



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 23, 2006

### GUNTHER TO HONOR CHAMBER MUSIC GROUP

JEFFERSONVILLE – NYS Assembly Member Aileen Gunther (D-Forestburgh) will attend opening day of the Weekend of Chamber Music's *Summer Festival 2006 – In the Company of Mozart* on July 9. Gunther will speak briefly and present a Resolution to Judith Pearce, artistic director, at 2 pm on the Main Street lawn between the Presbyterian Church and the Post Office. A free all-Mozart concert follows immediately, with treats for children from Mozart himself, a Meet-the-Artists' Reception, a wine tasting and other special events along Main Street. The summer festival runs through July 22.

Gunther will recognize WCM's contribution to the cultural and educational life of the county through its 13-year history. Under the direction of founder and flutist Pearce, WCM provides professional caliber chamber music concerts to the public, and original educational programming for children in Sullivan County. Internationally acclaimed musicians travel to the area every year to take part in WCM's mission to provide opportunities for people of all ages to experience the intimacy and warmth of live chamber music.

Pearce and her colleagues performed for the first time in June 1994, with just one weekend at the Meat Market in Lake Huntington, NY. Ensuing seasons brought them to the Community Center in Cochection; the Tusten Theatre in Narrowsburg; the Nutshell Gallery in Lake Huntington, and the historic Hortonville Presbyterian Church, as the Festival gradually expanded to three weekends of performances and workshops.

A chamber arrangement of Camille Saint Saens' "Carnival of the Animals" began WCM's work with young children in 1994, and interactive concerts were added later with the "Music and Imagination" series. The performing artists began coaching high school band and chamber music students at Monticello High School in 1998. The coaches widen their reach to two additional school districts in 2006-07, reaching an estimated 200 students in Sullivan County band and chamber music classes next year.

A collaboration with the Liberty Public Library and the Liberty Museum and Arts Center (LMAC) led to a multi-year New York State Council on the Arts grant in 2001, spearheaded by the LMAC, for The Memory Project,<sup>©</sup> Pearce's interdisciplinary arts-in-education initiative. In its final phase this year, Liberty High School 9<sup>th</sup> graders created articles and poems based on their interviews with senior citizens about local history. The Project ends with a concert and an exhibition in the fall (2006).

*In the Company of Mozart* is Pearce's most ambitious festival to date, offering nine different programs through July 22, marking Mozart's 250<sup>th</sup> birthday. In Jeffersonville for the first time, WCM is proud to present six events in the barn at the famous Eddie Adams Farm on North Branch Road. Two dinner concerts are at restaurants in neighboring Parksville and Callicoon Center, and opening day events along Main Street represent the spirited support of Jeffersonville's town leaders.