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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Language of Love is Focus of Public Art Project

Harrisonburg, VA (September 12, 2018) -- Arts Council of the Valley (ACV), Harrisonburg Downtown Renaissance (HDR), and Harrisonburg City Public Schools have teamed together to commission a public art installation designed to embody our community's diversity.

Building on the "Virginia is for Lovers" campaign, the project will ask artists to consider how ideas of inclusivity and multiculturalism translate into a visual experience. "The artist (or artist team) will take inspiration from our multilingual community," explained ACV Executive Director Jenny Burden, "particularly through engagement with Harrisonburg High School students."

The completed sculpture will be located near the English-language LOVE sculpture, visible behind the Smith House and adjacent to Turner Pavilion and the former Municipal Building.

"Through our recent public engagement activities, community members expressed deep pride in our city's extraordinary diversity," said Andrea Dono, HDR's Executive Director, adding that HDR's research also indicated residents want more public art downtown. "The three partners in this project wish to blend these two core community values of diversity and arts and culture into a single project called 'Language of Love,'" she said.

Both ACV and HDR have committed funds toward the project, and have submitted a Community Needs grant application to The Community Foundation to cover remaining project expenses.

Following a national call for public artists (<https://downtownharrisonburg.org/call-for-artist-proposals-language-of-love/>) and review of submissions, the selected artist will meet with a group of Harrisonburg High School students to gain insight into the values, topics, and ideas that interest high schoolers. Detailed project

plans will be submitted to Harrisonburg City Council before fabrication of the work begins. Installation is scheduled by June 2019.

“Public art engages people,” Burden said, “and this particular work will draw people downtown. It will be designed to highlight how our community views diversity as an asset, and will reflect our desire to ensure that all immigrants, refugees, residents, and visitors of diverse backgrounds feel welcome in the Friendly City.”

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Arts Council of the Valley promotes the Arts as fundamental to a vibrant community, providing memorable arts experiences in the City of Harrisonburg and Rockingham County.

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