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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**News from Touchstone Center for Crafts**

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**“EDUCATORS GATHER AT TOUCHSTONE CENTER FOR CRAFTS FOR A CREATIVE WEEK OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT”**

Farmington, PA —

Touchstone Center for Crafts recently welcomed over 30 educators from PA, WV, OH, NY, NC, and MD to the first annual Educators’ Retreat. This special week of programming is designed to provide professional development to enhance an educator’s own creativity while offering rich content that can translate to the classroom. Educators were able to choose a workshop in blacksmithing, ceramics, glass, fine metals, or drawing/painting and immerse themselves in their art as they explore creative techniques before returning to their classrooms. It is Touchstone’s hope that they return revitalized with fresh ideas, an expanded professional network, and unique resources to share with other educators/artists and students! Through generous donations from the Community Foundation of Fayette County and the Community Foundation for the Alleghenies, Touchstone was able to offer 15 full scholarships to K-12 educators throughout Fayette, Cambria, Somerset, and Bedford counties.

Executive director, Lindsay Gates says, “We wanted to bring educators together to share their experiences, learn new skills, and have a rejuvenating week immersed in the beauty of our rural campus – all which benefit the communities they return to.”

Workshop participant, Leah Shuck says, “I think this lovely setting at Touchstone Center for Crafts has truly invigorated me!” Another participant, Amy Roadman says, “It’s the most amazing way to earn professional development hours! Thank you to those who support the arts and provided the scholarships for myself, my friends, and coworkers.”

Act 48 Credits were available to PA educators who attended a workshop during this retreat, (sponsored by Pennsylvania Art Educators Association) which Touchstone hopes to offer again next year. The 2020 Educators’ Retreat will be held July 27 through 31. Scholarship applications will be available online December 1<sup>st</sup> and accepted beginning January 1, 2020. The deadline to apply for a scholarship is March 15<sup>th</sup>. [touchstonecrafts.org/scholarships](http://touchstonecrafts.org/scholarships).

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*Founded in 1972, Touchstone Center for Crafts is a non-profit educational center with a mission to advance excellence in the arts and crafts by educating and encouraging individuals to develop technical skills, good design and innovative expression. Touchstone is an important arts & culture institution in Fayette County, the only residential craft school in PA, & among only a handful across the country. Touchstone provides hands-on immersive learning experiences for adult, teen, & youth throughout various studios (blacksmithing, ceramics, drawing/painting, glass, small metals, special topics). Touchstone keeps traditional techniques alive while also pushing craft techniques forward into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Touchstone receives support from the Heinz Endowments, Laurel Highlands Visitors Bureau, Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, Opportunity Fund, additional foundations, our members, and individual donors. Please visit [touchstonecrafts.org](http://touchstonecrafts.org) or call 724-329-1370 for more information.*

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