure to the school day. When do you see the whole school community smiling and coming together? That usually happens at a concert or a show. Having arts in the schools benefits students intellectually as well as emotionally. It improves the entire school community, and ultimately strengthens our city. I will bring that perspective, and those experiences to my efforts as Chair.