Luncheon on the Grass Adds Concert, Public Art
May 20 at Lions Park

NORMAN – Norman’s annual arts picnic in the park is growing by two organizations and activities for 2012. The third annual Luncheon on the Grass picnic, which is a collaboration of the Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art, Firehouse Art Center, Jacobson House Native Art Center and Norman Arts Council, is scheduled from 4 to 6:30 p.m. Sunday, May 20, at Lions Park.

This year’s activity is held in conjunction with the Performing Arts Studio’s annual Summer Breeze Concert Series and features a live concert by Grammy Award-winning Brave Combo at 7 p.m. Lions Park is located at 450 S. Flood Ave., next to the Firehouse Art Center.

Also new to this year's event is the dedication of two new pieces of public art by the Norman Public Arts Board. Based on the design of the Firehouse duck by Douglas Shaw Elder, the PAB has commissioned the creation of two 4-foot-tall ducks that local artists Chris McDaniel, Christian Pitt and Joshua Pitt will paint with Oklahoma themes. The ducks will be unveiled at Luncheon on the Grass and then installed in their permanent homes at Andrews Park and Colonial Estates Park. The dedication will take place at 6 p.m.
“The Firehouse Art Center is excited to participate in the third annual Luncheon on the Grass event,” said Elder, executive director of the Firehouse. “This is a fantastic occasion to build upon our established partnership with so many Norman arts organizations.”

To help celebrate the public art dedication, the Public Arts Board is giving away rubber ducks to the first 100 children who submit their own completed design of a “ducksy” drawing that will be distributed in Norman Public Schools’ Thursday folders prior to the event. Of those designs submitted, two names will be selected in a drawing to award macquettes of the original “ducksy” sculpture that inspired the large duck sculpture next to the Firehouse.

Visitors are encouraged to bring picnic blankets, food and drinks. The collaborating organizations will provide hands-on art activities, Native American performances, music and snow cones.

“Norman is home to many great arts institutions,” said Ghislain d’Humières, director of the Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art. “Luncheon on the Grass is a great opportunity to represent this collective vision each year. This year, we are especially excited to add the Summer Breeze Concert Series and share in the joy of celebrating new public art.”

Artists of all ages also can participate in making sun prints with museum staff. Firehouse faculty will assist children who wish to create their own painting of a “ducksy” adventure on the Children’s Art Wall in Lions Park. The Jacobson House will provide Native American flute music, storytelling and powwow singers and drummers, as well as a traditional tepee erected in the park for visitors. In addition, DJ Nexus will provide musical entertainment and free snow cones throughout the event.

“I feel that it is important for us to work together as cohesive art establishments for the benefit of the Norman community,” said Kricket Rhoads-Connywerdy, executive director of the Jacobson House Native Art Center.

Luncheon on the Grass will be followed by a free live concert by Brave Combo, presented by Summer Breeze. For the past 30 years, the Denton, Texas-based powerhouse band has perfected a world music mix that includes salsa, meringue, rock, polka, zydeco, blues and more. With two Grammy Awards under their belt and seven nominations, Brave Combo has been labeled “America’s premier dance band.”

“The Performing Arts Studio welcomes the opportunity to join in this wonderful community event and partnership with Norman’s premier arts organizations,” said Mark McClellan, Summer Breeze chair. “It truly represents what is so
special about our city.”

Erinn Gavaghan, executive director of Norman Arts Council, said she was glad to see so many organizations sharing missions common to the NAC.

“The Norman Arts Council is very excited to participate in the Luncheon on the Grass series,” she said. “Collaboration between Norman’s amazing arts organizations is at the heart of the NAC’s mission, and this event is an excellent example of the great work we all do.”

The Firehouse’s website is www.normanfirehouse.com; the Jacobson House’s website is www.jacobsonhouse.com; the Norman Arts Council’s website is www.normanarts.org; the Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art’s website is www.ou.edu/fjjma; and the Performing Arts Studio’s website is www.pasnorman.org. Information about the Norman Public Arts Board can be found on the Norman Arts Council's website.

Information and accommodations on the basis of disability are available by calling (405) 325-4938.

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PHOTO CUTLINE

Norman families paint on the Children’s Art Wall in Lions Park at last year’s Luncheon on the Grass. The annual arts picnic is scheduled for Sunday, May 20, and includes a free concert by Grammy Award-winning Brave Combo.