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Western Kentucky Students Partner with Lexington Artists to Raise Money for Tornado Relief, Heal Communities

LEXINGTON, Ky. (March 8, 2022) – In an effort to bring a bit of brightness to the dark devastation in western Kentucky caused by a winter tornado, Independence Bank is partnering with a Lexington-based non-profit organization on a public art display as a form of healing.

“The tornado that ripped through the communities we call home will never be forgotten,” Independence Bank President Jacob Reid shared. “But what we will remember most will be the strength and resilience of the residents of these hometowns and how folks from all over the state and the country have come together to help. It is truly incredible to see the generosity to rebuild and extend a hand to our neighbors. Being new to the Lexington market, this was a great opportunity to come together and connect the Commonwealth in a way that offers healing and hope.”

Numerous communities were directly hit by the deadliest December tornado event ever recorded in U.S. history. At least 74 people lost their lives across the state; leaving hundreds of others injured. It is estimated this powerful storm caused nearly \$4 billion worth of damage, spanning several states, throughout its path and created 750,000 power outages. Now, just a few months later, it is our hope that this endeavor will help with healing in the recovery and rebuilding processes.

LexArts, Lexington’s official local arts agency, works to enhance the quality of life through the arts. Its Horse Mania public art project, extremely popular and successful in 2000 and 2010, is returning in 2022 to commemorate the organization’s 50th anniversary and is presented by Keeneland and Maker’s Mark. In a unique collaboration with LexArts, Independence Bank has funded three of the 70+ life-size fiberglass horse statues which are each scheduled to be painted and exhibited in Lexington. The blank canvases recently arrived and are offered in three poses including standing, grazing or walking.

“No other public art initiative in Lexington’s history has captured the hearts and imaginations of Lexingtonians and visitors like Horse Mania,” said Ame Sweetall, LexArts President and CEO. “In the days immediately following the horrific destruction in western Kentucky, our Horse Mania team knew we had an inspiring opportunity to help heal the broken hearts that so many were suffering. LexArts is extremely honored

to partner with Independence Bank to bring the healing power of the arts to these wonderful communities.”

Local Lexington artists have been selected to work with creative high school art students from the affected area of Graves, Hopkins and Warren Counties to come up with colorful designs to be placed on the six feet by eight feet figures. The ten western Kentucky region area teenagers, alongside family members, have been invited to Lexington for a unique opportunity during the weekend of March 11-13 to collaborate with the artists and experience the culture of the city.

Once the horses have been painted and embellished, they will travel to each of the three affected towns for a one-day showing where the public will be invited to observe them. An accompanying identifying plaque will indicate the horse, artist and sponsor.

The Bank-sponsored horses will be displayed in Lexington from mid-May through November, including during the Breeders’ Cup World Championships.

To help raise money for storm relief, these horses will be auctioned at Keeneland—home of the largest and most prominent Thoroughbred auction house in the world. The auction is tentatively scheduled for December 10th, 2022 which, coincidentally, falls on the one-year anniversary of the massive tornado.

“As a long-time fan and supporter of LexArts, I was so excited when they reached out to us. It has been amazing to help with something that started as an idea and a phone call and grew into a beautiful project,” said Stacy Berge, Independence Bank Lexington Market President. “The response of the students has been truly heartwarming. This thoughtful and talented group of young people are taking what they know about their communities and the continuing struggle to rise from the devastation in collaboration with the artist, are creating lasting art installations that can inspire, lighten the heart and serve as a reminder of the strength of their towns and counties.”

The Ice House Gallery, a Mayfield art guild destroyed in the storm, has been selected to receive the proceeds from the Graves County horse. Money raised for Warren County will be given to Family Resource Centers within both local school districts to support families in need. The Dawson Springs softball and baseball fields in Hopkins County were badly damaged, and resources will be allocated to help rebuild this recreational attraction.

The horses funded by the Bank will then be permanently displayed in the storm-impacted areas of Graves, Hopkins and Warren Counties.

For more details and additional ways to get involved, please visit the Bank online at www.1776bank.com/hereforgood. More information about LexArts and its initiatives, including Horse Mania, can be found at www.lexarts.org.

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ABOUT INDEPENDENCE BANK:

Independence Bank is a regional community bank with 28 locations in Calloway, Daviess, Fayette, Franklin, Graves, Hancock, Henderson, Hopkins, Jefferson, McCracken, McLean, Shelby, Warren and Webster counties. One of the fastest growing banks in Kentucky and fifth largest, Independence Bank possesses the size and experience to serve the largest and most complex clients and offers trust and investment services and agricultural services. As a banking revolution for the people, by the people, central to Independence Bank's mission is doing what is right and fair for customers, communities and employees. Independence Bank has been recognized in multiple categories by the American Bankers Association, including being named a Top Performing Bank and Best Bank to Work For, for 12 consecutive years, a Best Place to Work in Kentucky for 12 years and has assets totaling \$3.2 billion.

ABOUT LEXARTS:

LexArts is a nonprofit community organization that works for the development of a strong and vibrant arts community as a means of enhancing the quality of life in central Kentucky. Through its annual Fund for the Arts, LexArts raises millions of dollars in support of local arts. In turn, LexArts underwrites the operating expenses for a variety of Partner Organizations, awards grants through its Community Arts Development and Professional Development programs, and offers affordable exhibition and performance space for arts organizations. Major support for LexArts programs and services is provided by the City of Lexington. The Kentucky Arts Council, the state's official arts agency, provides operating support to LexArts with state tax dollars and federal funding from the National Endowment for the Arts.