



**NEWS RELEASE**  
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**George Rodrigue and Forum 35 Present Arts Grant to Local Elementary School**

BATON ROUGE, La—On February 24, 2011, artist George Rodrigue, along with representatives from Forum 35, will present Dufrocq Elementary School with an Arts Closet Kit. The program and kits were created by the George Rodrigue Foundation for the Arts, and supply a school's art program for the entire year. The presentation will begin at 9 a.m. with Rodrigue and his wife Wendy, doing a live art demonstration with students, followed by a facilitated art project with students.

The George Rodrigue Foundation for the Arts was created in 2009 to provide financial assistance in the arts and other areas. The Foundation also plans, develops, and implements unique educational art programs that are specially designed to enhance and expand art curriculums. The Arts Closet Kit program was designed to provide art supplies to Louisiana art teachers and schools whose funding does not otherwise allow for an art program. The kits are custom-designed by educational professionals for both elementary and secondary levels; they're valued at \$2,000.

"Through our experiences with the George Rodrigue Foundation of the Arts, we immediately noticed that most schools in Louisiana lack the basic funds and materials to incorporate art into their curriculum. Many teachers have little or no budget for art supplies," said George Rodrigue. "They are forced to purchase what they need personally or do without. With the launch of George's Art Closet, we will help teachers overcome this obstacle and give them the tools they need to make each classroom an imaginative and innovative learning environment that incorporates the arts into all subjects," Rodrigue said.

"National research indicates the arts are more important than ever in helping students retain math and science lessons. The arts also help students learn problem solving and expand their creative thinking skills. Our own teachers have verified this in the classrooms of our public schools," said John Dilworth, superintendent of the East Baton Rouge Parish School System. "That's why program's like Mr. Rodrigue's, along with community support from groups such as Forum 35, are so vital to our schools and students to help increase student achievement."

"Forum 35 has always held the arts and education to be two extremely important threads in the fabric of our community. Through our partnership with the George Rodrigue Foundation for the Arts which began with the 2010 Art Melt, we are able to address both of these important issues simultaneously through the donation of a GRFA Arts Closet kit to Dufrocq Elementary," said Forum 35 President Slater McKay. "Forum 35 looks forward to the continued cultivation of artistic talent and academic success through worthy projects such as George's Art Closet initiative and urges other organizations and businesses to consider joining us," he said.

Forum 35 is a community of engaged young men and women dedicated to improving and shaping Baton Rouge. For more information on Forum 35, membership, or its programs, visit [www.forum35.org](http://www.forum35.org).