Luncheon on the Grass Event Returns May 22 at Lions Park

NORMAN, OKLA. – Four of Norman’s powerhouse arts organizations are joining forces for another fun afternoon in the park. The Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art, Firehouse Art Center, Jacobson House Native Art Center and Norman Arts Council are teaming up to present the second annual Luncheon on the Grass, a free picnic scheduled from 1 to 3 p.m. Sunday, May 22, at Lions Park.

Visitors are encouraged to bring picnic blankets, lunch and drinks. The collaborating organizations will provide hands-on art activities, music and treats.

“Norman is home to many great arts institutions,” said Ghislain d’Humières, director of the Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art. “Though each has its own unique mission, our collective purpose is to engage the Norman community and its visitors with art and culture. It is a great opportunity to represent this collective vision with this inaugural collaborative picnic.”

Artists of all ages can participate in making sun prints with museum staff. In addition, DJ Nexus will provide musical entertainment and free snow cones throughout the event. The Firehouse Art Center will offer free painting on the outdoor Children’s Art Wall. Local artist Richard McKown will give a painting
demonstration on the Adult Art Wall with his reinterpretation of Georges Seurat’s *A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte*.

“The Firehouse Art Center is excited to participate in the second annual Luncheon on the Grass event,” said Douglas Elder, executive director of the Firehouse Art Center. “This is a fantastic occasion to build upon our established partnership with the Jacobson House, the Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art and the Norman Arts Council.”

The Jacobson House will provide cultural music with traditional Chickasaw songs and storytelling, powwow singers and more. Additional Native storytellers will be speaking near a tepee erected by the Jacobson House, and visitors can play traditional Kiowa games.

“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. “Oscar B. Jacobson was instrumental in creating a desire, as well as an outlet, for fine art in Oklahoma and this area of the state, in particular. He also was instrumental in the founding and development of what eventually became the Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art and the OU School of Art. It was always his desire to create opportunities for art such as the Firehouse does for the community. And the Norman art community continues to function with the help of the NAC and the many art supporters here in Norman.”

She emphasized that proximity is part of the key to the successful cooperation of the arts organizations.

“It is with this cooperation amongst our establishments, especially since we are within a few blocks from each other, that we can continue to create a setting where everyone will be able to view, purchase and experience fine art in Norman, as well as continue to create an outlet for our local Native peoples to share the unique diversity that Oklahoma Indians have to offer,” she said.

This year, the Norman Arts Council joined as a collaborator with the three arts organizations.

“The Norman Arts Council is very excited to participate in this year's Luncheon on the Grass event,” said Erinn Gavaghan, executive director of Norman Arts Council. “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 NAC is proud to support this event!”
Elder said the annual event is an opportunity for some of Norman’s leading arts organizations to give back to the community and show their continual collaborative missions.

“Luncheon on the Grass is a wonderful way for our community to come together in a relaxing atmosphere to experience and participate in the arts and culture of Norman,” Elder said.

Lions Park is located at 450 S. Flood Ave., next to the Firehouse Art Center.

The Firehouse’s website is www.normanfirehouse.moonfruit.com; the Jacobson House’s website is www.jacobsonhouse.com; the Norman Arts Council’s website is www.normanarts.org; and the Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art’s website is www.ou.edu/fjjma. Information and accommodations on the basis of disability are available by calling (405) 325-4938.

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PHOTO CUTLINE

Norman artist Richard McKown recreates *The Luncheon on the Grass* by Edouard Manet (1832-1883) during the inaugural Luncheon on the Grass event in 2010.