



Media Contact:

Rendy Auguste
National Center for Creative Aging
202-895-9456
rauguste@creativeaging.org

**National Center for Creative Aging Announces
Jennie Smith-Peers as New Executive Director**

New Executive Director of NCCA Aims to Change the View of Aging

April 12, 2016 (Washington, DC) - The National Center for Creative Aging (NCCA) which promotes healthy aging through creative expression in the arts and humanities serving older people, announces the appointment of Jennie Smith-Peers, now the Executive Director of Elders Share the Arts to serve as the new NCCA Executive director upon the retirement of Gay Hanna the current executive director at the end of June 2016.

“NCCA chose Jennie Smith-Peers because she has great passion for and understanding of our mission as well as extensive experience collaborating with stakeholders in the field of creative aging. She is a masterful change agent,” says Margery Pabst Steinmetz, President of the NCCA Board of Directors.

Smith-Peers has led Elders Share the Arts for the past five years expanding the reach and building on the legacy of this pioneering organization in Brooklyn, NY founded by Susan Pearlstein in the 1970s. She has directed programs such as Legacy Art Works which is replicated around this country and in other parts of the world. Her presentations are well received at the American Society on Aging and Leading Age among other national associations.

“I am honored, humbled and thrilled to have been selected to lead the NCCA. Building on the NCCA's leading role in the creative aging field I will work passionately to ensure that the organization continues to play a unique and vital role in the promotion of creativity in the lives of all older adults,” Smith-Peers says. “Through shaping policy and research and delivering innovative programs I am excited to help reframe the way we view aging. The expertise and dedication of the Board and Staff is inspiring. I look forward to working with them and to partnering with regional, national and international organizations, colleagues and artists to continue the work of this truly extraordinary organization.”

Founded in Washington, DC in 2007, NCCA provides support for the development and access to community based arts and humanities programs for older people; research to give evidence of the importance of these programs and services as well as develop policy and advocacy to share how creative aging builds potential in the second half of life by reducing isolation, depression and encouraging age friendly communities where all individuals can flourish across the lifespan.

“Jennie Smith-Peers will change the face of aging with her youth, intellect and many talents by demonstrating that aging is a lifelong creative process not a destination of despair”, says Gay Hanna, NCCA Retiring Executive Director. “I am thrilled with the selection and have been an admirer of her outstanding leadership and innovation for many years.”

NCCA was formed through a partnership between the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and the National Council on Aging (NCOA) in 2001. It has been designated as a national service organization in the arts and aging serving as an information hub and clearinghouse and a center for research and development, capacity building and policy development and advocacy to support the growth of this emerging field across the country. Recently, NCCA co-presented with the NEA *A Summit on Creative Aging in America* in collaboration with the White House Conference on Aging. A report was released in February. [Click here to read full report.](#)

About Jennie Smith-Peers

Jennie Smith-Peers is Executive Director of Elders Share the Arts (ESTA), a pioneering community arts organization that provides older adults with the creative tools to transform their memories into art. Before ESTA, she led parallel careers as a professional actress and administrator in aging services. She is an alum of We Are All Brooklyn Fellowship (2011), and of New York City’s Arts and Business Council’s Leadership Institute (2012). She holds a BFA in Acting from Emerson College, and is currently finishing her graduate degree in Drama Therapy from NYU with a focus on the impact reminiscence in late-life depression. She is a guest lecturer for CUNY’s Applied Theater Program, and has been a trainer for numerous arts and aging organizations, locally and nationally, on the best practices of creative aging and how to build sustainable arts programming for older adults. She is a Board Member on the State Society on Aging, a member of Release Aging Prisoners Project, and a founding member of Emerging Professionals in Aging NYC in partnership with American Society on Aging.

Jennie believes the arts are critical to personal, community and national well-being, since sharing our stories through art-making can build connections that go far deeper than those resulting from passive diversions. And she also believes that by giving voice to our elders through the arts that the dynamic of a community can be changed, thus building a more equitable society for all.

NCCA Programs

- [Creative Caregiving Initiative](#)
- [ENGAGE Initiative: Community of Practice for State Arts Agencies](#)
- [Military and the Healing Arts – At Washington DC VA Medical Center](#)
- [Teaching Arts Toolkit for Creative Aging](#)
- [THE CREATIVE AGE Leadership Exchange and Conference](#)

###

The National Center for Creative Aging is dedicated to fostering an understanding of the vital relationship between creative expression and healthy aging, and to developing programs that build upon this understanding.