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**BankRI Awards Grant to FirstWorks Arts Learning Program,
Engages Local Students in Live Performances of *Pilobolus* and More**
*In-school workshops led by professional artists and access to public performances highlight
program for students at two Providence schools*

PROVIDENCE, R.I. – Although a strong correlation exists between students’ arts involvement and their academic performance, arts programs remain among the first to absorb budget cuts in public K-12 schools. As a result, FirstWorks remains committed to increasing its collaboration with local teachers and school administrators to provide students from urban schools with access to artists and live performances.

To help ensure this work continues, **Bank Rhode Island (BankRI)** has awarded FirstWorks a \$2,500 grant in support of its Adopt-A-School Arts Learning Program. The funds will be used to deliver ongoing arts programming to more than 150 students at the Juanita Sanchez Educational Complex and Mary E. Fogarty Elementary School in Providence, along with field trips to live performances.

Through its Art Learning Program, FirstWorks provides students from Providence’s neediest neighborhoods with their first artistic experiences. The program includes in-school workshops taught by professional artists such as Wynton Marsalis’ Jazz for Young People program at Lincoln Center. It also offers students opportunities to attend world class performances and special matinees at The Vets in Providence. Last year, more than 4,000 students participated in FirstWorks’ Arts Learning Program.

As part of the Bank’s support of FirstWorks, Patricia O’Donnell Saracino, Vice President of Community Relations, recently accompanied a group of Providence students to The Vets for a performance of the Emmy-nominated *Pilobolus*. Students from the schools will also have a chance to enjoy performances by Heather Henson and her world of puppets from Jim Henson’s Creature Shop in January, Black Violin’s Classical Boom Tour, and Complexions Contemporary Ballet in the spring.

“Building connections for students between the arts, their academics and their personal interests is critical to their educational experience – we know that involvement with the arts has the power to boost academic achievement and help build pathways to college,” said Saracino. “But above all, just seeing how much the students enjoyed *Pilobolus* underscores why BankRI is a committed and proud partner of FirstWorks.”

FirstWorks is a non-profit based in Providence, whose purpose is to build the cultural, educational and economic vitality of its community by engaging audiences with world-class performing arts and education programs. Since 2004, FirstWorks festivals, performances, and programs have attracted more than 500,000 participants. Visit first-works.org to learn more.

About Bank Rhode Island

Bank Rhode Island, a wholly owned subsidiary of Brookline Bancorp, Inc. (NASDAQ:BRKL), is a full-service, FDIC-insured financial institution headquartered in Providence, Rhode Island. The bank operates 20 branches and more than 55 ATMs throughout Providence, Kent, Newport and Washington Counties. For more information, visit www.bankri.com. You can also find BankRI on Facebook at www.Facebook.com/BankRhodeIsland.

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