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For Immediate Release

CoSA Senior Elise Napier Earns Finalist Position in NFAA Awards

Coronado, CA (May, 2011) – For Coronado High School senior Elise Napier, an extraordinary experience as a YoungArts finalist ignited a fire to pursue her dream of performing.

Chosen from more than 6,000 applicants in nine disciplines in the visual, literary and performing arts, Elise embarked on a once-in-a-lifetime experience provided by YoungArts, the core program of the National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts (NFAA). As one of 148 finalists, Elise attended YoungArts Week in Miami in January 2011, where she engaged in performances, exhibitions, master classes taught by world-renowned artists, and the chance to be named an award winner in the field of Spoken Word Theater.

As one of 148 finalists, Elise was one of only seven in her division of Spoken Word Theater. She competed and achieved a Level II award of \$1,500, but the monetary aspect was only a small part of the entire experience of YoungArts Week. “I can’t even describe it, because it was so amazing,” Elise says. “The other artists there were so talented, so respectful, so supportive. It was such a safe place.”

The students attending YoungArts Week were selected in a blind adjudication process from a pool representing all 50 states and the District of Columbia, as well as U.S. territories. “We are honored to recognize these fine young artists,” said Christina DePaul, President and CEO of YoungArts. “They represent the next generation of extraordinary artistic talent, and it is our hope that their experience with YoungArts will help compel them to pursue their passions.”

For Elise, being a participant in YoungArts Week did indeed encourage her to pursue her passion of performing on stage. “The experience was what I needed to give me the confidence to push forward and keep going,” she says. During her time in Miami, Elise worked with mentors on three different monologues, stretching herself as an artist and learning different ways to inhabit a character. One of the most memorable moments for Elise occurred in a workshop led by Liv Ullmann, well-known for her work on Ingmar Bergman’s films. After Elise performed her Lady Macbeth piece for Ullmann, the veteran actress told her, “I think it’s fine the way it is.” In addition to small workshops with mentors, Elise also attended group audition sessions, during which panelists offered feedback to each student performer. “Listening to the feedback to the other artists was really helpful too,” Elise says. “It was good to be exposed to a variety of opinions and acting styles.”

While the encouragement and feedback she received at YoungArts Week was invaluable to her, Elise credits Coronado School of the Arts (CoSA) for helping her become a successful artist. As a

resident of Alpine, Elise commutes nearly an hour each way every day just to attend CoSA. From performing lead roles in shows directed by Barbara Wolf and Kris McClung, to working on her Shakespearean monologue one-on-one with Kim Strassburger, to writing scenes and acting with the CoSA Repertory Company, Elise has taken advantage of every opportunity to learn and grow in the arts. “I wouldn’t be where I am without CoSA,” she says. “It is what I needed to become a performer.”

Elise will attend the University of Southern California in the fall, and she hopes to eventually attend Carnegie Mellon for an M.F.A. She looks forward to someday working professionally in the performing arts, and her optimism pushes her onward. “I think if you love something enough and work hard enough, you can make it happen,” she says. “I’m going to make it happen.”

Her experience with Coronado School of the Arts has helped her hone her skills and dedication. Elise encourages other students who are considering the arts to be prepared to work hard and seek a balance between joy and effort. “Theatre isn’t for the faint of heart,” she says. “So if you’re going to do it, you have to do it 110 percent.” Fortunately for Elise, she already knows how to give acting her all, and she is excited to keep on going.

This is the second year in a row that a CoSA student earned a finalist position at YoungArts Week. In 2010, Michael Silberblatt won first place in Spoken Word Theater and went on to win a U.S. Presidential Scholar Award. As the 2010 YoungArts Alumni Representative, Michael attended YoungArts Week in January and was able to cheer for his former classmate as he watched her compete.

Two other seniors at Coronado School of the Arts also received recognition from the YoungArts program. For Cierra Bartelt and Joshua Dunn, their applications yielded merit awards. Joshua received his award for dance, and Cierra received her award for theater.

About Coronado School of the Arts:

CoSA is a public arts conservatory for high school students that embraces and encourages artistic creativity and academic excellence. This pre-professional arts program reaches out to talented students from all over San Diego County and offers a nurturing environment focused on individual growth, opportunity, and diversity.

CoSA is made possible by Coronado School of the Arts Foundation, a non-profit tax-exempt 501(c)(3) corporation whose stakeholders are passionate about supporting Coronado School of the Arts (CoSA), improving community awareness of CoSA, and securing funds to perpetuate, improve and expand the school’s programs.

For more information on CoSA or the Foundation, call 619.522.4050 or visit www.cosafoundation.org.

About YoungArts:

YoungArts, the core program of the National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts (NFAA), is the signature national program that recognizes and supports America’s most talented 17-18 year olds in the visual, literary and performing arts. The mission of YoungArts is to identify emerging artists and assist them at critical junctures in their educational and professional development, and

to raise the appreciation for, and support of, the arts in American society. YoungArts provides financial awards, master classes with world-renowned artists and a rich network of professional contacts and career development opportunities. YoungArts partners with the Presidential Scholars Foundation, the arm of the U.S. Department of Education honoring the nation's most deserving high school seniors. YoungArts is the sole nominating agency for the Presidential Scholars in the Arts, an honor given to just 20 seniors, who receive their award at the White House.

YoungArts regional programs in New York City and Miami are hands-on, laboratory programs designed to provide additional resources and enrichment. Participants have access to informative workshops, information about scholarships in the arts, career guidance, and portfolio development resources. YoungArts' 16,000 alumni include Broadway actors, award-winning playwrights, published authors and numerous well-known visual artists and notable names and arts advocates like Vanessa Williams, Allegra Goodman, John Currin and Kerry Washington.

YoungArts is the only organization in the nation to recognize students in nine discipline categories of cinematic arts, dance, jazz, music, photography, theater, visual arts, voice and writing.

For more information about YoungArts, visit www.youngarts.org.

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