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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SAMA VSA WORKSHOP TO HIGHLIGHT VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Loretto – The Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art at Loretto will host a VSA workshop with Mary Ann Shaw and Jim Donovan on Friday, May 9. The workshop will be held from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. The topic is “Teaching the Arts to Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder” and the program will focus on both visual and performing arts.

Shaw has 20 years’ experience working with children and young adults on the Autism Spectrum. She is currently employed by Saint Francis University, where she designs and teaches Special Education courses. She also is director of Saint Francis CARES, a community outreach program that delivers social skills training to children who display characteristics of Asperger’s Syndrome or High Functioning Autism. Shaw is presently working on a manual called *Teaching Art and Communication Skills to Children with Autism Using a Direct Instruction Approach*.

Donovan is a multi-platinum recording artist and educator whose mission is to empower, inspire and connect people. His programs use music as a vehicle for personal growth, healing, and the creation of community. He was a founding member of the ‘90s band Rusted Root, which sold over three million records to date. Donovan has a Bachelor’s degree in classical music performance from University of Pittsburgh and is currently completing his Master’s in education leadership at Saint Francis University, where he is also on faculty.

“This year’s combination of speakers will highlight the performance arts,” said Jessica Campbell, SAMA Education Coordinator. “It will be a change of venue since the Museum usually focuses on the visual arts.”

During the workshop, participants will receive an overview of characteristics of Autism, Asperger’s Syndrome and other pervasive developmental disabilities. Also scheduled for discussion are strategies for behavior management and the best practices in assessment.

Cost for the workshop is \$25 per person, with breakfast and lunch included in the price. Reservations are required by May 7 and can be made by calling the Museum at (814) 472-3920. ACT 48 credits are available.

The Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art at Loretto is located on the campus of Saint Francis University. Hours of operation are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Friday and 1 to 5 p.m. Saturdays. The Museum is open to the public free of charge. For additional information, please call the Museum or visit www.sama-art.org.

VSA, the international organization on arts and disability, was founded more than 35 years ago by Ambassador Jean Kennedy Smith to provide arts and education opportunities to people with disabilities and increase access to the arts for all. VSA Pennsylvania is a member of the Affiliate Network of VSA, a program of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC.

The Pennsylvania Council on the Arts (PCA) is a state agency established in 1966. The mission of the PCA is to foster the excellence, diversity, and vitality of the arts in Pennsylvania and to broaden the availability and appreciation of those arts throughout the state. The PCA formed the Pennsylvania Arts in Education Partnership to enhance ongoing efforts to foster educational excellence through participation in the creative process through residencies, projects and partnerships between schools, artists and arts organizations. The PCA and its partners work with Pennsylvania schools to support curriculum, enrich the important work of arts educators, and provide opportunities for students to explore and develop their creative abilities.