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## **Materials for the Arts Awarded U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's 2016 Environmental Champion Award**

*Award honors MFTA's unique contribution to the NYC's environmental health through creative reuse include diverting hundreds of tons from the waste stream and supporting arts programs citywide.*

**New York-** Materials for the Arts has received the Environmental Protection Agency's prestigious Environmental Champion Award in recognition of the creative reuse program's significant contributions to improving the environment and public health in New York City. The award will be presented at a ceremony hosted at the EPA's New York City headquarters.

"MFTA is a beloved resource for the City's cultural community, allowing arts groups and educators to provide top notch programming without using limited resources," said **Cultural Affairs Commissioner Tom Finkelpearl**. "MFTA's leadership as an environmental steward has been increasingly recognized in recent years, and we are proud to have the Department of Sanitation as an ally in supporting this critical program. I applaud MFTA's executive director Harriet Taub and her dedicated team for this much deserved award."

"We are pleased that the EPA has recognized Materials for the Arts as an Environmental Champion," said **New York City Department of Sanitation Commissioner Kathryn Garcia**. "Many of the items we throw out every day are not trash, and can have a new life, whether that's turning food scraps into compost, or finding a new home for everything from fabric to furniture, as Materials for the Arts does. Their reuse mission keeps tons of materials out of landfills and saves money for non-profits, schools and similar groups. Their work supports the City's goal of sending zero waste to landfills by 2030, and we are proud to support them."

"We are so happy to be recognized for our almost four decades of work in the field of reuse and waste reduction in NYC" said **MFTA Executive Director Harriet Taub**. "We hope that our model – supporting nonprofits and government agencies with access to free materials while helping businesses divert no longer needed items from heading to the landfill - can be an inspiration to other municipalities across the country."

In 2015, MFTA diverted 1.5 million pounds of materials from the waste stream, an 18% increase of total material diversion from 2014. These items were redistributed for free to 2,105 art organizations, public schools, community service organizations and government agencies

throughout the five boroughs. The total value of these materials was \$9 million dollars. In exchange for access to these items, members write thank you letters to the donors of materials as a token of appreciation and testimony of environmental sustainability in New York, a tradition that promotes donations and forges stronger connections among the huge variety of organizations that comprise the city's cultural community.

Through its innovative education center, MFTA engages thousands of teachers and students each year and demonstrates the potential of creative reuse to the next generation. MFTA reached over 17,879 students and 3,874 school staff members through field trips, workshops, courses, and on-site residencies in 2015. Providing year round professional development courses in creative reuse methods, the program impacted 427 schools.

“Organizations like Materials for the Arts which serve to align surplus and need in our society, do a great deal to balance the haves and have-nots, and save the earth from the unnecessary pollution of articles that have seen the end of their usefulness to one individual or organization.” said Ms. Rosemary Camera, Arts Coordinator and Music & Movement Teacher, Lucero Elementary School, PS 311

A program of the NYC Department of Cultural Affairs with support from the Departments of Sanitation and Education, MFTA collects a wide variety of reusable materials from businesses and individuals throughout NYC, diverting over 1 million pounds annually from the landfill. The award marks a significant accomplishment building on the de Blasio Administration's One NYC Zero Waste by 2030 commitment. The substantial amount of material diverted from the waste stream is a major contribution toward the de Blasio Administration's OneNYC goal of zero waste by 2030. Read more at [www.nyc.gov/onenyc](http://www.nyc.gov/onenyc).

The **Environmental Champion Awards** recognize individuals and organizations that have improved the environment and public health in EPA Region 2, which includes New York, New Jersey, Puerto Rico, The U.S Virgin Islands and seven federally-recognized Indian Nations. EPA will honor this year's award recipients at a ceremony on Friday, May 13 at 2:00 pm at the EPA offices at 290 Broadway in Manhattan.

For more information, visit [materialsforthearts.com](http://materialsforthearts.com)