

Making Exact Change



How U.S. arts-based programs have made a significant and sustained impact on their communities

A Report from the Community Arts Network

By William Cleveland, published by Art in the Public Interest

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A Research Project of the
Community Arts Network

By William Cleveland,
the Center for the Study of Art and Community

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<http://www.communityarts.net>

Art in the Public Interest

Linda Frye Burnham & Steven Durland, co-directors

P.O. Box 68, Saxapahaw, NC 27340

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On the cover: Detail of a Village of Arts and Humanities mural project. Photo courtesy the Village of Arts and Humanities

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Part One

Introduction

In 1976, U.S. Department of Labor analysts realized that their CETA program (Comprehensive Education and Training Act) was becoming a major funding vehicle for artists working in communities. They also became aware that a good number of these arts programs were in over their heads and needed help. In response, they established a special unit to document the best practices in the field and share that information with artists, arts administrators and community agencies involved. Although it was done in a hurry, the effort paid off and CETA's arts projects eventually became the program's the most effective component.¹

Since that time, many of the finest artists and arts organizations in the U.S. have quietly established a remarkable record of innovation and success in institutional and community settings. These unlikely community/arts partnerships have been established in factories, jails, condominiums, probation departments, senior centers, special schools and many other nontraditional sites. This work has challenged traditional ideas about the arts in America. It has also created successful models from which those concerned with the health and vitality of American communities can learn a great deal.

But, as the field has grown, much has changed. Twenty-five years ago, advocates for community arts used terms like *beautification*, *quality of life* and *community animation* to describe their work. These days, it is not uncommon to hear *conflict resolution*, *public safety*, *economic development* and *community revitalization* expressed to describe the work. These are not necessarily spurious assertions, but setting goals like these greatly alters the nature of the work. In fact, linking improved economic or social health with art making signals the emergence of an entirely new field — a field that differs greatly from its mainstream counterparts operating in studios and on stages. Those who work in this realm regard public participation and artistic creation as mutually interdependent. It also asserts that there are significant and tangible community benefits, beyond the aesthetic realm, that naturally accrue from these endeavors.

Many of these U.S. community arts programs are succeeding in ways that were unimaginable back in the CETA days. But they have not yet fulfilled their potential. The persistent pattern, even among some of the best of these programs, is for short-term

community engagement. This is driven, first, by uneven support for community arts in general and, second, the tendency for short-term, project-based investment by many funders. Despite a growing body of evidence that effective community development must be regular and sustained, these trends persist.

There are, however, a number of community arts programs that have managed to make significant and sustained contributions to their communities. At a community arts summit convened in the spring of 2004 by Art in the Public Interest (API) and the Rockefeller Foundation, leaders in the field felt it was time to take a deeper look at the ecology of effectiveness and sustainability for community cultural development. There was a strong feeling that the field could not advance without a deeper investigation of the best practices and survival strategies used by those who have succeeded in these difficult and complex environments. Others articulated a desire to share this information with the many nonarts organizations that take considerable risks to join in these cultural partnerships.

The Study Scope

In the fall of 2004, API approached the Center for the Study of Art & Community (CSA&C) for assistance with the proposed research. This study was undertaken to help the growing but largely disconnected community arts field learn from its most venerable and successful colleagues. Its focus is exemplary arts-based programs that have had a significant and sustained positive impact on their communities. For the purposes of this inquiry “significant and sustained positive impact” is defined as *change leading to the long-term advancement of human dignity, health and/or productivity*. “Long-term” in this context is defined as a minimum of ten years.

Given the above definitions, the major questions posed in this inquiry are:

1. As they have evolved over time, how have these programs defined success?
2. What ideas, values, standards, assumptions and expectations have influenced the design, policies and delivery of these programs?
3. What kinds of leadership and organizational practices characterize these efforts?
4. What support strategies (funding, technical assistance, training, etc.) have most contributed to the success of these programs?
5. How have these programs defined, measured and learned from their successes and failures?
6. What persistent issues, conditions or problems confronted by these programs have constrained their ability to fulfill their missions?

The Research Process

Approach: CSA&C's responsibility in this endeavor has been to gather information that accurately reflects the range of voices and perspectives represented by the programs studied. Particular attention was paid to soliciting new information and innovative ideas that could contribute to API's efforts to advance the field of community arts.

Methodology: The gathering and analysis of information for this study took place over a three-month period from January through May of 2005. Our data were collected from a broad cross-section of artists, administrators, participants and funders involved in arts-based community development work. Specific methods of inquiry were:

1. *A review of previous research on best practices in the field of community arts:* This included a review of relevant material identified in the API compendium of community arts research (<http://www.communityarts.net/links/studies.php>) and in the CSA&C database.
2. *Field survey:* The focus of the survey portion of the study was the identification of organizations whose work is representative of the range of programmatic approaches and philosophies that have emerged in the community arts arena over the past three decades. To do this, we contacted community arts funders, researchers and practitioners to ask for recommendations of potential study subjects. Our inquiry included:
 - Agencies with demonstrated success in developing and providing funds, evaluation and technical support for community arts programs
 - Other public and private funders with a history of successful investment in the field
 - Successful institutionally based community arts programs operating under both arts and nonarts auspices
 - Exemplary individual artists from the community arts field
 - Researchers and evaluators with experience documenting and assessing the field
3. *Site Research:* The ten study sites listed in the chart at the end of this introduction were selected from a list of more than 100 organizations compiled from the field survey.

Data were collected from each site using a written survey, phone interviews and a review of program materials. The interview protocols and survey questionnaire were developed to elicit information relevant to each program's community impact and sustained effort. (See Appendix A.)

4. *The Case Studies*: The consultants collected and compared information gathered and summarized from ten programs selected as case studies. Each case study includes following:
- **Basic Facts**: Program title, contact information, main focus, arts disciplines, beneficiaries, funding, etc.
 - **Snapshot**: Stories about critical events that reveal something about the character, impact and values represented by the program
 - **Description**: A brief summary of the organization’s history, mission and values, with a focus on the standards and practices that have contributed to the program’s capacity to achieve significant and sustained community impact
 - **Success and Change**: How each program defines and determines whether or not it is fulfilling its mission. This section includes a description of the program characteristics each organization identifies as critical to its effectiveness and examples of successful outcomes.
 - **Nuts and Bolts**: A full description, including environment, leadership, resources, governance, partnerships and training
 - **Constraints**: A discussion of obstacles and challenges encountered by the program and a description of responses
 - **Advice to funders**: Feedback on funder behaviors and practices that advanced or limited the success of the program — provided by study sites
 - **References**: A listing of relevant reports, articles and other media provided by study sites

Report Format: The purpose of this report is to summarize the consultants’ findings and present recommendations for short- and long-term responses to the issues, ideas and opportunities identified. The report is divided into several parts:

1. This section, the **introduction**, is provided as Part One.
2. The **case studies** are presented in Part Two.
3. The consultant’s key **findings** are shared in Part Three
4. The **recommendations** are offered in Part Four.

Exact Change Study Sites

The mission listed for each site is quoted from each organization's mission statement.

CityKids, New York, New York, est. 1985

Discipline(s): Multidisciplinary. *Constituents:* N.Y. Youth, young artists

Mission: To develop the leadership potential of youth by engaging them in an education and artistic development process that is grounded in the grassroots philosophy of Safe Space, Youth-to-Youth Communication, Multi-Cultural Bridge-Building and Leadership Development

Grassroots Art and Community Effort (GRACE), Hardwick, Vermont, est. 1975

Discipline(s): Visual Arts. *Constituents:* Seniors in Vermont

Mission: To discover, develop and promote visual art produced primarily, but not exclusively, by elderly self-taught artists in rural Vermont

Isangmahal Arts Collective, Seattle, Washington, est. 1994

Discipline(s): Spoken word, music, dance. *Constituents:* Seattle Filipino community, Filipino artists

Mission: Creating and maintaining avenues for our voices to express and analyze the problems of life lived by Filipinos and Asians

Manchester Craftsmen's Guild, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, est. 1968

Discipline(s): Craft, music, digital graphics. *Constituents:* Pittsburgh youth, veterans, single mothers, unemployed, artists

Mission: A multidiscipline, minority-directed center for arts and learning that employs the visual and performing arts to foster a sense of accomplishment and hope in the urban community

Mural Arts Program, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, est. 1984

Discipline(s): Mural Arts. *Constituents:* Philadelphia community, youth

Mission: A public art program that works in partnership with community residents, grassroots organizations, government agencies, educational institutions, corporations and philanthropies to design and create murals of enduring value while actively engaging youth in the process

Northern Lakes Art Center, Amery, Wisconsin, est. 1987

Discipline(s): Multidisciplinary. *Constituents:* Amery and northern Wisconsin citizens

Mission: A comprehensive cultural center organized and designed to provide local residents with the opportunity to develop and share their creative talents and abilities with one another and with the general public

Swamp Gravy, Colquitt, Georgia, est. 1992

Discipline(s): Theater. *Constituents:* Colquitt community and visiting audiences

Mission: Community theater designed to break down the walls that are racial and socioeconomic boundaries to bring to life the stories that have helped shape our community

Village of Arts and Humanities, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, est. 1986

Discipline(s): Multidisciplinary. *Constituents:* Germantown community

Mission: To provide a wide variety of arts education programs, renovate abandoned properties, rebuild the environment, conduct experiential training, create jobs and celebrate our achievements together through festivals, theater, exhibitions and publications

Wing Luke Asian Museum, Seattle, Washington, est. 1990

Discipline(s): Multidisciplinary. *Constituents:* Seattle Asian community and beyond

Mission: To engage the Asian-Pacific-American community and the public in exploring issues related to the culture, art and history of Asian-Pacific Americans

Zuni-Appalachian Exchange & Collaboration

(A project of Appalshop) Zuni Pueblo, New Mexico; Whitesburg, Kentucky; est. 1984

Discipline(s): Multidisciplinary. *Constituents:* Citizens of Zuni Pueblo and Whitesburg

Mission: A 20-year exchange and collaboration between Roadside Theater and traditional Native American artists of Zuni Pueblo, N.M., to advance cultural tradition and build community in both locations

Part Two

Case Studies

The ten case studies that follow are a representative sample selected from more than 100 suggestions made in response to our solicitation of the field in the fall of 2004. The information included here came from surveys, interviews and published sources. Much of the data included are taken directly from material made available by the programs in the study. As such, these summaries are more descriptive than analytical.

CityKids



CityKids Rep Performing at Grand Central Station. Photo courtesy of CityKids

Basic Facts

Location:	CityKids The CityKids Foundation 57 Leonard Street New York, N.Y. 10013
Connect:	P: 212-925-3320 F: 212-925-0128 E: sak@citykids.com W: www.citykids.com
Start Date:	1985
Contact:	Liz Sak, executive director
Sites:	Offices and program location at 57 Leonard Street; program activities in sites all over New York City; affiliate program in New Haven, Connecticut
Artistic Discipline(s):	Multidisciplinary with an emphasis on performing and media arts
Constituents:	Youth ages 13-19
Personnel:	Five senior staff, five junior staff (often CityKids graduates), six youth staff

Snapshot

What evolved wasn't just a theater piece. It was a brilliant format which combined hard-core information and a dramatic presentation by the kids about their own experiences. At one point a teenager is reporting, not saying, but reporting in a very de-personalized manner, about how his mother locked him up in a closet, when the action freezes and the spotlight focuses on an adult who says, "I am a nationally prominent psychiatrist and I want to tell you about the long-term effects of emotional abuse." We didn't just talk; we had them experience the subject. We even built songs into it. They finished up with recommendations which eventually affected the way they do business in Albany [New York's state capital]. They said, "You are the Commissioners of Youth, of all the social-service agencies. You work hard and try your best, but please, ask us! Let us advise you. We will tell you what works and what doesn't work. So, listen. Don't separate your efforts. All you agencies should work together. We are an integrated person, we need integrated services." The kids blew the commissioners away.

—Laurie Meadoff, founder and President Emeritus of CityKids
describing a CityKids presentation before a
New York State Special Commission on Child Abuse.²

Description

History

In 1985, cultural activist Laurie Meadoff founded CityKids as a nonprofit, multicultural youth organization located in New York City. She began by working with a group of ten young people from across the city. The approach developed into a clear and consistent strategy: to solve the challenges facing young people, first ask questions; help them explore the perceptions, feelings and facts about issues; teach them the skills to make their voices heard; and finally, partner with them to create change. This program design resulted in youth producing solutions — improving their own educational status; taking action in community service projects; producing new artistic works that market positive messages to their peers; and performing these works locally and throughout the country.

For the past 20 years, The CityKids Foundation has engaged young people to positively change their own lives, their communities and the world. CityKids accomplishes its mission through a variety of free, after-school, weekend and summer educational and

artistic leadership development programs. Over the years, the organization has developed unique expertise in youth-to-youth communication. CityKids uses that expertise to teach young people problem-solving and decision-making processes that include themselves as part of the solution. They have proved that the impact is substantial when kids listen to kids. Through programs focusing on self-esteem, health and education, CityKids learn to communicate positive values to their peers³

CityKids now operates programs for urban teens from its TriBeCa headquarters, its New Haven program site and ten New York City public high schools. More than 700 youth between the ages of 12 and 20 participate directly in CityKids programs, and CityKids performances, workshops and mass-media productions touch the lives of additional tens of thousands of young people each year. The majority of participants are African-American and Latino, and live at or below the poverty level.

Specific Programs

- *CityKids in Action (CKIA)* is an advanced youth leadership training program that has developed more than 1,000 young people as agents of positive community change and empowered them in turn to engage their peers and the broader communities in which they live. Youth first complete a three-phase, 60-hour leadership and community-organizing training, and then move on to facilitate Coalition meetings, lead workshops in schools, design, plan and carry out community improvement projects.
- *CityKids Repertory Company (Rep)* is the performing arts arm of CityKids, which takes ideas and issues from other CityKids programs and transforms them into original, youth-led issue-based drama, music, song and dance performances.
- *The BridgeBuilder Initiative (BBI)*, started in response to the events of 9/11, is an effort to bring CityKids proven arts-based leadership training programs into public schools, led by CityKids staff and trained youth facilitators.
- *CityKids Support Services* are ongoing, personalized services to assist youth involved in all CityKids' programs in realizing their personal, career and educational goals. Support services include case management and mental-health referrals; individual and group academic, job and internship counseling; tutoring; mentoring; referrals and placements; and a full library of college literature, applications, scholarship and financial aid information.

Mission/Values

Mission: To develop the leadership potential of youth by engaging them in an education and artistic development process that is grounded in the grassroots philosophy of

Safe Space, Youth-to-Youth Communication, Multi-Cultural Bridge-Building and Leadership Development.

The organization's *vision* is to create a future in which young people effect positive change in their lives, their communities and the world.⁴

Success and Change

Goals

CityKids uses its youth-derived expertise to teach young people problem-solving and decision-making processes that include themselves as part of the solution. Through CityKids programs young people listen to each other. CityKids programs focusing on self-esteem, health and education allow participants to learn to communicate positive values to their peers. Key goals of CityKids programs are:

- *Safe Space*: CityKids aims to create an environment where “young people feel safe physically, mentally and spiritually to be, feel, respect, express, grow and teach.
- *Youth-to-Youth Communications*: CityKids seeks to encourage dialogue between young people to allow them to learn from each other. “Respecting the voice of youth” is the basis of every CityKids program.
- *Multicultural Bridge Building*: The organization endeavors to bring together young people from diverse backgrounds that would not ordinarily have the chance to meet.⁵

Defining Success

- Participants with stronger abilities as leaders, role models and community organizers
- Program content and design that is relevant and useful to young people
- Measurable impact on public policy matters affecting youth
- Increased awareness by both youth and community leaders of issues relevant to youth
- Implementation of youth-conceived solutions to problems affecting youth
- Graduates applying program inspired values and strategies to issues affecting youth and the broader community

Critical to Success

- *Youth Ownership:* CityKids is a youth leadership program where the youth run the programs that they design. They facilitate the focus groups, stage-manage dramatic and dance productions, and serve as managers for many of the programs. CityKids participants have membership on the organization's board of directors as voting members and many of the organization's employees are CityKids graduates.
- *Champions:* Identifying champions is key to the success of the organization, as is finding several types of champions, persons who represent networks that will bring important resources and programmatic support to youth services.
- *Diversity:* CityKids recognizes that accountability and credibility with its constituents requires participation that represents the full diversity of the city's youth citizenry.
- *Safety:* The organization provides a nonjudgmental, neutral zone for youth who would not normally connect. Young people meet weekly at CityKids to explore cultural, racial and sexual issues, and speak their minds on personal and global issues such as violence, self-esteem, education, family, health and environmental awareness.
- *Leadership focus:* CityKids emphasizes the development of young people's abilities as leaders, role models and community organizers. A ten-week training program prepares youth as workshop facilitators on a variety of youth issues including prejudice, violence, self-esteem, relationships, teen pregnancy prevention and more.
- *High Standards:* CityKids programming is youth-conceived, -designed and -implemented according to rigorous standards. All programs are piloted first to determine how they work.
- *Entrepreneurship:* The program operates with the assumption that young people have the expertise and the imagination needed for effective youth-program design and delivery. They are assertive and persistent as they advocate their ideas to community leaders and funders.

Outcomes

- Measured increase in self-esteem of program participants
- The development of programs focusing on self-esteem, health, education, the performing arts, leadership training and computer literacy
- Convening young people from diverse backgrounds in a Safe Space environment to explore cultural, racial and sexual issues and to speak their minds on personal and global issues such as violence, self-esteem, education, family, health and environmental awareness
- Training on the use of techniques developed by the foundation to brainstorm ideas, plan courses of action, facilitate grassroots organizing, learn conflict-management

- techniques and learn how to take an idea to its action-oriented conclusion
- Leadership development training for repertory company members, focusing on self-esteem, diversity and conflict management
 - The development of a wide variety of youth-driven educational performances and media
 - Youth trained as workshop facilitators on a variety of youth issues including prejudice, violence, self-esteem, relationships and teen pregnancy prevention

Each CityKids program has specific outcomes by which the program measures success. For 2005 they include the following:

Area	Outcomes
Participation and Reach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 700 young people directly participate in CityKids programs and 10,000 youth are touched through CityKids performances and community-improvement projects.
Intensity of Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CityKids participants average 10 hours a week in programming. • CityKids participants average at least three years in CityKids programs.
Educational Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 90 percent of CityKids participants maintain or improve their grades. • 95 percent of CityKids participants who are in school graduate from high school or the equivalent, and those who are not enrolled in school either re-enroll or complete general equivalency diploma (GED).
Skill Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 95 percent of participants have an increased awareness of their own skills and abilities to create change. • 95 percent have improved communication skills such as active listening, paraphrasing, open-ended questions, neutral language, "I" messages and nonverbal communication, and leadership skills such as mediation, consensus-building strategies and the ability to communicate concepts to peers.
Long-Term Positive Life Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 80 percent+ of CityKids participants demonstrate increased ability to define and accomplish their goals. • Upon aging out of CityKids' programs, 80 percent+ of CityKids core participants transition successful to higher education or meaningful employment.

Nuts and Bolts

Environment

New York City is unique and fascinating demographically. Racially the population within the city's five boroughs breaks down in the following way: 34.1 percent white; 24.6 percent black/African American; 0.2 percent American Indian/Alaska Native; 11.2 percent Asian; 0.0 percent Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander; 0.4 percent other race; 1.0 percent two or more races; 28.3 percent Hispanic/Latino. Recently, the city has had large numbers of foreign immigrants arriving, many long-standing residents leaving, an increase in the gap between the rich and the poor, and a rise in the black middle class.

New York City's under-21 population, over two million in 2000, is greater than the total population of all but three American cities. About one half of these are between the ages of 13 and 21. This is nearly one-eighth of the city's population. Over 21 percent of these young people are living below the poverty line. A significant majority of them are attending or have attended the city's public school system.⁶

Leadership

CityKids came into the world through the efforts of a charismatic, visionary and driven young theater artist named Laurie Meadoff. In its early days, the organization was run much like a theater collective with a strong artistic director. Then director, Meadoff's great insight was her understanding that young people could not learn to take responsibility for the things they cared about without some degree of ownership. As such, CityKids was designed to support creative problem solving and leadership development by and for young people. Many of the program's current staff and supporters cut their teeth with CityKids. In 1999, CityKids made a successful leadership transition with the hiring of Liz Sak as its second director. Sak's background combines business training and work experience in youth development and the arts.

Resources

The organization's current (2005) annual budget is \$1.16 million. Over the last few years CityKids has deliberately reduced administrative expenses in order to reduce its overall budget and pay more attention to programs. This has translated as fewer resources for marketing and development. Most of the program's funding comes from private foundations and individuals. Recently it has significantly increased its income from foundations while reducing its reliance on earned income, which it felt was draw-

ing attention from program outcomes. When asked what support strategies have been critical to the program's positive community impact and sustainability Executive Director Liz Sak points to "the inclusive representation on all levels of the organization and having a very accessible and open board whose culture genuinely reflects the culture of the organization."

Governance

CityKids has a 19-member board of directors that meets quarterly. In addition, the Chair meets with the ED on a weekly basis and the Executive Committee acts as liaison to the full board on all organizational issues.

The board's roles are to provide macro-level guidance and oversight, provide financial oversight and fundraising. Sak feels the board has "very positively contributed to our impact and sustainability. Across all levels of the organization, everyone is always prepared to lead and to follow and understands the real value of both."

Partnerships

The organization has a full-time director of support services whose job is garnering nonfinancial support in the form of corporate partners for in-kind resources and trainings as well as nurturing and developing a pool of volunteers to provide tutoring, mentoring and administrative support to the organization.

Training

CityKids conducts a ten-week training program that prepares youth as workshop facilitators on a variety of youth issues including prejudice, violence, self-esteem, relationships, teen-pregnancy prevention and other relevant issues.

Constraints

Liz Sak sees fundraising as the major challenge facing CityKids. "As with most nonprofits, fundraising remains our biggest priority and biggest challenge. The market has changed a great deal in the past ten years and foundations are increasingly looking for more measurable outcomes. The challenge is to create outcome chains which are organic to programs rather than simply responsive to foundation requests."

Advice to Funders

Liz Sak: "I have long felt that funders can do more to bring together groups to foster collective learning and growth. Our best funders are the ones who do not shy away from the partnership which a funding relationship creates. They are unafraid to ask us to do better or examine things differently and this type of dialogue makes us better. We, as a field, can not grow without some sort of external, anecdotal pressure and assessments of progress which goes beyond reported numbers."

GRACE

(Grass Roots Art and Community Effort)



GRACE community workshop. Photo by Michael Gray, courtesy of GRACE

Basic Facts

Location:	GRACE P.O. Box 960 Hardwick, Vermont, 05843
Connect:	P: 802-472-6857 F: 802-472-9578 E: contact@graceart.org W: http://www.graceart.org
Start Date:	1975
Program Type:	Visual art making for elders and other special populations, also participation by the general public
Contact:	Carol Putnam, managing director
Sites:	Nursing homes, senior meal sites, mental-health centers, artists' homes, community centers
Artistic Discipline(s):	Visual art, primarily painting and drawing
Constituents:	Senior citizens and special populations
Personnel:	Visual artist-facilitators

Snapshot

The program grew and [Don] Sunseri began, art materials in hand, to visit community centers and hospitals. Now GRACE has a staff of more than half a dozen, with support from foundations and individual contributors. Its activities include workshops, exhibitions and events. GRACE artists have won awards, published books, and been subject to film and television attention.

Of course art-making programs have been mounted in institutional settings for decades, and in pre-thorazine days, art was employed as a pacifying therapeutic. But programs run by artists bring a different agenda. Their goal is not occupation but redemption, the forging of human bonds through the fashioning of form. The power of self-taught art to produce a “third world,” a space where artist and audience may communicate freely, is often strongest when closest to home where iconography and experience is shared. And yet GRACE artists have produced work that transcends barriers of time, place and personal circumstance, to include us all.

Dot Kibbee, an octogenarian who has worked with school-age children through the program, stands as testament to this. Her visual autobiography, “All That Glitters,” has the uncanny ability to inspire personal narrative in anyone who sees it. It serves as a template for others to tell their own stories. Her best-known picture, “Take My Hand,” thanks God for her deliverance from double pneumonia. It is reputed to have healing powers, and has been passed from hand to hand in the community where she lives.

—Lyle Rexer, 1998⁷

Description

History

Grass Roots Art and Community Effort (GRACE) had its beginnings in 1975 at the St. Johnsbury Convalescent Center located in Vermont’s Northeast Kingdom. Don Sunseri, an artist newly transplanted in Vermont and needing work, found a job doing kitchen maintenance at the nursing home. He was drawn to the residents and began to feel these elders could be a source of learning and perhaps inspiration for himself. Don engaged help from the Vermont Council on the Arts and secured CETA funding for two years of art workshops. He provided materials, encouragement and a supportive environment, using teaching skills and techniques of traditional art classes.

The workshops were received enthusiastically but the “lessons” were for the most part ignored. People would start to work and quickly be off on their own, forgetting the “how’s” and just doing their own thing. Seeing this impulse in the residents, Don responded by dropping the “lessons,” stepping back and letting the residents explore on their own. As a result, nursing-home residents produced a stream of beautiful, often autobiographical art works. The art work was later organized into exhibits, slide lectures and publications. Since that time, hundreds of exhibits have traveled to galleries, museums and art centers, regionally, nationally and internationally.

—“States of GRACE,” 1998⁸

GRACE conducts over 500 workshops a year in many mainly rural sites around Vermont. The workshops are generally two hours in length and are held weekly, or occasionally more frequently, in a variety of community facilities and settings. The populations primarily served are senior citizens and persons with developmental or mental disability, with the occasional addition of children and adults from the general public.

GRACE also mounts exhibits of artworks in many venues around New England, nationally, and even internationally. Usually a site such as a nursing home will display the paintings and drawings of its residents. But in the last several years, exhibits of the works of GRACE artists have been mounted in regional libraries, banks and galleries as well as in New York City, Washington, D.C., and at universities in Vermont and elsewhere. From 1980 to 1998, GRACE exhibited art work in a pine grove at the Bread and Puppet Theater Festival in Glover, Vt., with an estimated attendance of 16,000 people.

Mission/Values

Mission: To discover and develop indigenous, self-taught artists, primarily, but not exclusively, among the population of elders and other special constituencies in Vermont; to promote this important cultural voice through local, regional and national exhibitions, slide lectures, film and video documentation and publications; to assist and train others in the development of similar programs; and to develop and sustain the permanent and documentary collections.

The mission of GRACE is the development and promotion of visual art produced primarily by older, self-taught artists of rural Vermont. The boundaries between “trained artist/teacher” and “untrained person/student” are consciously minimized based on the philosophy that all people, of whatever age, physi-

cal capacity or education, have creative potential. Thus, all the participants, staff and clients, are encouraged to consider themselves as artists. “Self transformation is the goal of all art, the GRACE artists no less than others. If one can’t be cured of physical limitations, one can learn to transcend them. The arts provide a vehicle through which to learn this, consciously or unconsciously. The staff make it clear that the GRACE programs are “about art, not therapy. ...Them opening up opens us up. We’d rather not know about the clinical diagnoses. We approach each person fresh.”

—Lucy Lippard in “States of GRACE,” 1998

Success and Change

Goals

- Encouragement of artistic expression among seniors and other special populations
- Discovery and promotion of self-taught artists to the local and broader community
- Preservation of this important cultural voice through the establishment of a permanent collection

Defining Success

- The slow organic growth of the organization and sustainability over 30 years
- Ongoing workshops at contracted sites (most for ten or more years), successful exhibitions at recognized institutions, national recognition from NEA, Smithsonian
- Making positive community change (more of a by-product of the mission than a specific goal)
- Acceptance of the GRACE approach to working with people and attitude towards the art work produced
- Positive socialization resulting from shared participation in a meaningful activity

Critical to Success

- Consistently high-quality art materials
- Well-trained and experienced professional artists as workshop facilitators
- Respect for all participants as fellow artists
- Development of a supportive, nonjudgmental environment
- Treating perceived dysfunction or limitation as creative opportunities

- Art exhibitions, catalogues and sales that celebrate, validate and document participant work
- Dedicated staff and board members
- Support and validation from staff and administrators at contracted workshop sites
- Ongoing fundraising efforts

Outcomes

No formal evaluation of GRACE programs has been done, although some specific projects have been evaluated. The staff recognizes the value of this for program development and fundraising, but does not at this time have sufficient resources to devote to formal assessment. The following are some specific program outcomes.

- Delivery of 500 open-studio workshops annually
- Validation of participant's creative work through exhibits and sales
- Additional income for participants
- Reduction of social isolation of participants
- Providing an alternative means of communication to participants with physical or mental limitations
- Providing a new means of expression for individuals who have experienced trauma and loss
- Creating new audiences for artists who have had little or no previous exposure
- Publications and catalogues documenting the artistic output of GRACE artists
- The development of a GRACE artwork collections for exhibit and sale
- The development of a permanent collection to preserve and document the work of regional self-taught artists from within the GRACE program.

Nuts and Bolts

Environment

GRACE is located in northern Vermont, a rural state ranked as the poorest of the New England states. The organization's constituency is 75 percent elderly, 45 percent mentally or physically challenged, and five percent youth. Within this group, 90 percent have disabilities, nearly 50 percent are institutionalized and 75 percent are women. Over 85 percent of GRACE's clientele live primarily on Social Security and federal disability benefits (SSI).

Leadership

GRACE started with one artist, Don Sunseri, teaching art to seniors at the Johnsbury Convalescent Center located in Northeastern Vermont. A CETA grant supported Don Sunseri's efforts in the early years. As the program has evolved from a few introductory workshops to a venerable and respected cultural organization, the program has kept its original identity as an artist's project. The GRACE motto from that time to now is "Be yourself and do it your own way." This would be an appropriate caption on the picture of leadership that emerges from GRACE's history. On its Web page GRACE pointedly avoids the word "teacher" to describe its workshop leaders. They say they are

artists working to share and encourage creativity in others. As people working with people, we learn as much from workshop participants as they learn from us, or perhaps even more. By not teaching and by encouraging participants to be themselves, GRACE facilitates and encourages the process of self-discovery.

Both GRACE's founder and its current director have approached their leadership of the organization in the same way. Their job is not so much managing as it is creating a supportive environment for creative enquiry and discovery.

Resources

Budget: The annual operating budget is \$150,000.

Development: The program is supported by:

- Earned income from the workshops provided for the various sites and from exhibits and the sale of works of art
- Contributed income from grants and donations
- Income from a small endowment

Over the past five years, the budget has been growing at a rate of around five percent per year. A substantial anonymous donation in the 1990s supported the organization's operations and created a small operating endowment. Since the purchase of the building in 2000, GRACE completed a limited capital campaign and reduced the mortgage debt by 70 percent and completed the first phase of building renovations. Currently, GRACE is embarking on a fundraising plan to finish renovating the building and to provide for its maintenance.

Governance

GRACE is governed by a board of directors of eight members, consisting primarily of community representatives. The board oversees organizational policy and does partici-

pate in short- and long-term fundraising efforts. The director sees building the board with a view to fundraising as a need and a goal.

Partnerships

Vermont Arts Council, National Endowment for the Arts, Vermont Community Foundation, Town of Greensboro, Town of Hardwick, Howard Community Services, Northeast Kingdom Human Services

Training

The members of the staff of GRACE are professional artists. However, the training required to be a workshop facilitator at GRACE or to develop similar programs elsewhere is not based on formal instruction in a curriculum. Rather, interested persons are sent print materials and then invited to observe GRACE workshops. Their publication, “States of GRACE,” describes the philosophy behind this “training”:

The GRACE style of training, not surprisingly, follows a similar style to that of the workshops. This approach happens to be the style of Lao Tzu’s “Tao te Ching.” Action is really a sort of inaction. Inaction doesn’t really mean no action whatsoever, but action that is allowed to happen naturally, without force or meddlesome efforts. A bit more specifically, the Tao encourages refraining from activity contrary to Nature or going against the grain of things. This is the intrinsic nature of the GRACE program...

At the workshops, we encourage visitors to relax and observe rather than to try to help. The environment is creative and informal, so dialogue with participants is a great way to get a feel for how the workshops are run. Once an artist starts working, however, everyone must back away and let that “special silence” take over. It is what we strive for and treasure in GRACE workshops.

Usually we set aside a time to get together with visitors and talk about the workshops. Questions often arise about the GRACE “method” — the “shoulds” and “should nots.” GRACE staff members are not teachers but artists working to share and encourage creativity in others. As people working with people, we learn as much from workshop participants as they learn from us, or perhaps even more. By not teaching and by encouraging participants to be themselves, GRACE facilitates and encourages the process of self-discovery.

—“States of GRACE”

Constraints

The main constraint is money. As a small, rural nonprofit, they constantly have to worry about running their program on limited funds. Attracting the attention of the large foundations is a related problem, since their rural location and small staff means that they are not able to do the cultivation necessary to “get on the radar screen” of large foundations whose mission coincides with that of GRACE.

Advice to Funders

The lack of operating support from foundations has been a major hurdle. This is a significant issue for organizations after “start-up.” Loss of substantial funding after many years of consistent support caused a budget deficit for GRACE. Grant applications are often cumbersome and require undue staff time for completion.

Isangmahal Arts Kollektive



Isangmahal Arts Kollektive presents "Palengke," 2001. Photo courtesy Isangmahal Arts Kollektive

Basic Facts

Location:	Seattle, Washington
Connect:	P: 206-779-3997 E: jojo@youthspeaks.org W: http://isangmahal.org/
Start Date:	1997
Contact:	Jojo Goan, co-founder
Sites:	Monthly events held at the Northwest Asian American Theater, regular touring
Artistic Discipline(s):	Spoken word, music, dance, theater
Constituents:	Seattle's Filipino and Asian communities
Personnel:	Isangmahal is a volunteer collective of 30-40 artists.

Snapshot

Isangmahal has been such a driving force in my life growing up. My whole adolescence from 15 on has been shaped by it. It has been a mighty river that has helped me find my direction. I was 15 when I joined... I had a couple of friends who were in with the group because they had older brothers and sisters who were involved. They were college-age folks. I was 15, I was in HS. I didn't really associate with them. But word started to trickle down at the HS back in 98 that older brown folk were doing stuff in the community and we should go check it out. There was nothing in the community that existed like Isangmahal. It was revolutionary. So, I went to a show. It was my very first open-mike experience. I got up in the middle of a feature set because I didn't know what was going on. Somebody elbowed me and told me to go up on stage and read. I don't remember who it was. Anyway I thought people just kind of chose when they wanted to go up because I was not there at the beginning for the introduction. And I was like alright. So I went up in the middle of the set. Afterward Jojo came up to me and validated my work. He said what you had to say was important to me and please come back. That was it for me. When you are 15 you don't have that support everywhere. So, that's why we take such care of young people at Isangmahal because young people need to be validated.

—Angela, Isangmahal member, 2004⁹

Description

History

The Isangmahal (“one love”) arts “kollektive” was created in 1997 when a small group of Seattle-based Filipino-American writers and artists recognized the need for an artistic outlet for themselves and others in the margins. Partnering with the Northwest Asian American Theatre, they began with small events, providing an open mike and a supportive audience for fellow Filipino poets and performers. At their first open-mike event, the 15 poets who showed up made up the audience as well. But they persevered and at each event more and more people showed up. Nine years later the all-volunteer organization continues to produce monthly events that provide a safe, non-judgmental performing venue for spoken word, music and dance. During that time the kollektive’s membership has grown to include over 30 poets, musicians, visual artists, dancers, actors, DJs and videographers.

Isangmahal operates as a family. New members are invited by existing members to join. Joining means taking a role in helping to organize events and maintain the organization, which is all volunteer. They are not a nonprofit and do not receive funding

from any outside source. Ticket receipts from their events pay for facilities rental. No one receives compensation for work with the organization.

They have two formats for events. The first and most important is the open mike. It is the core of their work. Anybody can sign up and perform their poetry, music, dance — anything. Even visual artists share their work on stage. The collective's aim has been to create a safe and validating place for anyone to come in and share their work

The other kind of event, which may or may not happen in conjunction with an open mike, is called a feature set. A feature set has a theme and usually involves a mix of Isangmahal members who have developed and rehearsed a series of pieces. Spoken-word artists and performers are a central element of Isangmahal, “defining and changing their surroundings while wielding the power of the word. Each individual poet maintains and nurtures a unique style of writing and performance, as distinct and diverse as each one of the poet's personalities. Isangmahal writers are an accomplished group, with artists having been published, produced self-published work and performed as a group and individually across the nation. In addition, groups form within the group to collaborate on multivoice pieces.”¹⁰

Isangmahal poets and musicians have performed at numerous theaters, colleges and universities in Washington state, as well as Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Michigan, Florida and Washington, D.C. The spoken-word artists have performed at Seattle Center's artsEdge, Seattle Poetry Festivals, Eleventh Hour Productions' The Rapture Series, local rallies and events in Seattle's Asian-Pacific-American community. The RAW Gallery & Seattle Central Community College Art Gallery have hosted Isangmahal visual-arts shows and artists have been featured in exhibitions throughout Washington state. In addition, the group has produced and pressed two CD recordings.

Mission/Values

The vision of the kollektive includes understanding that we shall not remain complacent by any means, which signifies the importance of the tasks at hand, which encompass:

- Creating and maintaining avenues for our voices to express and analyze the problematics of life that we all live
- To locate and create propaganda revealing linkages which connect and bind us all in order to initiate critical analysis of our being
- To propagate LOVE, the sole basis of life and the basis of all revolutions.
- To hear and be heard, to see and be seen¹¹

Success and Change

Goals

Isangmahal is the celebration of the universality of the human experience through the uniqueness of the individual and the power of the collective. In presenting the synergy of sight-sound-music and spoken word that reflect the tribal roots of “ol skool” Filipino rhythms with the modern temperament of Filipino Amerika, Isangmahal hopes to share in the process of loving oneself. Isangmahal is an expression of the Filipino movement that has risen to open the consciousness of the diversity of America by acknowledging the differences and similarities and the love that exists amidst these rifts. Isangmahal’s stage performance brings together a chorus of artists whose sights and sounds reinforce both the ugly and the beautiful, both the pain and celebration. Through “one love,” Isangmahal synthesizes word and music into a presentation of (self)thought, (self)expression, and (self)analysis; a coming together of the greater community to join in the experience of Isangmahal.

—Isangmahal Web site, 2005¹²

Defining Success

Isangmahal believes in love as a source of freedom and art as propaganda for self-love. Understanding this dynamic relationship between art and love, and the critical location that art can take in the process of self-actualization, Isangmahal continues to ‘test the elasticity’ of this beautiful intersection and how it harnesses community. As racist/sexist/homophobic representations continue to plague our daily lives by attempting to incarcerate our own imaginations (how we see/hear ourselves), we continue to fight for our own safe space for subjective cultural production, community empowerment, and individual freedom. We believe in the fluidity of our culture and the necessity for transformative/open dialogue between the artist and the audience. We resist all static definitions that limit how we see our selves and our art. We define our own culture from the inside and from reflection with a love that we have always known as a people. Through means that aren’t defined by the “white dominated art world,” but by the cultural vernacular of survival through words, music, dance, video, and visual art we contribute to the fluidity of our culture while subverting the genocide of our authenticity as a people with the capacity to love one another in the process.

“The most heroic quest is the quest for self-love” - bell hooks”

—Isangmahal Web site, 2005¹²

Critical to Success

- Providing a safe, celebratory nonjudgmental space for performers and audience members
- Establishing a sense of the Filipino village community through the kollektive and its work
- Increasing awareness and understanding of Filipino social and political history
- Honoring the multiple generations that make up Seattle’s Filipino community
- Partnering with individuals and organizations with shared interests and goals
- Increasing impact and exposure through touring
- Harnessing the combined creativity, wisdom, labor and commitment of the kollektive’s membership
- A collective belief in “Isangmahal” (one love)
- Supporting collaboration and an improvisational aesthetic
- Supporting artists whose work deals with contemporary issues

Outcomes

- Survival as a non-501(c)(3), community-based, all-volunteer organization
- Fostered and supported large community of Filipino artists
- Monthly open-mike performance events
- Periodic feature sets (thematic, rehearsed)
- Provided touring opportunities for members
- Committed membership of 30-40 artists
- Partnered to establish a national network of progressive Asian artists
- Many members have become full-time professional artists
- Forged significant partnerships locally and nationally
- Developed a multigenerational audience

Nuts and Bolts

Environment

Over the last 100 years, hundreds of thousands of Asians have found their way to Seattle in search of employment and opportunity. While this steady stream of immigrants found that their manual-labor jobs often defined their initial social status, they banded together to forge coherent communities and create opportunities for advancement. Despite persistent, often brutal discrimination, strong communities emerged out of struggles to preserve old customs in new places.

With an estimated population of over 30,000, the Filipino-American community forms the largest group of Asian Americans in the Seattle area. The Filipino population in the region grows by approximately 1,000 per year. Average per capita income is slightly below the national average, and 75 percent of Filipino households have pooled income from three or more adults working. Many of these households are intergenerational, where grandparents become surrogate parents for young families. An estimated 80 percent of Filipinos in the Northwest are Catholics, some are members of Protestant churches, and others are members of the Aglipay, a church with its origin in the Philippines.

Leadership

Most of the founding members of Isangmahal are active leaders in the organization. Because Isangmahal is a collective, decisions tend to be made by those who are most active. Although the nonhierarchical organizational structure is very supportive of new initiatives, these efforts are necessarily driven solely by the labor and commitment of individual members.

Resources

For the most part, Isangmahal operates on a pay-as-you-go basis. Proceeds from concerts and open-mike sessions pay for the rental of the hall and equipment. At various times the collective has produced CDs, chapbooks and other artwork for sale. The proceeds for collectively produced merchandise is given back to the collective account. The proceeds for individual work, (i.e., chapbooks, CDs, etc.) go to the artist. No individual artist in the collective is paid for performance.

Isangmahal receives some support from private donors. Chicago's "I Was Born With 2 Tongues" and "Pacifics" are two important institutional partners that have supported their work. They helped in raising money to send an Isangmahal team of youths to the 2001 National Youth Poetry Slam, Emerging Voices.

Governance

See Leadership

Partnerships

Isangmahal considers itself to be in partnership with the entire Filipino community.

They focus on maintaining strong relationships with all sectors of this community. This requires interaction with numerous individual leaders and organizations that represent a wide spectrum of attitudes and positions. They want to help the older generations share their histories and stories with younger generations who know very little about those who came before them.

Various shows have been dedicated to important historical figures and events in local and national Filipino history. They play the griot role to promote meaning and understanding in the Filipino community. They try to help express the breadth of issues and opinions.

They are working with Youth Speaks to create poetry workshops and open-mike experiences for young people. Because most Isangmahal members work regular jobs, many of which are in the human services realm, they have many connections across sectors in the community. Seattle has a very large Filipino community with a vast archive of documentary material that Isangmahal works with.

Training

Although Isangmahal has no formal training program, its collective and collaborative culture promotes mentoring among its members. Many of the emerging leaders in the organization have worked for years learning the ropes from older members. The supportive open-mike environment also provides a nonthreatening learning venue for young talent rising up in the community.

Constraints

Each event is a two- or three-month process. Because nobody has assigned roles, each event requires different members to step up and take responsibility for different functions (artistic direction, stage management, etc.). This organic management style has its benefits and challenges. In Jojo Goan's words, this ad hoc way of working takes its toll. But the outcome is often extraordinary. They are also struggling with newcomers who do not bring the same level of commitment and energy as the founders

Advice to Funders

None offered.

Manchester Craftsmen's Guild



Manchester Craftsmen's Guild ceramics studio. Photo courtesy MCG

Basic Facts

Location:	Manchester Bidwell Corporation 1815 Metropolitan Street Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15233-2233
Connect:	P: 412-322-1773 F: 412-321-212 E: jgreen@mcg-btc.org W: http://www.manchesterguild.org
Start Date:	1968
Contact:	William Strickland, director, Manchester Craftsmen's Guild; Joshua Green, director, arts and education
Sites:	Manchester Craftsmen's Guild/Bidwell Training School facilities in Pittsburgh
Artistic Discipline(s):	Visual arts, performing arts, culinary arts (Bidwell Training Center — adult job-training program)
Constituents:	Youth, ages 11-19, single parents, veterans, community members
Personnel:	MCG Youth and MCG Arts – 27 full-time, + two to six volun- teers per year MCG Jazz – six full-time + six part-time recording engineers and technicians Bidwell Training Center – 55 Manchester Bidwell Corporation – 27

Snapshot

With a \$12 million yearly budget and the motto that “Creativity is the catalyst for change,” a Pittsburgh arts center and training program uses the creative arts to inspire inner-city kids and adults to create better futures for themselves. The Manchester Bidwell Corporation (MBC) not only teaches the arts, but also houses a center for jazz performance, a record label and a real-estate office, which leases office space. It’s all part of founder Bill Strickland’s mission to harness the arts to inspire inner-city kids and adults to create brighter futures. “The worst thing about being poor is what it does to the spirit — the arts reconnect people to their spirits,” says Strickland, who believes the arts also pave the way for successful entrepreneurial thinking...

The MCG/BTC budget comes from a combination of fundraising and business revenues. The MCG Jazz Center includes a jazz record label, MCG Jazz, and a performance space that draws some of the best names in the business. ...In that same building each year, 400-500 teenagers from the Pittsburgh Public Schools sign up for after-school classes in ceramics, photography, drawing and design. MCG says last year a remarkable 86 percent of the participating seniors went on to college, as opposed to 30 percent from Pittsburgh’s public schools at large. And alongside these arts programs, job-training programs draw on the stimulating artistic energy of the place, and offer associate-degree and diploma programs.

Strickland believes his project works, because, first of all, “Art helps people reconnect to their spirits.” When people engage in the arts, he says they get in touch with themselves again, and accomplish the not-so-small feat of making life worth living again. And he says art and entrepreneurship go together. “Artists are essentially entrepreneurial: an entrepreneur always starts with a blank canvas. Artists say, ‘Hey, I see this image in this canvas,’” says Strickland. “That imagination is the same part of the brain where entrepreneurship lies: the place that visualizes and institutionalizes that kind of thinking.”

—The Osgood File, 2003¹³

Description¹⁴

History

As a teenager growing up in Pittsburgh’s North Side, Bill Strickland was not much different from other kids in the neighborhood. That was true until one morning in school when he passed the open door to the art room where teacher Frank Ross was working

on the potter's wheel. Awestruck by the sight of a skilled artisan raising and forming the walls of an urn, Strickland approached the teacher. Over the coming months, the relationship that Ross and Strickland initiated with a revolving mound of clay began to give form to the future vision of Manchester Craftsmen's Guild.

In 1968, Strickland established Manchester Craftsmen's Guild to help combat the economic and social devastation experienced by the residents of his predominantly African-American North Side neighborhood. The Guild initially offered an informal art program and exhibition space for inner-city minority children. Strickland and his father built a kiln in a garage and acquired a few potters' wheels. Photography was soon added to address the interests of community members and because Strickland understood that artists needed good pictures to promote and help sell their work. Grants from federal employment programs and Pennsylvania Council on the Arts soon made it possible to hire part-time teaching artists for both the ceramics and photography studios.

Because of his successful track record with Manchester Craftsmen's Guild, Strickland was asked to assume the leadership of Bidwell Training Center, a vocational education program in the same community. In the mid-1980s, Manchester Craftsmen's Guild received a \$250,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Arts requiring a three-to-one match. This grant was a key component of a \$7.5 million capital campaign to construct a 62,000-square-foot vocational training and arts center. Opened in 1987, this facility offered vastly improved and expanded studios as well as a 350-seat concert hall, classrooms and workshops. By the 1995-1996 school year, over 350 high-school students from communities throughout the City of Pittsburgh regularly participated in Manchester Craftsmen's Guild after-school programs. During the day, staff artists reached an additional thousand students by going into the schools.¹⁵

Mission/Values

Mission: Manchester Craftsmen's Guild is a national model for education, training and hope. MCG reshapes the business of social change through the arts, entertainment, entrepreneurship and community partnership.¹⁶

Manchester Craftsmen's Guild is a multidisciplinary, minority-directed, center for arts and learning that employs the visual and performing arts to foster a sense of accomplishment and hope in the urban community. It accomplishes this by:

- Educating and inspiring urban youth through the arts and mentored training in life skills
- Preserving, presenting and promoting jazz and visual arts to stimulate intercultural understanding, appreciation and enhancement of the quality of life for its audiences

- Equipping and educating leaders to further demonstrate entrepreneurial potential

Success and Change

Goals

- Improve academic achievement of participants
- Improve career-development skills, options and outcomes for participants
- Enhance community environment through the creation of artworks
- Create partnerships that cross academic disciplines and link the school with the community
- Support academic concepts with creative and practical problem solving
- Increase awareness of future educational and career opportunities among students
- Explore the creative process while developing critical and analytical thinking skills
- Develop critical life skills by identifying choices and forces that differentiate between survival and success
- Encourage students to become reflective about their actions, behaviors and accomplishments
- Apply creative problem solving to daily life situations
- Inspire youth in the discovery and mastery of artistic interests that give voice to mind and spirit
- Advance the fields of jazz and visual arts

Defining Success

The Manchester Craftsmen's Guild team believes that success involves all those affected in the process of education. MCG addresses the context of the environment in which learning takes place, in its own facility as well as in schools throughout Pittsburgh. Partnering with teachers through its Artists in Schools programs, MCG brings technical expertise and artistic imagination to the classroom. Scholarships are available for evening studio courses at MCG to any classroom teacher interested in acting as a change agent who promotes the arts as a pathway for learning.

- Improved graduation rates for MBC participants
- Improved academic achievement in partner schools
- Improved education and career outcomes for participants
- Improved economic development in MBC targeted communities
- Continued community support for MBC

Critical to Success

- Programs designed and implemented based on the assumption that students will reach a high level of skill, knowledge and creativity when high expectations are present
- The provision of professional quality tools, materials, facilities and the highest quality instruction available led by practicing artists
- Dedication to the idea that lives can change through relationships built around art mentoring
- The combination of skill development, discussion and experiences that link to community and higher education
- A belief that attitude and willingness to learn are more important than talent or previous accomplishment
- Developing social networks around art and culture that often counteract the negative stereotypes and boundaries that academic tracking, school feeder patterns and age-old neighborhood rivalries sometimes reinforce
- Educational programs designed according to the following standards:
 - Use the highest quality tools and material and instructors.
 - Use a rigorous and sequential curriculum that is linked to prevailing school standards.
 - Provide low student/teacher ratios.
 - Link curriculum and learning to careers and social issues.
 - Apply high standards of artistic, technical & intellectual engagement.
 - Emphasize teamwork among students.
 - Create a community environment of support.
 - Seek parental involvement as a key to academic success.
 - Embrace the potential of every student to succeed.
 - Recognize teachers as the primary change agent for students.
- Performances and presentations by living masters
- Affordable accessible programs interested and motivated students

Outcomes

More recently, programmatic change and external conditions that affect program have required Manchester to be more formal in the planning, implementation and tracking of programs. This has taken place due to the increasingly competitive funding environment, demands of accountability from the school district and the need to maintain quality as programs, audiences and staff size expand. Documented outcomes include the following:

- From 74 to 80 percent of participants in the Apprenticeship Program go on to college, compared to 20 percent in the community.
- 250 of these are students served on an annual basis.
- A study of a three-year arts-infusion program in four of Pittsburgh's academically underperforming middle schools identified intermediate outcomes that included improved overall school climate, teacher efficacy and parent and community investment in education. Ultimate outcomes included improvements in student academic, behavioral and attendance performance and success in transition from middle school to high school.
- Dramatically improved academics, maturity, self-reliance and social competence were observed among participants.
- Manchester Craftsmen's Guild cultural programs, including exhibitions, lectures, receptions and concerts by internationally recognized artists, have changed audience members' perceptions of the North Side.
- Tickets for approximately 30 concert dates each year are sold to capacity. Art events attract approximately 1,500 visitors per year, over and above concert audiences. Combined with the approximately 5,000 middle- and high-school students, their family members and teachers, the number of community members that now associate Manchester as a cultural destination rather than a blighted neighborhood is substantial.
- Manchester Craftsmen's Guild students have been invited to participate in conferences on leadership, technology and entrepreneurship. Additionally, they have won thousands of dollars in scholarships dedicated to the arts and community involvement.
- Manchester Bidwell construction and program development has provided 125 jobs. Adjacent commercial real-estate development has taken place both simultaneously with the Manchester Craftsmen's Guild construction of 1986 (UPS) and subsequent to it (Mascaro Construction), creating or relocating approximately 300 additional jobs to this once blighted section of Pittsburgh.
- Dozens of artist-driven community-improvement projects have provided school and park beautification, community gardens, community festivals and family celebrations.
- MCG and Bidwell team members are widely respected and play leadership roles in the arts, education and workforce development locally, regionally and nationally. Sitting on boards ranging from major banks to arts organizations, contributing articles to professional journals and sitting on national boards of accreditation are some of the indicators of the organization's influence.

Nuts and Bolts

Environment

According to 2004-05 school-year data, Pittsburgh Public Schools, the second largest school system in Pennsylvania, enrolled 32,661 students in its 86 schools (53 elementary, 17 middle, 10 secondary, two alternative programs and four special schools). Of those students, 59.9 percent are African-American, 37.8 percent are White, 1.5 percent are Asian/Pacific Islander, 0.7 percent are Hispanic, and 0.1 percent are Native American. PPS shares the challenges of many large, urban school districts with regard to meeting the academic goals and standards set by the states for children. Over 68 percent of MCG students come from low-income families (according to PPS 2004-05 free/reduced price lunch data) and 74 percent live in single-parent homes, factors that research identifies as contributors to low achievement and risk for academic failure. Manchester Craftsmen's Guild serves students and teachers from all of Pittsburgh's public high schools and many of its most economically disadvantaged middle schools.

Leadership

MCG is an organization still under the leadership of Bill Strickland, its visionary founder. Bill Strickland is a phenomenal storyteller and spirit whose hopes for all young people are shaped by his own life's trajectory. We rely on the compelling nature of this story and its resonance with many of our students to describe and teach the Guild's organizational culture and standards to students, family members, teachers and staff artists. A central part of Bill's approach to leadership is that he believes that all people are capable of great things if offered the environment and resources they deserve. He expects staff — artists, clerks, managers and program directors — to be both brilliant and extremely dedicated on a regular basis. Because Bill is also entrepreneurial, he is constantly seeking ways to expand his vision through new ventures, partnerships and replication efforts. The work environment is not for the faint of heart. There is a strong desire to create and contribute from the bottom up.¹⁷

—Joshua Green, MCG director of arts and education

Resources

The budget for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2005, for MCG Youth is approximately \$1.7 million; MCG as a whole had an operating budget of approximately \$3.7 million. The total budget for MBC and affiliates is approximately \$10 million.

Development: Manchester has annual contracts with Pittsburgh Board of Education and the state and federal departments of education. Both the Manchester Craftsmen's Guild and Bidwell Training Center have benefited from a large donation of technology by the Hewlett Packard Foundation and a partnership with Steelcase Furniture. Strategic alliances with companies including PPG, Heinz and Sony have helped with the start-up of the Drew Mathieson Center for Horticultural Technology and the MCG Jazz recording label. Significant support from the Pittsburgh region has come through grants from the Heinz Endowments, the Allegheny Foundation, the Grable Foundation, the Pittsburgh Foundation, the McCune Foundation and the Eden Hall Foundation. National Foundations that have supported Manchester Craftsmen's Guild at different points in its development have included Surdna, Ford, Kellogg, Nathan Cummings and the Wallace Funds. Corporate giving from the Pittsburgh region has come from Bayer, Nova Chemical, PNC Financial Services and Equitable Resources.

Governance

In February 1999, the previously separate and autonomous boards of Manchester Craftsmen's Guild and Bidwell Training Center merged into a unified governing identity known as Manchester Bidwell Corporation. This change reduced the total number of members serving on the two boards from a high of 50 to a single board that has fluctuated from 22 to 30 members. Manchester Bidwell Corporation provides services that are critical to the operations of both organizations, including financial management, public relations, fund raising/institutional development and human resources. The development of the Drew Mathieson Center, Harbor Gardens and replication efforts made it increasingly challenging for funders to discern between the overlapping missions and identities of Manchester Craftsmen's Guild's and Bidwell Training Center.

The creation of the Manchester Bidwell Corporation has helped create a broader audience of operations in a more global sense. Corporate leaders and businesses in both the private and social sector see MBC as a community organization serving youth and adults bringing full-circle the sphere of influence back to the community. The reach of MBC is seen not just in terms of career training or youth development ñ it's a counter-attack to many of the risk factors that plague inner-city communities, namely a devalued sense of education and economic stability.

The reorganization of the governance structure was accomplished in an effort to respond to those concerns while allowing the two entities to maintain distinct organizational identities specific to programs. Organizational expansion and new program development is under control of the central corporation. To some degree, this may have slowed the progress of new initiatives in an effort to insure they remain consistent

with the MCG/Bidwell vision and are phased in so that they do not overwhelm the organization's resources.

Partnerships

- The most significant partnership for MCG Youth is with the Pittsburgh Board of Education. A contract for services from the board constitutes 10-20 percent of MCG Youth's annual operating budget. Additionally, MCG and the Pittsburgh Board of Education have recently begun to seek federal funding through programs that require partnerships between lead educational agencies and community-based organizations.
- MCG Youth has instituted a partnership with the Community College of Allegheny County to develop a dual-enrollment summer program that enables rising juniors through recent high-school graduates to earn free college credits.
- MCG Youth has conducted four biannual residencies with the Penland School of Crafts, enabling 25 Pittsburgh teens to work with nationally recognized craftspeople at Penland's North Carolina campus.
- For more than five years, MCG Youth distributed more than \$90,000 in scholarships annually to young Pittsburgh art students through a consortium of Pittsburgh arts organizations, funds and institutes of higher education.

Training

MCG Youth has established a commitment to ongoing staff development that is job-embedded. The guild has played host to the Pittsburgh region's first-ever arts-education leadership symposium conducted with the Arts Education Collaborative. Guild staff members meet one Friday each month to engage in lesson study and/or curriculum development. Each year the Guild hosts a district wide in-service for 300 arts and music teachers who work in Pittsburgh Public Schools. Past presenters have included artist Faith Ringgold and researcher/policy analyst Nick Rabkin. Guild staff members engage in an annual week-long orientation to review policies, procedures and performance goals for the upcoming academic year. In past years additional sessions have been devoted to intercultural communications and learning, studio-specific art practices, technology, standards and assessment.

Constraints

- *Funding:* Though Manchester Bidwell Corporation has weathered difficult times better than other nonprofits, many of its programs are still reliant on funding conditions

that could change dramatically on an annual basis. Their reliance on foundation support has left them vulnerable to unpredictable financial stability. Such funding is rarely reliable for long-term support of programs, even though they may be effective. Manchester's current challenge with funders is to refine a model of educational and community impact that can be more sustainable. To validate and ground future efforts they are working to align their educational programs with current research models and become more effective at data collection and usage. Nonprofits with the complex and somewhat hybridized identity of Manchester Bidwell do not fit neatly into current funding categories. Current public policy does not let tax dollars flow easily to community-based organizations that offer viable and valuable educational assets that enrich schools and the communities they serve.

- *Reorganization:* Some staff and departments more accustomed to working under the old order may find that the current system slowed efforts to engage in new ventures. As the organization has grown larger and more complex, risks involved in new programming endeavors or entrepreneurial efforts have implications that impact greater numbers of staff and community members affected by programs. The effort to shield staff from the stresses of new endeavors so that they can focus on currently operational programs has also resulted in a sense of distance from the processes and ramifications of replication of initiatives. The ideal is that the governance board has the responsibility of centralizing complex and varied programs into a clear, unified picture. This picture should guide future MCG Bidwell growth.
- *Transportation:* Because Manchester's location isolates it from the surrounding residential neighborhood, the program has found that transportation is a significant barrier to increased school participation.
- *Educational Programs:* The crisis in urban education and the response to the No Child Left Behind Act and other state-based standardized testing has made access to students and teachers a challenge for Manchester. Testing and test preparation use time that was once dedicated to teaching and learning. Many schools and teachers are not permitted to engage in alternative approaches such as the arts without showing how the experience will contribute to increased scores on math or verbal tests. The case for these programs will be difficult to make in an environment that does not tolerate experimentation.

Advice to Funders

- The great dream is that funders will become more interested in sustaining longer-term relationships around programs that work rather than regularly changing focus. Institutions like the Guild have a high rate of staff burnout. The work is demanding, and often wonderful artists have a difficult time balancing their creative and educational capacities. Community and youth arts organizations could benefit through support for professional-development opportunities that help teaching artists maintain and intensify their commitment to creative work and personal development. Opportunities to attend symposia, participate in residencies and even pursue creative research over an extended period through sabbaticals could help stabilize the field and propel it to new heights.
- Youth employment opportunities through community arts programs have become fairly pervasive. Too often funding opportunities for these initiatives have severe family-income guidelines that restrict and in some cases homogenize the population of youth eligible for these programs. Over time, students return to the Guild years after graduation and report that the experience of diversity at the Guild was different from anything they encountered in school. Alums report that this feature of the Guild, more than any other thing, has helped prepare them for life in higher education and the workplace.
- Much emphasis continues to be placed on establishing a scientific model that can demonstrate causal effects of the arts programming on student academic achievement and attitudes. Unfortunately the worlds of research and youth-arts practice seem to interact for only brief moments. Research in this domain might be enhanced if there were opportunities for Youth Arts practitioners and educational researchers to meet and educate one another on some ongoing basis. Why not create a residency for a researcher embedded within a model youth-arts program? They would benefit through direct observation and participation in art forms and become more engaged in the organic process of change that occurs in the studio. Researchers could also become involved in staff development in ways that could lead to much richer analysis of a field that is of great concern but still little understood.

Mural Arts Program



A Family Garden, by Donald Gensler with Jane Golden, 2004. Photo by Jack Ramsdale

Basics

Location:	Mural Arts Program The Thomas Eakins House 1729 Mount Vernon Street Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19130
Connect:	P: 215-685-0753 E: info@muralarts.org W: http://www.muralarts.org
Start Date:	1984
Program Type:	Public art, community development, arts education
Contact:	Jane Golden, executive director
Sites:	Over 2,500 mural sites in Philadelphia (150-200 new sites per year)
Artistic Discipline(s):	Mural arts, visual art, some performance related to mural dedications
Constituents:	Citizens of Philadelphia, distressed communities, youth
Personnel:	22 full-time and five part-time staff, and over 165 contracted muralists

Snapshot

Meg Fish Saligman, a Philadelphian who travels the country painting murals and is known for big, intricate renderings such as “Theatre of Life” at Broad and Lombard Streets, is impressed with how sophisticated public art has become here. “You wouldn’t find better anywhere in the world,” she said.

Murals crop up in all sorts of unlikely spots. At the Curran-Fromhold Correctional Facility in the Northeast, ex-convict Alvin Tull, a Mural Arts employee, is leading an effort to liven up a recreation courtyard on Pod 1 of the A Building. “This is like a ministry for me,” he said. Mural Arts is expanding to other prisons, and is working with children of inmates.

Murals often achieve landmark status: Jackie Robinson near Broad and Somerset Streets, Dr. J at Ridge Avenue and 12th Street, a homage to architectural ghosts at 22d and Walnut Streets. At 50th Street and Woodland Avenue is a wall called “Families Are Victims, Too,” a memorial to loved ones who died violently. Michelle Hundley visits often with her four little boys. She points out one face on the wall. Jeffrey Rushton. Her son. Gone six years now, a 10-year-old killed by a hit-and-run driver. “There’s a bench in front of his picture,” said Hundley, a nurse. “We like to sit out there. It’s comforting.”

—Julie Stoiber, 2004¹⁸

Description

History

The Mural Arts Program (MAP) was conceived in 1984 by Jane Golden as part of an initiative aimed at eradicating graffiti throughout Philadelphia. Originally named the Philadelphia Anti-Graffiti Network, the initiative included a massive graffiti-removal effort along with a mural-painting component designed to engage adjudicated graffiti writers (who were typically low-income, minority youth) in learning more positive and productive ways to express their creativity. Golden was a professional artist who had also helped to found and direct the Public Art Foundation, an art program for young people on probation in Los Angeles. In 1996, the Anti-Graffiti Network was restructured. The mural painting component was reconfigured as a separate organization, renamed the Mural Arts Program, and given a “home” in the City of Philadelphia’s Department of Recreation.

In its first few years, MAP worked exclusively with adjudicated graffiti writers who learned to paint murals, using their talents to bring beauty rather than blight to inner-city neighborhoods. Now MAP offers after-school workshops in mural making and community engagement with young people from around the city, focusing on at-risk low-income teens and including those who have not encountered the juvenile-justice system. These workshops complement and support MAP's overall mission of partnering with community residents, grassroots organizations, government agencies, educational institutions, corporations and philanthropies to design and create murals of enduring value while actively engaging youth in the process.

Mission/Values

The stated mission of the Mural Arts Program is to:

- Design and create murals that reflect and depict the culture and history of Philadelphia communities
- Develop long-term, sustainable collaborations with communities that engage residents in the mural process of vision and design to expand their view of their community and environment
- Promote community awareness and understanding of visual art by developing and implementing visual and educational programming in those communities for children and youth through involvement in the creation of murals in their neighborhoods
- Build on neighborhood revitalization efforts and investments using murals and the mural design process as a community-organizing vehicle, blight-removal strategy, and demonstration of civic pride
- Generate professional development opportunities for artists committed to working collaboratively in communities to create murals and visual-art education projects

Success and Change

Goals

MAP is committed to a participatory and respectful creative process. It is a gesture of respect to a neighborhood to paint a mural there at all, but the Mural Arts Program (like the Anti-Graffiti Network before it) goes beyond this and bases its designs on community wishes. It does not impose its images. MAP has this in common with other successful mural programs, but also has more respect for local residents' personal desires than most. In intensive community meetings, MAP demonstrates respect for people who are largely excluded from government and traditional vehicles of public

expression such as the mass media. Nevertheless, these people know what they believe and have strong opinions about what should (and should not) be represented on the walls of their communities. The Mural Arts Program also works to involve the city's residents in the creative process, offering art-education programs at recreation centers, homeless shelters and other sites throughout Philadelphia.

Defining Success

The program defines success in two distinct but interdependent ways. The first, "quality," is embodied in MAP's long-term relationships with over 100 of what have been called the finest muralists in the country. As such, the program is very picky about whom it selects to design and lead each project. Its insistence on quality is also represented in the excellence of the artwork on the walls, seen as the physical representation of their community-engagement process.

MAP's other arena for determining success manifests through the individual and community relationships that are intrinsic to each mural effort. In this realm, the symptoms of success include the following:

- Ongoing and increasing involvement by participants
- Community involvement, support and ownership of both the mural process and product
- Organizations and community partnerships that are sustained beyond individual projects
- Diverse representation of community throughout the mural-making process
- Youth participants with new skills, a sense of accomplishment and the esteem of their peers and the broader community.

Critical to Success

Staff have identified program characteristics essential for a mural's successful completion. They include:

- Time for building relationships & trust
- Learning from mistakes and successes
- Listening: to learn from and be challenged by community partners
- Patience, tenacity and persistence
- Honesty, especially when the chips are down
- Adequate resources
- Clear, timely, consistent, and regular communication
- Planning : Even if it changes
- Community support and ownership

- Credibility, based on outcomes, not promises
- Excellent artists, materials and staff
- Skilled diplomacy
- Experienced hands
- Clear roles and responsibilities
- Clear and rigorous standards

Outcomes

Since its inception in 1984, the Mural Arts Program has completed more murals than any other public art program in the nation — more than 2,500 indoor and outdoor murals throughout Philadelphia. This effort has brought art to the cityscape, turning graffiti-scarred walls into scenic views, portraits of community heroes and abstract creations.

The University of Pennsylvania's Social Impact of the Arts Project (SAIP) study of MAP also looked at MAP's physical, social and economic impacts. Major findings included the following:

- Murals often serve as an indicator of a neighborhood that has the ingredients to create revitalization, including a diverse population and a strong civic life. To the extent that murals serve as an expression of that transformation, we can say that they have an impact in stabilizing and sustaining processes of community revitalization.
- Every \$1.00 of city funding for murals leverages roughly \$.25 to \$1.00 in community contributions — \$.65 for the “typical” mural — or a 25-to-100 percent return on investment.
- Of the 139 murals completed in 2001, young people were engaged with 69 (50 percent) of the projects.
- During 2001, the Mural Arts Program employed a total of 99 artists to fill 113 positions available in its two core programs.

Nuts and Bolts

Environment

Philadelphia, the fifth largest city in the U.S., is located in the middle of the densely populated eastern seaboard, which also includes New York, Wilmington, Baltimore and Newark. One of America's oldest urban settlements, “Philly” is as steeped in American history as it is neighborhood tradition. Originally built in the 1700s on the banks of the Delaware River, the city has spread out to include over 200 distinctly

defined neighborhoods¹⁹ with a population that is equally diverse (48 percent White, 43%, Black, 4.4 percent Asian, 0.2 percent American Indian, 7 percent Hispanic). The city's population is relatively young and unattached with a median age of 35 and a community of singles that approaches 47 percent of the adult population. In 2000, the average household income was \$35,000 and the average house sold for a very low \$80,000, about one half the national average. The 2000 census also indicates that 71 percent of the city's adults have graduated from high school and 21 percent have spent at least two years at university. The violent crime rate in Philadelphia is about four times the national average.

A 2003 historical analysis of the location and social geography²⁰ of MAP's murals by the Social Impact of the Arts Project indicates that murals created over the years have been concentrated in the city's most disadvantaged neighborhoods. Sections of the city that have high poverty, low household income and high indicators of housing distress are all likely to have had many murals.

Leadership

For most of its history, the Mural Arts Program has been an artist-designed and artist-managed organization. The vision, persistence, stamina and advocacy that have fueled its successful growth have come principally from one person, its director, Jane Golden. This has been a strength, inasmuch as the source of the organization's direction and decision making has been clear and unambiguous. The City of Philadelphia, funders and community partners all have placed great trust in Golden's capacities and ideas, and her reputation brings extraordinary credibility to all of MAP's initiatives. In recent years, the program's rapid growth has pushed the organization's sole-proprietor model beyond its capacities. In response, MAP has endeavored to create management systems and distribute leadership more broadly among staff members and its nonprofit board.

Resources

Budget: 2004 Budget: \$4.4 million

Development: City funding accounts for approximately 45 percent of MAP's activities. The rest is provided by nonprofit organizations (26 percent), foundations (23 percent) corporations and individuals who support MAP either through a nonprofit financial intermediary (Greater Philadelphia Urban Affairs Coalition) or the Mural Arts Advocates. Both are 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporations. For 2005, MAP lists over 100 funders and nonprofit and public agencies organizations as supporters.

Governance

MAP is a city agency operating under the auspices of the City of Philadelphia's Managing Director's Office. As more funding has become available from nonpublic sources, MAP has increased its reliance on the organization's nonprofit arm, the Mural Arts Advocates. Given this, the Advocates' board of directors has taken a larger role in the governance of the organization. This public/private partnership allows the organization to take advantage of both the City's resources and reach and the adaptability and flexibility of the nonprofit. Jane Golden sees this unique arrangement as one of the keys to MAP's success. She feels strongly that "relying solely on either private or public funds is not a good idea; building (funding) partnerships is."

Partnerships

Golden feels strongly about partnership as a foundation of MAP's development and ongoing work. She feels that MAP's status as a city agency makes collaboration and inclusion intrinsic to the work. She says, "Mural making is collaborative. Wherever we go — in the neighborhoods, with funders and the city departments — we cannot work separately. It would be impossible to do our work." Golden also knows that partnerships can be complicated but feels if you keep your eye on the big picture (no pun intended), then collaboration enriches the work.

Over the last two years, MAP has forged a new partnership with the city's Department of Human Services. With the support of Mayor John Street and the Department's leadership they have initiated new programs for adjudicated youth and prisoners. Golden sees these arts-based partnerships as enhancing MAP's ability to respond critical issues facing the communities they work with. She envisions their relationship with the city's youth-service agencies as allowing MAP to work as a part of a continuum of care rather than an isolated experience "There is so much we can do together that we can't do alone. When you partner with people and agencies with community-development expertise you are really starting to address the problems that plague cities."

Training

MAP conducts staff meetings that are used for debriefing the mural and education processes. These meetings help the organization document and learn from its ongoing projects. For programs that focus on a specific population, such as adjudicated youth, MAP sometimes brings in qualified experts to advise artists and staff. As programs with the Department of Human Services evolve, Golden says she would like to take more advantage of some outside expertise for the continuing professional development of MAP staff.

Constraints

MAP identifies two consistent barriers or limitations to the program's development. The first is working within the city bureaucracy. Golden says, "Early on we were continually reminded that we were a small art component of a much larger enterprise. We were in a constant struggle to stay alive and garner needed resources." She indicates that from 1996 to the present, the city has provided increasing levels of support for MAP. While this support has been essential to MAP's success, it has also carried a price, which Golden describes as a kind of a culture clash. "The public sector is not used to being constantly challenged by a creative, entrepreneurial entity in its midst."

The other constraining factor has been maintaining a consistent and stable funding stream. Golden describes the funding pie in Philadelphia as "very small." Given that MAP's nonprofit board has not taken on a significant development role, much of that work has fallen to Golden. "The perception is that we get a lot of funding from the city so [funders] think they don't need to support us the way they do other arts programs in the city and they are often changing their minds about what is important." She says, "You need to steel yourself for that ride, but something always happens to turn it around. And it is usually the work itself that provides the impetus for new ideas and resources."

Advice to Funders

Jane Golden says the complexity and volatility that is inherent to community mural making requires a particularly stable resource base.

Part of the reason that we are here today is because of the investments that have been made in our risky early years. We needed venture capital and some gave it to us. Funder loyalty is critical to this work. The most important part of community development is dependability, predictability and stability. Good ideas, creativity and high standards cannot be delivered in a climate of upheaval. The program officers need to be in the field more and figure out a way to assess really good programs and then make long-term commitments to them. We are always jumping through the new hoops. Shifting funding criteria has pushed many organizations away from their core missions. Excellence needs to be rewarded so that communities know good work pays off.

Northern Lakes Center for the Arts



Don Hansen (r.) as Ezra Williams in "The Neighbors" by Zona Gale. Photo courtesy Northern Lakes Center for the Arts

Basic Facts

Location:	Northern Lakes Center for the Arts 113 Elm St. Amery, Wisconsin 54001
Connect:	P: 715-268-6811 E: lammacl@amerytel.net W: www.northernlakescenter.org
Start Date:	1989
Contact:	LaMoine MacLaughlin, executive director
Sites:	Single site in the center of town, some educational activities within local public schools
Artistic Discipline(s):	Multidisciplinary
Constituents:	Citizens of Amery, Wisconsin
Personnel:	LaMoine MacLaughlin, executive director Mary Ellen MacLaughlin, associate director Don Hansen, special projects coordinator Jerry Johnson, arts instructor (music) Juliana Schmidt, arts instructor (music)

Snapshot

Water is a critical life force for the small community of Amery, Wisconsin, located 75 miles northeast of Minneapolis-St. Paul. The Water Project, a project of the Northern Lakes Center for the Arts (NLCA), was a multidisciplinary exploration into the issue of water — its use and abuse. Between November 2000 and December 2001, people working in different art forms presented creative strategies for discussing perspectives on water: a reading and publication of new writings inspired by water; an adaptation of Ibsen’s “An Enemy of the People” to present-day Amery; a chamber orchestra concert featuring water-related classical repertoire juxtaposed with newly commissioned work; the creation of Amery’s first three-dimensional piece of public art; and an exhibition of photography chronicling life along Amery’s Apple River.

This project illuminated the vital role that a local arts agency can play in catalyzing and linking public interest and discourse around a key civic issue in a small community. It examined the training and use of community members as facilitators for dialogue, particularly highlighting the vital role that young people can play; the potential to employ both classic and new work as a stimulus for dialogue; the tailoring of dialogue techniques to the art presented, as well as its anticipated participants; and the effectiveness of joining forces with other partners to build understanding and awareness around an issue. It underscored the difficult balancing act in arts-based civic dialogue that involves fostering authentic dialogue while retaining artistic quality and value so that each has validity and purpose. Throughout the evolution and implementation of this project, NLCA showed how flexibility, openness to opportunities, and a willingness to combine existing and potential resources lead to strengthened artistic activity, broadened public interest and involvement, and increased capacity within the community for meaningful dialogue.

—Cheryl Yuen, “The Water Project,” 2004²¹

Description

History

Wisconsin has a long history of arts development at the local level. At the very beginning of the 20th century, Progressive Party Governor Robert LaFollette and University of Wisconsin President Charles Van Hise developed “The Wisconsin Idea,” which carried forward the concept that all of the elements of state government, including the University of Wisconsin, belong to all of the residents of the state. The implication was that rather than requiring all resi-

dents to avail themselves of services centered in the State Capitol in Madison, it was the responsibility of state government and the university to go out into the state to where the people lived. And this concept was practiced in reality. Thomas Dickinson started community theaters in Madison and Milwaukee. Franz Rickaby and Helene Stratmann-Thomas traveled to rural corners of the state gathering Wisconsin folk music. John Steuart Curry, the first artist-in-residence of any major university, helped rural residents develop their drawing and painting talents as part of the Wisconsin Rural Artists Program. From the 1940s to the 1970s, it was impossible to turn on Wisconsin Public Radio (incidentally the oldest public radio station in the nation) without hearing "...this has been a production of the Wisconsin Idea Theater, Robert Gard, Director." Robert Gard and his staff traveled to every corner of Wisconsin teaching writing and theater as part of various programs, including the Wisconsin Rural Writers Program.

To be quite honest, when we developed the Northern Lakes Center for the Arts, we did not do so to intentionally follow in the footsteps of those who had gone before us, but we had grown up with Wisconsin Public Radio and the Wisconsin Idea Theater and all of that was part of an inbred culture that was directed at developing the creative talents and the artistic imagination of local residents. When we started working, the commitment to growing the abilities of local people seemed only appropriate and logical.

—LaMoine MacLaughlin, 2005²²

Mission/Values

Mission: Northern Lakes Center for the Arts was established in 1989 as a comprehensive cultural center organized and designed to provide local residents with the opportunity to develop and share their creative talents and abilities with one another and with the general public.

Values:

- The arts represent our society's highest form of cultural and spiritual expression.
- The authentic experience of the arts involves active participation, not passive observation from a distance. Art is first of all a process rather than a product: Art is Action.
- Everyone possesses inherent creativity and imagination which can be further developed.
- Involvement in the arts not only enriches the lives of individuals; it ennobles and raises the spirit of the entire community as well.

Success and Change

Goals (2004/2005)

- To implement the Regular Season and Summer Season Activities Schedule (Concert Series, Drama Series, Writers' Forums, etc.)
- To continue operation of a community school of the arts
 - Continue school for the arts enrollment of at least 100 students
 - Continue scholarship program
- To implement a regranting program providing financial assistance to local arts organization
- To continue special project involvement
 - Continue development of local endowment
 - Continue public school long term art/literature residency
 - Investigate/develop Palestinian exchange project
 - Continue Clayton newspaper publication
- To continue necessary Center facility remodeling
 - Continue/finish pipe-organ refurbishing
 - Perform Center facility minor repairs

Defining Success

We haven't redefined success so much as we have seen our original expectations reinforced: that local residents, if given positive support and room and time to grow, can produce beautiful music and wonderful theater and amazing dance and fantastic visual artwork and moving writing.

If significant and sustained positive impact, defined as change leading to the long term advancement of human dignity, health and/or productivity, means moving the community from where it is to somewhere else, then change has not been a specific intention of our work. We have always believed that Amery is a real, bona-fide community by any standard or definition and has inherently, almost by definition, advanced the human dignity, health and productivity of its local citizens. You don't have to lock your doors (either of your house or of your automobile). The most common crime involves writing bad checks or minor shoplifting. This doesn't mean that everyone likes everybody, but in very real ways we are all interdependent upon one another and respect one another.

—LaMoine Maclaughlin,
written response to MEC questionnaire, January 2005

Critical to Success

The Center's programming has been guided by the needs and interests of the community it serves. The staff members feel their approach has been validated by the community's support of and involvement in their activities. A further indication of the success of this way working has been the Center's increasing integration into the community's cultural and social life. "When we began," MacLaughlin observes, "I was impressed by the fact that a local softball team had two families with three generations of players on the same team. We haven't had three generations performing at the same time in our theater activities or in our chamber orchestra – yet – but we have had two generations frequently, and we will get there some day."

Outcomes

At the most basic level, the Center's supporters see their survival as the most critical outcome measure. Beyond that, MacLaughlin, once again defers to the wisdom of the community as an accurate measure of their effectiveness:

Having lived my life in rural areas, I have learned that rural residents are pretty no-nonsense when it comes to evaluating the worth of a local organization or activity: If they consider it worthwhile, they will support it; if not, they have other things to do. Beyond that, our students perform very well in arts competitions and we have had young people go on to pursue careers in the arts. Local residents have a great amount of respect for real, honest achievement.

The Center has a strong penchant for participation and active learning, so full houses are not necessarily considered threshold achievements. MacLaughlin quotes Baker Brownell to elaborate on the concept that "art is action":

The passive, voyeuristic audience sitting in plush seats has nothing to do with what the arts are all about. Make no mistake about it – the one experiencing the art during any concert or performance is the artist – the audience is merely watching. The artist is having all the fun experiencing the creative delight; what the audience experiences vicariously is second best – once removed.

In contrast, MacLaughlin wants "everyone to experience first-hand what the artist does."

When asked which of the program's characteristics have most contributed to the program's significant and sustained positive community impact, MacLaughlin points to

their persistence as key. "It's not so much a program as our having hung in there and stayed the distance for these past 15 years. Local residents know that we will be there when they need us and are ready for what the Center offers."

MacLaughlin describes the Center's evaluation efforts as "pretty unsophisticated." The board of directors' annual review process is designed to identify the specific community's needs and articulate how the Center will respond to them over the coming year. The Center pays close attention to two indicators that tell them whether they are moving in the right direction.

- From the very beginning the organization has never operated in the red. This means that the community has financially supported the organization.
- People continue to enroll in the Center's school of the arts and to be involved in and to attend its concerts, performances and exhibits.

Nuts and Bolts

Environment

Amery, Wisconsin, is a small, rural town of 2,863 situated 57 miles from the Minneapolis-St. Paul Metropolitan area. Its downtown lies on an isthmus between the Apple River and Pike, North Twin and South Twin Lakes; Bear Trap and Wapogasset Lakes are nearby. The median age of Amery residents is just shy of 45 years old. In 2000, the average household income was \$31,000 and the average house sold for around \$93,000. Ninety-seven of every 100 residents in the town are white, with the majority tracing their ancestry to Scandinavia and Germany. The rest are either Hispanic or Native American. The 2000 census indicates that practically all the adults in town have at least a high-school diploma, with 20 percent completing college. Depending on the time of the year, unemployment fluctuates between 1 and 1-1/2 percent. Violent crime has an equally low profile. In wintertime, temperatures in Amery can dip significantly below zero, with an average in the teens. Summers are mild and sometimes humid. "Spring and Autumn are spectacular!"

Leadership

Says MacLaughlin, "We have always believed in the innate creativity and imagination latent within every individual and all of our programs have been developed with that belief in mind."

Resources

The Center's 2004 budget was \$100,000. Over the organization's 15-year history it has grown slowly, but steadily from \$40,000 in 1986 to its current level.

Northern Lakes is supported primarily by earned income (70-75 percent: arts-school tuition, ticket sales, facility rental, etc.) with supplemental contributed income (25-30 percent: public funding [Wisconsin Arts Board, Wisconsin Humanities Council, etc.], corporate and foundation funding, Amery Area United Way and individual donations). They also have a small endowment (\$55,000+), which helps support scholarships for needy students to attend the Northern Lakes School of the Arts.

As the budget has grown, the spread of funding sources has remained fairly consistent. MacLaughlin notes that "rural organizations do not typically have significant sources of contributed income available and so have had to survive on earned income, which is usually more stable." He points to this as a critical element of their success with the community. "Our ability to survive and grow has been dependent upon and in response to meeting needs within our community. We have never been perceived as money scroungers with our hand continually in someone's pocket or continually looking for contributed financial support from local businesses."

Volunteers have also played a big role in the organization's ability to sustain itself. Volunteers are active in everything from performing, to fundraising, to providing refreshments following concerts, to cleaning the facility.

Governance

Northern Lakes is governed by an 11-member board of directors. The following outlines board-member responsibilities:

- *Oversight* – assuring that the organization pursues programs to meet its mission and is properly managed (that it pursues its activities with honesty and integrity and meets the letter as well as the intent of any laws and regulations relating to nonprofit organizations and funding-source expectations)
- *Involvement* – participating in the organization's activities in order to provide input and feedback for evaluating present programming and for developing the organization's future plans, goals and objectives
- *Stewardship* – providing or securing adequate financial resources to support the organization's programs
- *Advocacy* – communicating the importance of the organization's mission, objectives and programs within the local community and other appropriate places²³

Every board member must be actively involved in meeting all of these responsibilities all the time. If a board member is unwilling or unable to meet even one of these responsibilities, that board member should resign. Board membership is a gift to the organization, but it is a gift with expectations. It is a gift of focus, of commitment, of resources, and of time. If a person will not or cannot provide the organization with what is necessary to be a board member, there may be other ways of supporting the organization, but each board member must meet all of these responsibilities.²⁴

From its early beginnings, the Northern Lakes Center for the Arts was governed by an active, committed board of directors. The eleven members of the board are drawn from the various participating discipline-specific guilds. They and two staff members developed a working mission statement that still remains the functioning purpose statement of the Center's activities. MacLaughlin says that "without the Northern Lakes board of directors, the organization would have died long ago."

Partnerships

The Center has developed very strong working partnerships with the local public schools, with local government and local business organizations. They take programming into the public schools at all levels on a regular basis (monthly at least). They are also active members of the Amery Community Club (which describes itself as "more than a chamber of commerce"). MacLaughlin chairs the club's Fine Arts Committee.

Training

For the board of directors, the Center has developed a comprehensive new-board-member orientation/training program. MacLaughlin identifies the lack of training for new rural-arts leaderships as one of his major concerns. He points out that "those training programs that do exist among U.S. universities are very urban-oriented; next to nothing is available for people wishing to work in rural areas."

Constraints

According to MacLaughlin:

There really have been very few bumps. Those that have occurred have usually resulted from our own ignorance or marching backwards into the future. Our major problem has always been the out-migration of our young people to

urban areas. Amery exists geographically within the fifth ring of urban sprawl oozing from the Minneapolis/St. Paul metro area (so Amery is just off the edge). However, we know that the future will change our community and what we are doing in our work is trying to keep what is best of the present to carry it forward into the future.”

Advice to Funders

Says MacLaughlin:

Don’t continue to neglect rural areas. The most interesting activities taking place in the arts right now are happening in rural areas across the United States. Consider what Sheryl Crow said last year in an interview on “60 Minutes” (she was really speaking about commercialism as applied to the arts): “I can’t say that the (popular) music industry... is one that nurtures artistry. It doesn’t— It doesn’t create a comfort zone, it doesn’t ask you to be creative. It doesn’t ask you to be original. It asks you to fit into a format that people can make money off of.” The pseudo-artistry she describes can be applied to more than just the music industry and is centered in our urban areas. Real art is still happening, but in rural areas less focused upon copy-cat commercialism. Look at what is happening in rural areas.

Swamp Gravy



Bridley Wade and William Bullard are two of almost 100 volunteer cast members who participate in Swamp Gravy productions each October and March in Colquitt, Ga. Photo courtesy Swamp Gravy

Basic Facts

Location:	Swamp Gravy P.O. Box 567 Colquitt, Georgia 31737
Connect:	P: 912-758-5450 E: info@swampgravy.com W: http://www.swampgravy.com
Year Started:	1992
Contacts:	Joy Jinks, community volunteer, Colquitt/Miller Arts Council
Sites:	Annual performances in Colquitt and state and regional touring. Swamp Gravy Institute Training and replication sites throughout the U.S. and in Brazil
Artistic Discipline(s):	Theater, arts education, and murals
Constituents:	Colquitt community members and visitors
Personnel:	Three full-time staff, 61 cast members, 21 technical crew members (plus Boy Scout Troop #85), and 170 storytellers and story gatherers. Significant part-time staff is employed depending on production needs.

Snapshot

The first theater space was an elementary-school lunchroom, and the play performed there was little more than a revue with sketches and songs, all homemade. But it was a sell-out, prompting one local wag to comment, “People will always turn out to see their neighbors make fools of themselves.” People did turn out, but only because the performance was entertaining and touching and the stories local.

With the initial success of the play, the Swamp Gravy players were soon able to move into a 70-year-old cotton warehouse, which became a makeshift theater. The new theater had dirt floors, no heating or air conditioning, brick walls and lofted ceilings. The only sound system came from the lungs of the actors. Lighting was primitive and included washes made from the local football stadium field lights. To combat the sweltering South Georgia heat, members of the audience were given hand fans as they filed in. For many students of the theater, the cotton warehouse would hardly qualify as a proper venue for productions of any kind. Yet the actors and singers performed with gusto and the stage technicians became seriously devoted to their work, providing professional guidance on direction and lighting.

—Ed Lightsey, 2000²⁵

Description

History

In the early '90s, town leaders in Colquitt, Georgia, felt the town needed something to re-energize the community's pride and economy. Joy Jinks of the Colquitt/Miller Arts Council felt an historical pageant could provide an infusion of cultural energy, involve the county folks and attract visitors from elsewhere. In 1991, Jinks met Richard Owen Geer, then completing a doctorate in performance studies at Northwestern. Jinks related her idea and Geer got excited. Over many hours of discussion, they decided to work together to develop a play in Colquitt around the personal history of the town. They called it “Swamp Gravy.”

“Swamp Gravy” is a musical play that celebrates rural southwestern Georgia folk life. Original songs and choreography are combined with traditional music and dance in a grand-scale stage production with a cast and crew of 100. Professionally written (originally by Tennessee playwright Jo Carson), directed and designed, the play draws on folklore, tall tales and family stories for its content, culled from oral histories gathered

by a team trained by Carson. It is performed in Cotton Hall, a 60-year-old warehouse in Colquitt. It has also played in Washington, D.C., at the Kennedy Center and throughout the South.

Now in its thirteenth year, “Swamp Gravy” is what its artistic creator, Richard Owen Geer, calls “an experiment in a form of community performance — oral-history-based, large-scale, professionally produced amateur theater” that celebrates the lives and stories of the residents, black and white, of Colquitt and Miller County.

The title, “Swamp Gravy,” refers to a local recipe for a stew, a kind of improvised soup made of “whatever is at hand.” Built from the oral histories of the people of Miller County, it sports the full-length stories of a handful of people and the sayings, phrases and diction of literally hundreds of people. It blends folk remedies, ghost stories, jokes, well-known scandals and deeply held secrets. It contains births, deaths, dressing up, dressing down, mother love, family violence and a secret wedding in the woods. It’s got folk tunes, sing-alongs and the blues.

—Linda Frye Burnham, “Swappin’ Lies in Miller County:
The Story of Swamp Gravy,” Art Papers, 1994

The show runs four weekends each spring and fall and is rewritten each year. Although the theme of the play changes — in 2004, it was “Brothers and Sisters”; this fall (2005), “Love and Marriage” — the basic design of weaving together stories into a theatrical tapestry remains the same.

Mission/Values²⁶

Mission: To involve as many people in a theatrical experience that empowers individuals and bonds the community while strengthening the economy

Values:

- *Community involvement:* Swamp Gravy began in 1991 when the Colquitt/Miller Arts Council voted to sponsor the project. Since that time, over 1,000 citizens (16 percent of the county population) have been involved in some capacity. Their roles include: storyteller, story gatherer, actor, singer, seamstress, painter, carpenter, ticket seller, greeter, concession salesperson, souvenir salesperson, exhibitor, promoter, Swamp Gravy Institute consultant and more.
- *Individual Empowerment:* Swamp Gravy actors testify to the development of self-confidence in their lives. Youth cast members carry their stage presence over into the realm of classroom reporting. Two cast members have created a neighborhood

after school tutoring program for at-risk children. Another has developed and applied her creativity and initiative to help establish a Museum of Southern Culture and its outreach program of training school teachers and students in story-telling techniques. Twenty-five cast members have been trained as Swamp Gravy Institute consultants and have shared their experience of arts-based community revitalization.

- *Bonding the Community:* Swamp Gravy has united Miller County across the boundaries of age, race, class and gender, according to “Swamp Gravy Artifacts.” The ages of cast members range from eight months to 87 years, with as many as 50 percent of the cast under the age of 18. Biracial participation has characterized the cast since the beginning of the project, and an increasingly diverse audience mix has been observed. Twenty-five percent of the stories have been collected from the black community, and as high as 14 percent of the cast has been African American. All socioeconomic boundaries have been crossed, and one third of the actors are male. Because many of the cast members encounter one another daily, the Swamp Gravy esprit de corps carries over into all facets of life and work in the community. Swamp Gravy is a way in which the arts create common ground on which diverse people can work and play together.
- *Strengthening the Economy:* Over the ten years 1994-2003, Swamp Gravy sold approximately 72,000 tickets. Seventy-five percent have been out-of-town guests, which mean new dollars coming into the community. Estimating \$53 in purchases per guest (\$18 ticket, \$15 meal, \$10 gasoline, \$10 souvenirs), over \$4,000,000 has been generated in the small community during this period, an average of \$400,000 per year.

Success and Change

Goals

- Gathering and communicating community stories
- Producing a work of merit
- Community revitalization
- Improving community identity and cohesion
- Reconciling differences
- Improved student achievement
- Economic development

Defining Success

- Significant involvement of community members
- Black and white citizens working together
- Strong audience attendance
- Improved economy
- Increased tourism to city and county
- Positive reputation for community inside and out

Critical to Success

- Establishment of local arts council
- Building community involvement and ownership through oral history-based theater process
- Availability and effective use of conflict resolution, mediation resources and skills
- Financial and volunteer support of community
- Artistic and community organizing expertise from both outside and inside the community
- Effective management capable of adapting and learning on the run
- Publicity and exposure beyond the community via touring and media
- Local and outside funding
- Links to cultural tourism and economic development
- Entrepreneurial approach

The Swamp Gravy Institute, a training program designed to share the program's successful strategies and values with other communities, describes the following as indicators of success:²⁷

I. Organization

- A 501(c)(3) sponsoring organization
- A clear, focused mission statement
- By-laws broad enough to encompass many projects
- Networked with state and regional arts and cultural organizations
- Diversified financial support

II. Participation

- Script based on stories told by local residents
- Committed leadership core representative of the makeup of the community

- Broad community support from other organizations
- Participation of at least one percent of the community in the project
- A role is provided for everyone who auditions

III. Personnel

- Outside professional artistic director, playwright and designers
- 100 percent volunteer cast inclusive of age, gender and race
- Imported and/or locally created music
- A paid administrative staff person responsible to the board
- Respected local resident(s) acting as mediator/problem solver

IV. Facility: A performance facility controlled by the sponsoring organization

Outcomes

- Reconciliation of disparate sectors of the community
- An open and ongoing examination of community history
- Hundreds of performances by community members for an audience of over 150,000
- An economic influx of over \$1.5 million: Cultural tourism is now the town's largest employer and economic sector.
- Establishment of local Arts Council
- The Arts Council now owns four buildings and is developing a fifth. They are:
 - A 15,000-square-foot converted cotton warehouse containing the theater, Museum of Southern Cultures, and a community area for meetings and weddings
 - An arts-and-education building for adult education and seminars and classes offered by the alternative school and the community college
 - A Youth Program facility (for Grades 9-12) also used for the activities of the New Vision Coalition, a program for African-American children in Grades K through 8
 - A market building containing four low-income apartments and a crafts, folk art and antique mall
 - A fifth building, dubbed the New Life Learning Center, to be "designed as a training center for people on public assistance"
- The establishment of an arts-education component
- The creation of the Swamp Gravy Institute in 1997, which holds workshops on story gathering, community involvement and play-production planning and implementation for other communities interested in creating their own productions

- The Colquitt/Miller Arts Council's ownership of the Tarrer Inn, an historic bed and breakfast

Nuts and Bolts

Environment

Colquitt, Georgia, is a small, rural farm town of nearly 2,000 located in the southwest corner of the state. The nearest large cities are Tallahassee, Florida, which is about 62 miles to the south, and Montgomery, Alabama, 155 miles northeast. Aside from the fame generated by Swamp Gravy the town is known for its Mayhaw (berry) Festival and mild winters. Summertime in southern Georgia can be very hot and humid. The median age of Colquitt residents is almost 39 years old. In 2000, the average household income was \$27,000 and the average house sold for around \$75,000. Racially, the town's population is nearly evenly split between black and white. The 2000 census indicates that 70 percent of the adults in town have at least a high-school diploma, with about seven percent completing college. The unemployment rate for the area is about half the national average, while the crime rate is about the same as the U.S. average.

Leadership

In the early days of the program, Joy Jinks, a community activist and philanthropist, was strongly influenced by the community-engagement strategies promoted by the Institute of Cultural Affairs, of which former Organizational Director Bill Grow is a staff member. The Institute describes itself promoting "positive change in communities, organizations and individual lives in the U.S. and around the world by helping people find their own solutions to problems and the means to implement those solutions."²⁸

Grow says that many of the ICA's values and community-building strategies informed the work of Swamp Gravy's collaborators. They include:

- Crediting others for accomplishments
- Not being concerned with compensation and/or advancement
- Constantly learning
- Never opening your mouth if you are not about to change history.
- Always working from the back of the room (including everyone in the conversation)
- Always working to support and build trust
- Focusing on work that is history-long and worldwide
- Acknowledging that you are never a leader alone

Resources

The current budget (2005) of the Colquitt/Miller Arts Council, with all of the Swamp Gravy-related projects is \$900,000.

On top of this there is a separate capital fund that over the last ten years has supported a variety of renovation and building projects. These include the renovation of several downtown structures and that had a tremendous impact on the local economy. Over \$700,000 has been spent on renovation of Cotton Hall, and the Museum of Southern Culture. Reconstruction of the Arts and Education Center, which houses the Arts Council and several public education programs, cost \$489,000. An additional \$200,000 enabled the conversion of another dilapidated building into the Children's Theater. Another million dollars in renovations provided facilities for the Market Building. The Tarrer Inn was renovated in 1994 at a cost of \$2 million and donated to the Arts Council. The majority of the construction money remains in the community as local contractors use all local carpenters and local vendors as much as possible.

Early support came from individuals and organizations from the community. Bill Grow says that "one of the smart things that Joy Jinks did was to hold back support to allow capacity to grow in the community." He says that people responded with yard sales, fish fries and the like. The Georgia Humanities Council's early support provided funds to bring Richard Geer and Jo Carson to Colquitt to train people in story gathering. Also, as needs increased and more and more, people volunteered. After Karen Kimble became the organization's first executive director, she became the principal fundraiser for the project. Eventually, Joy Jinks and others in the community provided some of the needed funding, as has the Georgia State Arts Council and some national funders.

Governance

The Swamp Gravy board of directors is also the board of the Colquitt/Miller Arts Council. The members come from the community. Early on it was seen as important to keep both together so that the one did not overpower the other.

Partnerships

The project began as a community partnership. One of the earliest organizational partners was the Colquitt Fire Department. Bill Grow says that early on "The fire department contributed more than any other organization in the community with space for rehearsal and bathroom. They saw themselves as guardians of the project." Other important early partners included the Georgia Humanities Council and the Georgia

Council for the Arts. This support manifested, in part, because Swamp Gravy was regarded by politicians as a community-development success. Many of the state's legislators have come to know the benefits of cultural investment through their interaction with Swamp Gravy. As the program has expanded, partnerships have also been forged with local school districts and state and regional tourism agencies.

Training

As the program grew, the Swamp Gravy Institute was created to share Swamp Gravy practices with other communities. Locals have also benefited from involvement in various Swamp Gravy workshops and seminars and mentorships. Richard Geer, the project's first artistic director, has continued to provide participants with professional quality training acting, directing and theater technology.

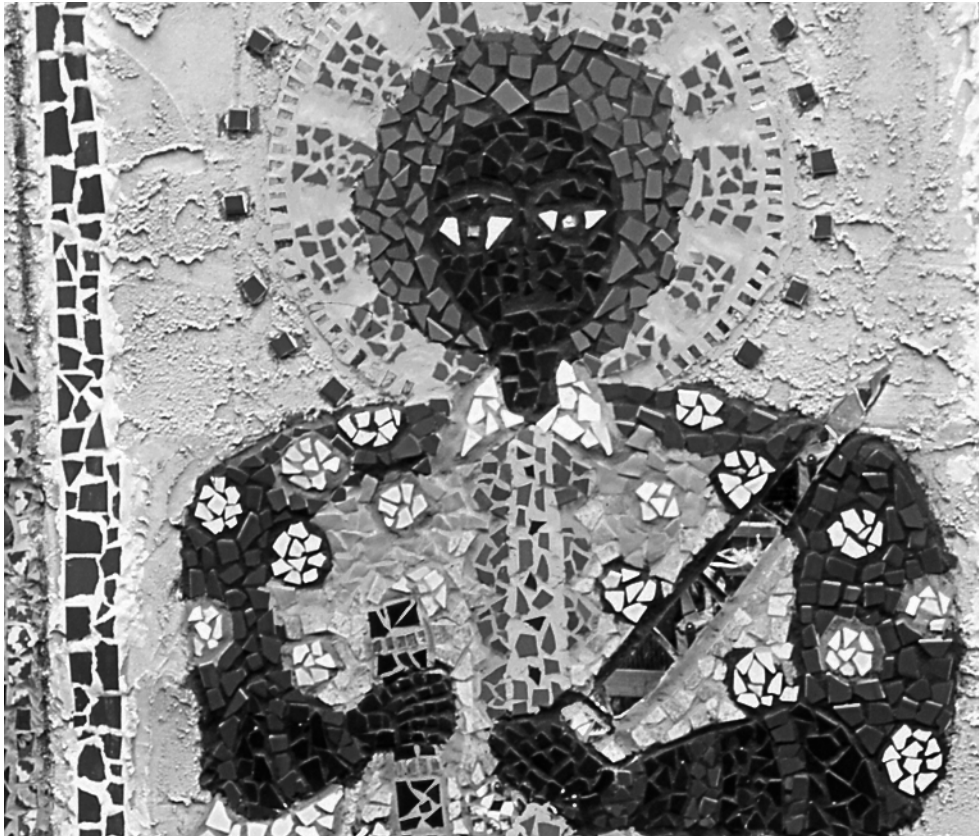
Constraints

Humanities scholars and artists, including theater director Geer and playwright Carson, trained citizens in techniques of oral-history interviewing and transcribing. Stories of local residents were integrated into the final play. These elements reflect the play's authority and express its local knowledge. At times, Geer's outsider aesthetics clashed with the community's. He found he had to set aside his individual artistic preferences and become more sensitive to the signals of the actors. The intimate process of community members who do not usually interact with each other rehearsing and performing together in the safe environment created by the arts council contributed to dialogue in this small town. As a cumulative effect, Miller County's pride has deepened. The project has now been replicated in other communities with projects presently underway in five states.²⁹ Annual "community performances" are being held in Freeport, Fla.; Winona, Miss.; Union, S.C.; Chicago, Ill. and Newport News, Va. Startups are underway in McKeesport, Pa., and Elkhorn City, Ky. While successful, these efforts also stretch the program's capacity.

Advice to Funders

From Bill Grow: "We have a productive enterprise, we have partners, we have a plan, we have in-kind resources, so we would like you to apply to us to be considered as an investor. Criteria include: Minimum bureaucracy, no political strings, history of funding community-based, community-owned projects. In essence, I think the leadership in the field needs to turn the tables on funders by asserting their expertise."

Village of Arts and Humanities



Detail of Village of Arts and Humanities mural project. Photo courtesy Village of Arts and Humanities

Basic Facts

Location:	The Village of Arts and Humanities 2544 Germantown Ave. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19133
Connect:	P: 215-225-7830 F: 215-225-4339 E: village@villagearts.org W: http://www.villagearts.org
Year Started:	1986
Program Type:	Arts training, arts education, community development
Contacts:	Kumani Gantt, executive director
Sites:	Main facility and multiple community sites throughout the Philadelphia area, international partnerships in Kenya, Republic of Georgia, Ecuador, China and Italy
Artistic Discipline(s):	Multidisciplinary arts and humanities
Constituents:	Community members: youth, ages 5-15, and adults
Personnel:	13 full-time staff, contracted resident artists, volunteers and interns

Snapshot

I've known this stretch of Alder Street in North Philadelphia for many years, here where it branches off of Germantown Avenue with a little dogleg that wraps around the original building of the Village of Arts and Humanities. This is now the Education Building, which will be filled with neighborhood kids taking Lone Nash's African dance class this afternoon; the building adorned with a three-story mural inspired by Egyptian and even more ancient African art; the building that faces the first community sculpture garden, from which many others have come. Alder Street today functions much as it has for years. It is a busy walkway, too narrow for cars, host to all-day chess games, jazz pumped out of Saladin Williams' window (where he's hung an oversized portrait of Elijah Mohammad), and a crew of local guys putting up a cinder-block front on a house that Lily Yeh tells me will soon be home to a crafts industry.

That crew, those plans, that's the difference, and that's what sets the Village of Arts and Humanities apart from most community arts programs. The people living on Alder and the immediate streets nearby are, for the most part, the same ones who've been here for decades. They are creative, community-minded people held back by the urban dogs of substandard housing, drug use, lack of vocational training and political disenfranchisement. Yet they are changing their lives by working with a group of artists whose vision extends beyond the artwork, and even beyond the artistic process, to encompass the complex fabric of community. Folks need to express themselves, but that alone is not enough. The brilliance of the Village of the Arts and Humanities is its ability and willingness to seek the resources to provide jobs, to teach and counsel, to provide housing and good food, and, in doing so, to connect people one to another.

—Gil Ott³⁰

Description

History

The Village of Arts and Humanities is a community-based arts, education and neighborhood development organization, located in inner-city North Philadelphia. The program began on a single abandoned block in Philadelphia where youth and adults worked together to turn a garbage-strewn vacant lot into a park that incorporated art and greenery. As the program grew, members renovated an abandoned three-story warehouse next to the park for use as its main facility.

Responding to a lack of activities for youth, the Village added after-school arts and education programs in this new facility. Programs and activities continued to expand to address community needs, growing to include theater productions, festivals, economic-development initiatives, community health programs, publications, outreach activities, community meetings and housing construction.

A 2005 planning document titled “Who Are We/Who Do We Want Become” describes the Village as both a place and a way of life.

The Village of Arts and Humanities exists in a place that Arthur Hall named the Ile Ife Cultural Arts Center. Ile Ife Park was the first park that Lily Yeh, the Village’s founder created and in the Yoruba (Nigeria) cosmology (which in the African Diaspora became Santeria, Condomble and good old-fashioned southern Hoodoo), Ile Ife is the birthplace of humanity. Very much like the image of the phoenix that envelops the mural in Ile Ife Park, the Village of Arts and Humanities is in the midst of a rebirth that will enable it to rise from the ashes, and to soar again – stronger, wiser, and once again prosperous.

We are a unique, innovative multifaceted arts organization, world renown for our methodology in community building through the arts and our pursuit of artistic excellence. We are deeply grounded in the artistic, cultural and political heritage and struggle of the African American community in which we reside, while also fostering a new multiculturalism that embraces the gifts and challenges all cultures and people face.³¹

Mission/Values

The Village’s mission is *to build community through innovative arts-based programs in education, land transformation, construction and economic development*. In all of its projects and activities, the Village seeks to do justice to the humanity of people who live in inner-city North Philadelphia and similar urban situations. Founder Lily Yeh describes the Village of Arts and Humanities as “using the arts as the ‘bone structure’...building an urban community where members care for each other and are interconnected.” In all of its projects and activities, the Village seeks to respect the humanity of the people who live in inner-city North Philadelphia and similar urban situations.

Success and Change

Goals

Through arts-based programs and activities, the organization works with residents to reclaim abandoned space and rebuild a sense of hope and possibility in their neighborhoods. Critical areas of program focus include:

- The stimulation of economic development
- Improved health and healthcare
- Improved education

Defining Success

Devon, age 6, and Jacinta, age 8, decorate washcloths and aprons with poetic chants that teach them and their families about preventing lead poisoning. Life-size puppets parade around a group of seniors discussing cancer screening in a program called Conquering Cancer Creatively.

—Gil Ott³²

- *Health Issues:* The Village studies barriers to good health in the community and works with Temple University's School of Nursing and the Philadelphia Department of Public Health to provide art-based workshops to children and adults. Puppet shows, photography exhibits and hands-on activities such as painting, silk-screening and rap and drill teams have become effective ways to teach people about nutrition, exercise, HIV/AIDS, heart disease, breast cancer and diabetes. A community advisory working group, "teach the teacher" workshops and numerous outreach activities with local organizations, residents and health providers further expand the reach of the Village's Hands-on-Health Program.
- *Education:* Responding to the needs of children and teens in North Philadelphia for safe, positive, challenging activities, the Village has developed a multifaceted, hands-on educational program to engage and nurture youth, to increase their connections to positive peer and adult role models, and to build their skills, confidence and sense of their own growing potential.
- *The Learning through the Arts program includes four interconnected parts:* Core Leadership, Open Workshops, Outreach and Youth Theater. Through this multi-tiered approach, the Village provides several levels of involvement — from one-time workshops to a five-day-a-week commitment — allowing young people ages 13 to 18 to take part in the Village in the way that suits them best. In 2000, more

than 2,500 youth participated in Learning through the Arts.

- *Economic Development:* The Village has launched a variety of income-producing activities that develop the economic capacity of both community members and the organization. Through its programs and projects, the Village is able to provide numerous training and employment opportunities in arts and trades-related fields to local teens and adults. For example, Jamile, age 13, and Erin, age 14, were eager participants during the creation of the Village Eagle Youth Park. Jamile learned about tile making and Erin practiced his building skills as they worked alongside the Village construction crew and the Philadelphia Eagles football team to construct the park.

Critical to Success

The Village uses art as its inspiration and foundation. Art, in this context, means creativity in thinking, methodology and implementation, as well as the visual and performing arts. Children create images, sculpture and poetry that become crafts, murals and performances. Teens express themselves through dance and theater that they perform throughout the country. Adults build sculpture parks, plant vegetable gardens and organize community health events. In 2000, over 400 volunteers and interns contributed more than 10,000 hours of their time working with Village staff and community to revitalize the physical surroundings and support the artistic and education programs.

Art at the Village also leads emblematically. As it has tried to address the food, housing and even social needs described by its residents, the project has necessarily expanded geographically. Yeh located services and accessed utilities for squatters in the area. She has acquired title to abandoned houses for renovation and vacant lots for community gardens and more beautiful, tiled parks. As a result, the Village enjoys a substantial amount of locally controlled public space, something rare in a city of private and police-patrolled malls and parks. These pocket parks are also strategic; they are cast out to the geographic and psychic peripheries of the Village, an artistic signal to the neighbors that its borders are expanding. Yeh says, “Living art includes ritual. This is missing in modern life. Art draws people in, then they become involved to better their lives and the community.”

—Gil Ott³³

Outcomes

The program's evaluation efforts have focused on the collection of documentary material such as news accounts, photos and videos of the various projects. The critical mass of projects provides a striking physical testimony to the efficacy of the work. Dozens of blocks of blighted abandoned property have been reclaimed as beautifying park and recreational space. The organization considers the high level of community participation and ownership of Village initiatives to be the most significant indicator of success. Specific program outcomes include:

- Since 1986, the Village has renovated six abandoned properties and transformed more than 150 parcels of vacant land into parks, gardens, green spaces and a tree farm.
- The Village has also worked with tens of thousands of people to teach them how to renovate abandoned properties, rebuild the environment, conduct experiential training, create jobs and create festivals, theater, exhibitions and publications.
- The program offers a wide range of after-school and summer arts classes for youth, including modern, jazz, African and Caribbean dance; theater; painting and drawing; ceramics and photography; African-American history and world culture; and an after-school tutorial program.
- Village partnerships and consulting services now span the globe from the United States to Italy, Kenya, the Ivory Coast, the Republic of Georgia, China and beyond.

Nuts and Bolts

Environment

The specific geographic area the Village serves is approximately one square mile. It is bordered by Broad Street on the west, by Allegheny Avenue on the north, by 5th Street on the east and by Diamond Street on the south. These boundaries include Census Tracts 164, 165, 166, 174 and 175. According to Year 2000 U.S. Census data, nearly 19,000 residents live in the target area. The median age of the population is 30 years. Nearly 60 percent of residents are African American and the remaining 40 percent of the population consists largely of Puerto Rican and immigrant Latin American families. Nearly 47 percent of residents rate their health as fair to poor – compared to only 25 percent of all Philadelphians ranking themselves in the same category. The median household income is about \$14,500 and 64 percent of children in the area live in female-headed households. Among households with children, 86 percent fall below the

poverty line. Twenty-two percent of local housing units are currently vacant. About 25 percent of the population is officially categorized as unemployed – compared to only 7.6 percent of Philadelphia’s total population. Only one-third of adults over the age of 25 hold a high-school diploma and less than 10 percent have a post-secondary degree.

Leadership

In “Who Are We/Who Do We Want Become,” the Village planners talked about leadership this way:

We understand that each of us is a product of a system that often does not support the simultaneous, but often paradoxical understanding of cultural similarities and differences. In our work we know that ALL people suffer because of their existence within a system that does not promote the prosperity and creativity of every person extant upon the planet, and therefore strive to make our work accessible to all, while paying close attention to the residents within our Shared Prosperity corridor.

While much of the Village’s work is with people who have been labeled as at-risk, underprivileged, impoverished, undereducated, and stressed, we also understand, ... that all of the work that we create through our artistic, environmental and community building programs are water drawn from the well of the people. The teacher, the sensei, the instructor, the baba are therefore engaged in as much learning as the student. Rather than offering people what they do not know, the Village fosters the inherent creativity present within every human being. In the end, we ardently work, through continuous staff, board and community dialogues and trainings to dismantle racism, privilege and oppression, and understand how this unholy trilogy works to destroy communities and our ability to work together as a collective human family.

The Village endeavors to create programs that support people of all backgrounds regardless of race, culture, religion, education, socioeconomic background, gender, sexual orientation, age, or ableism. Much like the wounded shaman who is capable of making journeys to the underworld because their spirit was once disconnected, we are engaged in work that transmutes negative energy into positive expression, with the goal of promoting a more just and sane world. We advocate dialogue, rather than monologue in our artistic expression, and continually engage our program participants and the residents of our community in the evaluation and improvement of our programs.³⁴

Resources

Finance: Current annual budget (2005) is \$1,313,054. The Village's organizational budget has grown significantly over the past several years, from \$465,250 in fiscal year 1997. Percentage increase per year: 43 percent from 1997 to 1998, 15 percent from 1998 to 1999, 37 percent from 1999 to 2000, 21 percent from 2000 to 2001, 2 percent from 2001 to 2002.

Development: Fiscal year 2001 (Sept. 2000 - August 2001) funding breakdown: foundations 72 percent, corporate grants nine percent, government 11 percent, individuals three percent, program income five percent.

Governance

Board of Directors

- The board consists of 25-30 members maintaining a mix of 51 percent community participation.
- The board is actively engaged in fundraising and through direct means and assistance by FY 2008 plans to raise 35 percent of the annual operating budget.
- The Village holds training sessions on existing programs for new and current trustees.
- The Board is engaged in ongoing board training and development with other organizations.
- Board responsibilities are clearly delineated and a board handbook is created and distributed.
- The board is engaged in ongoing diversity and antiracism training.

Partnerships

In the immediate neighborhood:

John F. Hartranft Community School
Fairhill Community Center
Philadelphia Parent Child Center
Neighborhood Action Bureau
Salvation Army
Acme Wire Products
Narcotics Anonymous Groups
Germantown Business Association

In North Philadelphia (selected list):

- Taller Puertorriqueño
- Norris Square Neighborhood
- Stetson Middle School
- Elverson Middle School
- McKinley Elementary School
- The Church of the Advocate
- Project HOME
- All in the Family Group Association
- Asociacion de Puertorriqueños en Marcha
- Daniel Boone School

Philadelphia and surrounding region:

- AmeriCorps
- Clay Studio Painted Bride Art Center
- Philadelphia HeadStart
- Temple Health Connection
- Salvation Army
- WHYY TV12
- Philadelphia Green of the Pa. Horticultural Society
- St. Gabriel's Hall
- Philadelphia Museum of Art
- Philadelphia Department of Public Health
- Philadelphia Health Management Corporation
- Philadelphia Public Housing Authority

Colleges and universities:

- Moore College of Art
- Cabrini College
- Temple Schools of Health, Social Work, and Nursing
- Bryn Mawr College
- Haverford College
- Swarthmore College
- University of Pennsylvania
- University of the Arts

Training

Each project incorporates project or task-specific training. Many of the various initiatives that have been undertaken by artists and community members have included a

significant degree of “on the job” training. When she was the directing the program, Lily Yeh described herself as an expert learner.

Constraints

Some of the projects initiated by the Village have not been completed or have not fulfilled their goals. These “unsuccessful” efforts were seen by Yeh as “the price of doing business in a community that has struggled for its survival for decades.” She described the pattern of her work as “three steps forward and two steps back.” The organization’s planning and program design anticipates the multiple obstacles and challenges that are inherent to grassroots community-development work. She felt that the strength of the organization is that it has learned from and incorporated the lessons garnered from these so-called “mistakes.”

Other constraints comprise the typical list of challenges faced by poor and developing communities. These include:

- A lack of access to funding for basic community infrastructure
- A lack of access and influence with local government
- A transient population
- High incidence of crime
- Poor schools
- A lack of accessible green space

Advice to Funders

- Make community ownership and participation a key criterion for support for community-based efforts.
- Provide long-term funding (three to five years) that allows recipients the flexibility to change course based on wisdom and experience garnered over time.
- When funds are limited, spread support out over time.
- Don’t penalize grantees for being honest about their difficulties and mistakes so that we can all learn from them.

Wing Luke Asian Museum



Current Wing Luke Asian Museum building in Seattle's International District. Photo by Tom Borrup

Basics

Location:	Wing Luke Asian Museum 407 Seventh Avenue South Seattle, Washington 98104
Connect:	P: 206.623.5124 E: folks@wingluke.org W: http://www.wingluke.org/
Start Date:	1986
Contact:	Ron Chew, executive director
Sites:	Seventh Street site, plus a new museum site being developed at 8th St. and King St.
Artistic Discipline(s):	Multidisciplinary, humanities
Constituents:	Seattle Asian community, Seattle community at large
Personnel:	21 full-time staff, 75 volunteers

Snapshot

One Song Many Voices: Our centerpiece exhibition depicts the 200-year story of the immigration and settlement of Asians and Pacific Islanders in Washington State, from the first Hawaiian settlers to more recent refugees from Southeast Asia. The exhibition includes ten Asian-Pacific-American groups – Cambodians, Chinese, Filipinos, Japanese, Koreans, Laotians, Pacific Islanders, South Asians, Southeast Asian hill tribes and Vietnamese. The exhibition is the only one of its kind in the nation to integrate their many different experiences into a cohesive story of courage, determination and success. It features artifacts and photographs from early Asian-American businesses and community groups, including restaurants, social clubs, a barber shop, an herbal shop and a hand laundry

Camp Harmony: Visitors must walk behind barbed wire to experience Camp Harmony D-4-44. This exhibition features a replica of a portion of the assembly center in Puyallup, Washington, where thousands of Seattle’s American-born Japanese were incarcerated without justification during World War II. The installation incorporates sound dramatizations of the desperate hours before families were forced to abandon their homes.

Asian & Pacific Islander Adoptees: A Journey Through Identity: While many adoption trends are tied to specific historic events, such as war and poverty, Americans adopting children from Asia has grown in demand. As thousands of children and babies enter into the United States each year from Asia, many prospective parents face challenges in raising a child of another ethnicity from their own, as well as the general questions of identity adoptees acquire through adolescence. The adoption experience is complex and very personal. This exhibition captures the brave journey adoptees make in pursuit of self-identity. This intimate exhibition is a unique melding of history, personal testimony, culture and art from adoptees, adoptive parents, family members and those involved in the adoption process.

—Excerpts from Wing Luke exhibition catalogues

Description

History

The Wing Luke Asian Museum was named in honor of Wing Luke, a Chinese-American immigrant elected to the Seattle City Council in 1962. Luke, a charismatic and visionary

political leader who fought for open housing, historic preservation and cultural pluralism, was the first Asian-American elected official in the Pacific Northwest.

In 1987, the Museum completed its first capital campaign, raising nearly \$350,000 to renovate the upper floor of an old auto garage into a museum with climate control, storage facilities for collections, and five times as much exhibit space as the previous site. Meanwhile, the Northwest Asian American Theatre, an Asian-American community theater company established by student activists in 1974, converted the basement into a modest performing/theater space.

Shortly after Ron Chew was brought on as executive director in 1991, the museum initiated an experimental exhibit project that would become the model, in spirit, for the dozens of exhibits that followed it. It became the signature project for a museum looking for new methods of community engagement. This display, "Executive Order 9066: 50 Years Before and 50 Years After," opened on February 19, 1992, the 50-year anniversary of the infamous federal order that forced 110,000 Japanese Americans to forsake their homes for desolate concentration camps.

In the 13 years since Chew assumed leadership, the museum has matured and grown in size, as the institution has shifted its resources and focus to community-based projects. The museum has expanded from three staff members, 20 regular volunteers and a budget of \$130,000 in 1991 to 17 full-time staff, four part-time staff, 75 regular volunteers and a budget of \$850,000 in 2005. Over time, the museum has been transformed from a tiny organization, similar in scale to many volunteer historical societies, into a cutting-edge cultural institution that leads the nation in effectively linking cultural expression to community responsibility.

This has set the stage for a capital campaign to develop a much larger museum facility in the Chinatown-International District in the next several years. In 2005, within its 7,200 square feet, the museum houses a collections area, a small library/resource center, a classroom, several permanent and changing exhibits, and staff offices. In the past several years, as the institution has grown, the museum has acquired additional off-site office and storage space. The museum is now engaged in site selection, fundraising feasibility and long-range program planning. "We have been described as a family with five children living in a one-bed room apartment," said Beth Takekawa, a museum associate director who helped engineer a successful organizational development plan in 1998 that included realignment of board and staff roles. "We are readying the organization to upgrade our substandard quarters to provide community gathering, performance and exhibition spaces adequate to house our expanding audiences and programs."

Mission/Values

Mission: To educate the public about the contributions, history and issues facing Asian-Pacific-American (APA) communities.

A number of assumptions also guide the museum's work. Executive Director Ron Chew explains how they affect the way the museum works.

There has always been an assumption that the work that we do should be guided by the community here and now. There is an assumption that the museum is a portal for reflection for the outside world rather than a fortress of knowledge that people enter. There has been an assumption that change and the development of the relationships that we need to do our work will take a long time. We are not about stuff and projects but about relationships and stories that rise up from the community. The story is more important than the stuff. The museum is more a place of dialogue than stated facts.

There is no single artistic vision that informs exhibitions and programs at the Wing Luke Asian Museum, nor is there a single logic that guides a visitor's experience.

As a multidisciplinary institution, the museum has cultivated collaborative relationships with diverse organizations and individuals in order to bring issues to the fore that are relevant to the constituents it serves. At the core of this ongoing effort is the museum's methodology of engaging community members as key decision makers in the development and realization of exhibitions and programs. While conventional planning models adopt a hierarchical managerial structure, the Wing Luke Asian Museum has consciously integrated and empowered its target audiences into the development of exhibitions and programs as well as operational functions. Individuals are actively involved in planning and decision-making as Community Advisory Committee (CAC) members. Communities of color make up a majority of both leadership and participants within the organization.

Success and Change

Goals

- To contribute to the creation of a just and tolerant world
- To make significant and lasting positive social change in the local community
- To redefine what a museum can be

- To establish the museum as a place for community dialogue
- To promote and provoke the active discussion of community issues
- When appropriate, establish the museum as an advocate with and for the community
- To establish the museums as a place for learning, reflection and insight

Defining Success

Wing Luke's definition of success is rooted in its unique approach to conceiving and creating its programs. The museum has pioneered the community-driven exhibition and program-development process. This process differs significantly from typical museum practice, which usually places curatorial authority solely in the hands of museum professionals. Chew feels the one of the museum's responsibilities is "to enter into discussions with the community about what they are interested in seeing." He points to the recent Adoptee Exhibit as an example. "We are responding to the world around us. America has seen a huge increase in foreign adoptions. This exhibit arose from the community's specific interest in exploring this issue, not as an abstract subject but because of their personal experiences."

Chew says the process is less tidy than museum-directed exhibit development.

Our process results in surprises all the time. When we engage the community in this way, we end up doing projects that are unexpected. But the content is always fresh because it so often comes from what is happening right now in the community. We are doing a project with the Sikh community that explores the parallels between that community's 9/11 experiences and Japanese internment. Other specific indicators of success identified by the museum include:

- We observe significant community participation in museum programs.
- Community members return time and time again.
- People learn and are moved through their participation in museum programs.
- People see something of themselves in our exhibits and event.
- People become members of the museum.
- People contribute artifacts and stories to our exhibits.
- The community supports the museum's new capital campaign.
- Community responsive exhibits become more widespread in museums.
- Constituents are comfortable providing both positive and negative feedback.

Critical to Success

- Developing deep relationships project by project with our community
- Assuring that the museum's work is guided by the community
- Having a unified vision among key leadership
- Having staff continuity within the organization
- Transmitting knowledge and experience within the organization, advancing the mission
- The community-response approach, which keeps the museum close to the grass roots and relevant
- Dialogue, a practice that enlivens the organization and its constituents
- The involvement of multiple generations — necessary for the work to have depth
- The recognition that community-centered projects take more work
- Hiring staff for their relationship-building skills, not just subject-matter expertise
- Creating museum programs that are relevant to today's issues and needs
- Treating diversity as an asset that strengthens the organization
- Making sure young people rise to leadership
- Investment in long-term relationships

Outcomes

- The presentation of five exhibits exploring significant community issues
- Average annual attendance of 27,000 on-site; 175,000 touring exhibits and off-site programs (FY2003-04)
- A membership base of 850 (FY2004-05)
- Gradual annual budget growth over 13 years from \$130,000 to \$1 million
- Growing and maintaining the organization in the community
- The training of dozens of new Asian-American museum professionals
- The creation and refinement of the community-response program-development model
- The ongoing involvement of hundreds of community members in the development of museum programs
- Establishing a model for museums as a place of dialogue
- The successful initiation of a \$27-million capital building and endowment campaign.

Nuts and Bolts

Environment

The museum's community is very diverse. There are 30 different ethnic groups in Seattle's Asian community. According to Chew, "creating programs that are meaningful across this broad constituency, requires great diplomacy and continuing dialogue. Our credibility is based on our work and the balance of our approach. We also have to do projects that cut across common ground."

Chew is not hesitant to characterize the museum's home, Seattle's International District, as a "ghetto." "Wing Luke is located in a neighborhood that has insufficient resources, crime, that is also impacted by large capital projects like the recent stadium construction." He knows that "museums need to be in places that people feel comfortable in. That has been a challenge for us, because this community is in transition."

The growth of the museum is fueled not only by continuing program successes and organizational maturation but also by the astonishing proliferation of the Asian-Pacific-American community. In Washington State, the Asian-Pacific-American population swelled from 53,400 in 1970 to 323,000 in 1995, a six-fold increase. By the year 2010, the total Asian-Pacific-American population is expected to climb to more than 544,000. The museum plays an ever more significant role in educating the public about the culture and history of Asian-Pacific Americans and building bridges of understanding between older and newer ethnic groups that have little history of cooperation.

As in other Asian-American communities across the country, the sweeping immigration law of 1965 resulted in new waves of immigrants and refugees from many new parts of China, the Philippines, Korea and other parts of Asia. The end of the Vietnam War in 1975 brought in new communities from Southeast Asia. An increasingly prosperous community — new immigrants from a more mobile social class and highly educated American-born Asians — is now scattered across urban and suburban neighborhoods throughout the state.

The strongest base of support for the museum remains within the older Chinese, Japanese, and Filipino American communities, those with the longest history in this region. But the museum has taken bold steps to build stronger relationships with the Korean, Vietnamese, Cambodian, South Asian and more recent Chinese communities.³⁵

Leadership

Wing Luke's current director has been with the organization for the past 13 years. During that time, the museum has pioneered new ways for museums to engage community and grown steadily in capacity and stature. Many would point to Executive

Director Ron Chew as a major reason for this success. He, in turn, would point to his staff and the museum’s focus on community engagement. Chew is not shy about making decisions in a crunch but, as a rule, the organization does not operate as a hierarchy. The museum’s collaborative culture encourages all members of the management team to advocate for their particular departments or issues. Discussion and debate are encouraged and also build support for eventual decisions. As director, Chew also recognizes that for the museum to sustain itself, younger people must play a key leadership role in shaping the organizations programs. To that end, over half of the staff members are in their early 20s.

Resources

Budget: 2004-05 annual budget – \$1,007,058

Development: The following is a breakdown of Museum funding sources and amounts for fiscal years 2001-02 to 2004-05 Some of the foundation funds received in 2002 were multiyear grants that carried over into ‘03 and ‘04, so the growth is a little more gradual than appears below.

	FY 01-02		FY 02-03		FY 03-04		FY04-05	
Corporate	86,881	8%	63,776	9%	29,275	4%	59,500	6%
Public	398,048	37%	120,140	17%	89,100	12%	193,783	20%
Foundation	354,200	33%	213,020	31%	175,995	24%	270,500	28%
Individuals	74,808	9%	85,875	19%	139,288	25%	125,000	24%
Auction	94,182	7%	129,355	11%	184,848	16%	230,000	8%
Earned	73,704	7%	75,993	11%	115,509	16%	80,200	8%
Total	\$1,081,823		\$688,159		\$734,015		\$958,983	

In general, Asian Americans still contribute to individuals and organizations in their home countries. This reduces the philanthropic base available for local projects. The Wing Luke capital campaign is an opportunity to turn the Asian philanthropic focus endeavor toward America. Chew feels this is “a first. It states our American manifestation of art and culture is important.”

Governance

The museum itself is governed by a volunteer board of trustees, which consists of 19 community leaders representing a broad range of communities and interests. In 2003, at the beginning of the capital campaign, the board of trustees engaged its consultant to complete an assessment and recruitment project to prepare the board to carry out a

significant campaign and oversee a greatly expanded operation in the future. The Board Development Committee instituted an annual board commitment form to document members' financial and leadership responsibilities, including participation on at least one standing committee – including Development, Finance & Audit, Facilities and Capital Campaign Steering – as well as ad hoc task forces such as Personnel, Business Plan Review, Donor Recognition and Campaign Branding. The current board is now 16 percent Caucasian, 42 percent Chinese American, five percent Filipino American, 16 percent Japanese American, five percent Korean American, 11 percent South Asian American and five percent Southeast Asian American. The members are 63 percent female and 37 percent male; 21 percent are under the age of 40 and 79 percent are over 40.

Partnerships

In the past several years, the museum has more actively worked to develop project partnerships with other cultural groups, extending the educational reach of the institution. Today the museum frequently works with the Seattle Public Library and the Northwest Asian American Theatre on joint programs. In 1998, the museum came together with Living Voices and children's author Ken Mochizuki to produce "Within the Silence: Share the Courage," an original multimedia performance piece that brings the story of the Japanese-American World War II experience to classrooms. To date, this portable performance piece has reached more than 12,000 people—mostly at school sites—in 15 states and Vancouver, B.C. The museum has also worked with businesses, residents and social-service agencies to spur community pride, promote economic vitality and educate visitors to the International District.³⁶

Chew sees institutional partnerships as important, but feels successful collaborations still depend on the individuals involved. "The organization has many partnerships. We always look at how we connect to individuals within organizations before we commit. Projects that have dozens of co-sponsors are often pro forma and superficial. In the end it is relationships between committed individuals that make partnerships."

Training

The organization supports staff attendance at conferences and encourages mentorships and internships with other institutions. Because many of the Museum's staff members do not come from the museum profession, they support site visits and training within the profession.

Constraints

Programming: It has taken great patience, resourcefulness and sensitivity to successfully pursue the Wing Luke Asian Museum model of program development. Each project has been fraught with specific perils, sometimes engendered by the difficulty of bringing to the same table individuals and groups with a long history of distrust and hostility. “Executive Order 9066: 50 Years Before and 50 Years After” presented the challenge of securing the participation of both the Nisei veterans, who fought overseas during World War II to prove their loyalty, and the “no-no boys,” who resisted military service on grounds of conscience. To this day, individuals from both groups remain bitterly distrustful of one another, but they came together to help create “Executive Order 9066.” “One Song, Many Voices” presented the challenge of a balanced representation of more than ten different ethnic and linguistic groups, many of whom are recent immigrants carrying the scars of rivalry and conflict in Asia.³⁷

Funding: The museum has no endowment. This means they must raise all of their funds from scratch every year. Because of their unique approach, Wing Luke often encounters funders who don’t understand what they are doing. But Chew understands that this comes with the territory. “We are not about pieces of the frozen past. We can be controversial. We can be scary to people who want a museum that is safe and unchallenging. You also have to realize that there is still a great deal of intolerance out there.”

Advice to Funders

While Chew is very grateful to many in the funding community for their support, he also has strong feelings about how funders could better support community-based efforts like Wing Luke.

The funding community has gone back and forth with how to invest and measure impact. With the downturn of the economy and the demise of many arts organizations, they have become more bottom-line. Big funders like Ford are looking for sustainable business models. This is not necessarily a bad thing, but this approach does not measure the spirit of the work that is being created. They should be more interested in how are people moved in a lasting way. Objective measures are OK, but I worry about the work being over-documented and over-quantified. The desire to replicate can also be dangerous. Our organic process cannot be bottled. Our process is most likely indigenous to our situation. Cloned models do not capture the spirit and heart of some of the most important work.

Zuni-Appalachian Exchange and Collaboration



Roadside and Idiwanan An Chawe performing "Corn Mountain/Pine Mountain" (1994-6). Photo by Tim Cox

Basic Facts

- Location(s):** Roadside Theater, P.O. Box 771, Norton, Virginia 24273
Idiwanan An Chawe, Zuni, N.M. 87327
- Connect:** **P:** 276-679-3116 **E:** roadsidetheater@verizon.net
W: <http://www.appalshop.org/rst>
- Start Date:** 1984
- Contact:** Donna Porterfield, project producer, playwright, editor
- Sites:** Whitesburg, Ky., and surrounding counties in Virginia and Kentucky, Zuni Pueblo, N.M.
- Artistic Discipline(s):** Theater, performing arts, literary arts
- Constituents:** Members of Zuni Pueblo, residents of Whitesburg and Appalachian region, national and international audiences
- Personnel:** Roadside Theater: Donna Porterfield, project producer, playwright, editor; Dudley Cocke, director, dramaturge, editor; Ron Short, playwright, composer, performer; Tommy Bledsoe, performer; Kim Neal Mays, performer
Idiwanan An Chawe: Edward Wemytewa, project producer, playwright, performer/editor; Arden Kucate, performer, playwright, choreographer; Dinanda Laconsello, performer

Snapshot

The season theme really started when Roadside came for a visit and Ron Short and I took a ride out in the country to Nutria (Arizona), where I was raised. We were sitting outside my grandma's old house talking about the seasons. I was telling him about how when we planted corn or other seeds, we gave one for Earth, one for the crow, and so on. ... That conversation in Nutria became part of one of the songs he wrote about following the seasons. It's a song about two worlds, with miles of difference between them, and how the seasons and planting were the same. That song is another story about how Appalachia and Zuni collaborated.

—Arden Kucate, 2002³⁸

One reason this collaboration worked was because of the amount of time over the years we'd spent sharing and learning about each other. ... We got to the point that we could laugh with and at each other. ... I can't understand all of Zuni culture, but there are some things that have to do with the heart and with feeling that I do understand. Another reason it worked was that the theme of the play – farming – was something we shared. The four of us ... writing the play are about the same age, and we had grown up in a time when farming was still an important part of life—a really important part of our background.

—Donna Porterfield, 2002³⁹

Description

History

In 1975, Roadside Theater began telling the indigenous stories rising up from its home town, Whitesburg, Kentucky, and the surrounding Appalachian region. The theater was developed as a part of Appalshop, a multidisciplinary, rural arts and education center that produces and distributes film, video, audio recordings, radio and theater that celebrate the people living in the 13-state Appalachian region. Since its inception, Roadside has toured its creations and co-creations to more than 2,000 communities in 43 states and Europe. In the process, the company has developed a process that connects those stories to audiences that reflect the nation's economic, racial, ethnic, educational and geographic diversity.⁴⁰

In 1984, members of the Roadside Theater Company began a 17-year cultural exchange between the company and traditional Native American artists of Zuni. From

1994 to 1996, the two groups co-created and premiered “Corn Mountain/Pine Mountain: Following the Seasons,” a bilingual play with music and dance that explores the differences and common ground of Zuni and Appalachian culture. In the process, the Zuni theater company Idiwanan An Chawe (Children of the Middle Place), was also born.⁴¹

In 2002, Zuni A:shiwi Publishing released “Journeys Home: Revealing A Zuni-Appalachia Collaboration,” a 112-page book that combines the “Corn Mountain/Pine Mountain” play text with interviews, language essays, drawings and a music and spoken-word CD to probe and document the collaboration between Idiwanan An Chawe and Roadside Theater.⁴²

In February 2003, the Smithsonian Institution presented Roadside Theater and Idiwanan an Chawe’s latest collaboration, “Zuni Meets Appalachia,” a performance of traditional and original Appalachian and Zuni stories and music, at the National Museum of the American Indian in New York City and at the National Museum of American History in Washington, D.C.⁴³

Mission/Values

Roadside Theater describes its purpose as the creation of “a body of drama based on the history and lives of Appalachian people and collaborating with others nationally who are dramatizing their local life.”⁴⁴ They state further that “the purpose of theater is to increase our understanding of ourselves and our empathy for others.”⁴⁵

Idiwanan An Chawe was established, in part, to increase awareness and extend the use of a newly invented written alphabet for the Zuni language created by the theater’s director, Edward Wemytewa, and others in the community. The company uses the new alphabet along with dance, music and storytelling to protect and preserve the ways of the Zuni people.

Success and Change

Goals

- Establish and maintain a sustained (21-year) cross-cultural collaboration
- Strengthen and revitalize the traditional Zuni storytelling tradition
- Create collaborative work to explore both contrast and common ground between the Appalachian and Zuni stories and histories

- Continue development of Zuni cultural resources
- Advance awareness and use of Shiwí'ma Bena:we, the Zuni language
- Strengthen and revitalize Appalachian cultural traditions

Defining Success

According to the roadside Web site:

Roadside Theater's core activity is conceptualizing, writing, staging and touring plays. Sometimes we do this solely from within our company; at other times by collaborating with other professional artists and national theater companies; and in still other instances in league with talented singers, musicians, storytellers and dancers who don't make their living as artists.

We think of each new play as an experiment, not just in content, but in form. Our artistic process is one of taking chances and learning. While practicing our profession, we have made two collateral discoveries that we think are noteworthy: A proven way to help a community build bridges across divides of class, race and ethnicity, and a method to engage all parts of a community in publicly telling its stories.⁴⁶

The organization is guided by two documents that further articulate their approach to community-based theater. They are the company's "General Theory of Cultural Organizing and Methodology of Cultural Organizing."

Key elements include:

- A willingness to reexamine basic assumptions and test hypotheses through repeating cycles of posing questions and trying to answer them
- A humble curiosity, an openness to simple questions and unexpected answers
- A willingness not to know the answers
- Programs and projects with all stakeholders present for partnership...relying on manageable cycles of action and assessment in order to learn together
- A willingness, indeed a desire, to improve the roadmaps as new evidence is uncovered and new ideas are generated⁴⁷

Idiwanan An Chawe:

Here at Zuni, our language and our connection to the land are important. Idiwanan An Chawe tells stories in the Zuni language because we are con-

cerned about the language. We have to maintain it. Who we are, our religion, our history, our culture, are embodied in our language. If the Zuni language is lost, how will we make prayers; how will we be Zuni? We are finding that theater — telling our stories through live performance — is a good way to keep the language alive.⁴⁸

Critical to Success

Roadside describes its residencies as “community-strengthening.” Typically they unfold in the four phases they have outlined below:

1. Roadside residencies begin with public performances of plays selected from Roadside’s repertoire, complemented by workshops that explore Roadside’s history, purpose and artistic process.
2. In the second phase of a multiyear residency, the community, with Roadside’s help, begins to uncover its own stories and music through a specific story and music collecting process (story circles). This second phase culminates with public performances by the community of its stories and music – often in conjunction with big potluck suppers or community cook-outs.
3. In the third phase of a residency, a community’s stories and music form the natural resource to craft plays, which are produced by a community’s artists for the public.
4. The final phase of the residency formally acknowledges the local project leaders and artists, seeks to identify infrastructure and resources to establish a place for their work in their community, and introduces their work to other theaters and presenters in the national arts community.⁴⁹

Other more project-specific characteristics include:

- Stable and committed leadership
- Time to learn from and explore respective creative and physical environments
- Trust built over time
- Ongoing support from funders
- Back and forth visits
- Roadside community-theater-making process
- Work in schools

Outcomes

One aspect of the Roadside process critical to determining the impact of their work is their “articulate pursuit of three questions.” These are: “What are we trying to change, and why is that important? How are we trying to make this change, and why is that the best strategy? How will we know we are making the change; what data will provide us evidence, so we can improve the work and we can demonstrate its accomplishment to others?”⁵⁰

Questions emerging from the Appalachian-Zuni collaboration include: “Have youth participants finished school and continued to develop their cultural identity? Has the project inspired others in the community to start their own projects? Do leaders judge that the project has contributed to a particular campaign – for example, the restoration of the Zuni River?”

Specific outcomes from the collaboration have been varied. Over 21 years the Zuni-Appalachian relationship has been established as a part of both cultures. In Appalachia, the iterative Zuni visits helped people there remember and take pride in their own Native American heritage, illustrated by the first Native American exhibition of Indian artifacts, photos and text collected from local families. In Zuni, the publication of “Journeys Home” in the Zuni language represents the most and best written Zuni language extant. For both locations the array of public interaction, including oral history collection, singing revival, story circles and public performances, has involved members of both communities in the development and appreciation of the ongoing work.

Nuts and Bolts

Environments

Whitesburg, the county seat of Letcher County, Kentucky, is located in southeastern area of the state near the Virginia border. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the town’s population is 98 percent white and has an average age of 43 years. Forty percent of Whitesburg residents age 25 and older have college degrees. In 2002, per capita income in Letcher County was \$19,337. This was an increase of 32.3 percent from 1997. The county’s 2002 figure was 63 percent of the national per capita income, which was \$30,906.

The Appalachian region lies across the spine of the Appalachian Mountains running

from southern New York to northern Mississippi. It has an area of 200,000 square miles and includes all of West Virginia and parts of 12 other states – Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, Mississippi, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia. In parts of the region, rugged terrain makes access difficult. The economy has historically been based on the extraction of natural resources, including coal and timber, and on manufacturing. More than 40 percent of the population is rural, twice the U.S. average, and poverty rates are high.

Zuni Pueblo, one of the oldest continually occupied settlements in North America, is located in west-central New Mexico, on the Arizona border.

Traditionally, the Zuni (A:shiwí) lived in close quarters in a pueblo composed of a plaza surrounded by apartment-style adobe buildings, sometimes rising eight stories. People of all ages lived together. Today, although changed in appearance, the old pueblo is still where most of the communal houses, the kivas and the religious dance halls are located. In the center of the pueblo is a line that designates the Heart. The village's physical environment has been as essential to the transmission of our traditions as the presence of our grandmothers and grandfathers. Over the past 30 years, partly in response to a growing population (now numbering 10,000) and to federal-government housing regulations, many Zunis have moved away from the Heart into single-family houses. These solo houses are spread out over several wide areas of the reservation.⁵¹

Leadership

Helping individuals and communities discover and publicly present their stories has been part of Roadside's efforts for two decades. They have evolved a residency methodology that rests on four broad principles they call their pillars:

- Partnerships and collaborations with an inclusive range of community organizations
- Local leadership
- Engagement over the course of at least several years
- Flexibility to alternate between the role of teacher and student

Resources

Roadside Theater's current annual budget is \$271,000. They describe the organization's fiscal journey as being "up and down depending on project activity." As with most of the projects in this study, sources include federal, state, foundation and individual contributions. For the collaboration, at least 50 percent of the support was given to

Roadside and Idiwanan An Chawe by their respective communities in the forms of food, housing, volunteer time, cultural mentoring, etc.

The funders for the collaboration are:

- National Endowment for the Arts
- Rockefeller Foundation
- Wallace Foundation
- Ruth Mott Fund
- Andrew W. Mellon Foundation
- William and Flora Hewlett Foundation
- Witter Bynner Foundation
- Doris Duke Charitable Foundation
- LEF Foundation
- Appalshop Production and Education Fund
- Indian Set-Aside Funds
- First Nations Development Institute
- Theatre Communications Group
- Santa Fe Art Institute
- Shubert Foundation
- Kentucky Arts Council

Governance

Roadside Theater is governed by the Appalshop Board of Directors. Idiwanan An Chawe is governed by the Zuni Tribal Council, which is a sovereign entity. Permission for and understanding of the project have been sought and negotiated at every step throughout the history of the collaboration. In both communities, governance contributed by embracing the project and encouraging community participation.

Partnerships

An array of partnerships has been developed in both communities. These include churches, senior-citizen centers, public schools, A:shiwi Publishing company, civic organizations, local business, etc.

Training

According to Donna Porterfield:

The project began with people at different skill levels. We worked together to understand our strengths and weaknesses — we then focused on our strengths,

our assets, and learned from each other. For example, people in Zuni are excellent dancers, so we used this talent extensively, and it brought to light a new view of Roadside's Appalachian dance traditions. Roadside has a finely honed storytelling style; Zuni has a fine storytelling tradition that had gotten rusty. So Idiwanan An Chawe began telling the Zuni stories again – this time on the stage, as well as in the classroom and living room. Multigenerational participation was an asset that formed a base of learning through exchange.⁵²

Constraints

The mission was fulfilled. An issue in Zuni and Appalachia has been capacity – not always enough resources of time and people to do as much as everyone would enjoy.⁵³

Advice to Funders

Donna Porterfield said:

Fund for the long term – this is a 20-year project. When bridging cultural divides, outcomes in terms of depth and long-ranging effect are commensurate with amount of time spent. For example, one result of this project is that a book was published, "Journeys Home: Revealing a Zuni – Appalachia Collaboration," which contains the largest body of written Zuni extant. How wonderful that this text is a Zuni – Appalachia play, full of new and traditional stories and songs.⁵⁴

Part Three

Findings

CityKids aims to create an environment where “young people feel safe physically, mentally, and spiritually to be, feel, respect, express, grow and teach.

–CityKids Web site

This study was undertaken to assist Art in the Public Interest in its ongoing efforts to support and strengthen the community arts field in the United States. To do this, we solicited a broad range of opinions and perspectives on the basic questions posed. The Findings section summarizes data received from the ten case studies. Its emphasis is on program characteristics, strategies and trends that could inform practice in the broader field of arts-based community development. It includes both summaries of consultant findings and direct quotes.⁵⁵ The findings are organized in six sections, summarizing our analysis of responses to the questions outlined below:

1. As they have evolved over time, how have these programs defined success?
2. What ideas, values, standards, assumptions and expectations have influenced the design, policies and delivery of these programs?
3. What kinds of leadership and organizational practices characterize these efforts?
4. What support strategies (funding, technical assistance, training etc.) have most contributed to the success of these programs?
5. How have these programs defined, measured and learned from their successes and failures?
6. What persistent issues, conditions or problems confronted by these programs have constrained their ability to fulfill their missions?

Making positive community change has been more of a byproduct of the mission than a specific goal.

–Carol Putnum, GRACE

1. ***As they have evolved over time, how have these programs defined success?***

1.1 Cross-sector arts partnerships produce expanded definitions of success. This study’s subjects have found that partnerships between the arts and agencies concerned with community development greatly expand the diversity and complexity of the work. These expanded aims shape definitions of success or failure in different ways. First, the “we” has expanded. In addition to citizen participants, every new sector and/or partner that becomes involved, be it a school, a neighborhood block, a senior program or a small rural town, now has a say in designing the program and identifying the desired outcomes. In the mix, artists doing community work often find themselves contending with a greatly expanded range of scrutiny and judgment.

1.2 Definitions of success in community arts work reflect community needs, assets and priorities.

For the organizations in this study, community art is principally defined as art that is made with, for and about the communities they serve. Service is an important quality as well, since the work is generally created to help the community in some way. Some of these efforts have very specific objectives, like crime reduction or increased literacy. Others are more broadly framed as celebratory, commemorative or healing. And, although change often results, very few use the word to describe their work. While the terms they do use to describe their roles run the gamut from historian, storyteller and healer to educator, organizer and community developer, the common ground across all of these programs is the integration of art making with community issues, interests and assets. This shared landscape is also evident in both the formal and informal guidelines that direct the work. The following section (1.3) describes these standards briefly.

1.3 Some characteristics are regularly identified as keys to community arts success.

The following program characteristics and values were most often identified by artists, administrators and participants as critical to productive community arts work. (Many of these are addressed in greater detail in the sections that follow.)

Productive community programs:

- Have guidelines and structures that are simple, clear, and focused
- Have support structures that emphasize continuity and regularity
- Are patient and nurturing
- Accommodate mess, waste and altered plans
- Emphasize convening and networking
- Have open and regular communication
- Accommodate unpredictability
- Pay attention to details
- Emphasize quality over quantity
- Value process as much as product
- Cultivate and celebrate their history and alumni
- Try to protect their “researchers” from distraction and exploitation
- Learn from experience and incorporate lessons learned
- Practice community building

He said what you had to say was important to me and please come back. That was it for me. When you are 15 you don't have that support everywhere.

—Angela, Isangmahal

1.4 Constituents have a big say in determining goals.

The mainstream art world is constantly on the lookout for the next big thing. Some cultural historians have opined that the best places to glimpse the cultural future are in out-of-the-way,

left-field boroughs far from the nexus of economic and political power. If this is true, then the diverse but distinctly off-center locales that have produced this study's subjects should be a motherlode of great ideas. But the most revolutionary ideas rising up from these programs are not new at all. The two most consistently articulated principles we encountered in this study are "accountability to the community" and "participatory democracy." Put simply, this means that these programs exhibit good manners and share power.

The common sense genius here is that these programs simply walk their talk. Their missions articulate a commitment to community participation and ownership. While many programs pay lip service to this simple but hard to realize ideal, these organizations actually do it by devoting the majority of their time, resources and expertise to developing authentic advise-and-consent relationships with their communities. They further demonstrate their commitment through their willingness to stop the presses when community feedback reflects that they are falling short of this ideal. At the Wing Luke Asian Museum, this means that exhibitions that are curated with the community, for the community, do not go up until the collaborative design team is satisfied. At Swamp Gravy, this means that writing a new script each year involves both literary imagination and the art of negotiation.

At 50th Street and Woodland Avenue is a (Mural Arts Program) wall called "Families Are Victims, Too," a memorial to loved ones who died violently. Michelle Hundley visits often with her four little boys. She points out one face on the wall. Jeffrey Rushton. Her son. Gone six years now, a 10-year-old killed by a hit-and-run driver. "There's a bench in front of his picture," said Hundley, a nurse. "We like to sit out there. It's comforting."

—Philadelphia Enquirer

- 1.5 Many define community arts in terms of community cultural development.** A good number of the people we talked to defined community-based arts in terms of "collaboration" and tangible, useful outcomes. This was as true in our conversations with representatives of education, human-service and community-development sectors as it was with artists and arts administrators. Within this group, there was general agreement that the arts are an appropriate and useful partner for both developmental and aesthetic goals. While many of the funders and civic leaders interviewed were familiar with this type of cross-sector arts activity, they felt that the work could be taken to another level. There is also a growing recognition that this next level cannot be reached by solo operators and that deeper partnerships and more integrated definitions of success will be needed to increase the effectiveness and impact of future work.

Among the artists we talked to, success in the community arts realm was more vaguely and broadly defined. When asked to reflect on the term, most began with an arts-based definition but also said that they felt the lines between arts and community-development practice had been blurring for the past few decades. The majority understood and embraced the development of hybrid definitions of success as accurate and relevant. Many also felt strongly about the

potential for artistic growth and innovation offered by cross-sector exploration.

1.6 Leadership development is a natural byproduct of many community arts

endeavors. Many of these programs have found that leadership development is an intrinsic and important outcome of community art making. Some even characterized it as the most significant long-term result of the work. When queried as to how or why this occurs, our interviewees had a variety of responses. Many felt that the new relationships that had developed through community cultural work naturally broadened the perspectives and capacities of those involved. Others pointed out the empowering effect that came from working closely with accomplished professionals in other fields. Some observed that these relationships often lay the foundation for new strategic alliances and sources of support.

2 *What ideas, values, standards, assumptions and expectations have influenced the design, policies and delivery of these programs?*

2.1 Commitment to community engagement is a responsibility, not a strategy. Over the past two decades many arts organizations and funders have embraced community engagement as a priority. While the motivations driving these have been varied, the most central goal has been the expansion of their audiences. This makes sense. For organizations whose primary purpose is making and presenting art, finding a public is key. In this regard, the organizations in this study differ significantly. For a community art center like Northern Lakes, or culturally specific arts group like Isangmahal, community relationships are intrinsic to both art production and presentation. In a sense, the work is not complete without the community's involvement. Community members are thus regarded more as a constituency than an audience. This notion of a cultural constituency implies a broad range of responsibilities and, in some instances, even obligations for these programs. These include expectations of openness, accountability, continuity and respect.

2.2 Missions and values are informed by practice, not ideology. Some of the characteristics common to these programs arise from their long-term engagement with the communities they serve. This extended interaction with the community shapes the organizational culture. When the community is a partner, active listening, constructive dialogue, patience, clear communication and long-term planning inevitably rise up as critical behaviors.

When we started working, the commitment to growing the abilities of local people seemed only appropriate and logical.

–LaMoine MacLaughlin,
Northern Lakes Center for
the Arts

Our process results in surprises all the time. When we engage the community in this way, we end up doing projects that are unexpected. But the content is always fresh because it so often comes from what is happening, right now in the community.

—Ron Chew, Wing
Luke Asian Museum

- 2.3 These programs operate as creative learning centers.** Communities are dynamic, living organisms — always in motion, always changing. According to our interviewees, they have found that programs that serve communities must be designed to learn from and with the constituents they serve. They do this by making space in their organizational cultures for the stories, debates, rumors and reflections rising up from the community. This creates a learning environment that is open to ideas and provocations from both inside and out.
- 2.4 Learning builds trust.** These programs have come to know the deep distrust that many communities have for “do-gooders.” They have found that building trust requires both patience and a respectful engagement of the many layers of a community’s cultural landscape. Over the years, each has honed a capacity for discovering and learning from the histories and stories that form community identity. Many spend considerable time teaching staff about how this knowledge can be used to build trust and support effective collaboration. Some respondents also indicated that impatient funders sometimes have made this task more difficult.
- 2.5 Investments emphasize quality.** We were told time and time again that there are no shortcuts in the community arts arena. When combined, both creative and community-development processes require even greater care and attention. Our interviewees asserted that their communities deserve the best of both. But because empirical research often defines success in community-development work, there is a tendency to steer resources toward activities that will translate in terms of volume rather than depth. When this happens, resources are often spread too thin and systemic root problems ignored. Because it is new, and for the most part untested, arts-based community development is particularly vulnerable to this pattern of investment. Our respondents encouraged funders to apply the highest standards of quality to both sides of the community/arts equation.
- 2.6 Process gets equal billing.** Northern Lakes Art Center Director LaMoine MacLaughlin says “art is action.” He and his colleagues in this study see artmaking as an integrated continuum of process and product. Their programs manifest this conviction by treating all aspects of the work with equal diligence and investment. In Philadelphia, when the Mural Arts Program makes plans to create a community mural, this means that community engagement and mural design get as much attention and resources as rendering and public relations. At the Village of Arts and Humanities, Lily Yeh went one step further. She describes contract negotiation, fundraising and other administrative functions as intrinsic parts of her artistic process. Once again, this value is intrinsic to the implicit community covenant that guides these endeavors.

2.7 Transcendent elements of the arts are acknowledged and celebrated. “The artist,” says psychologist James Hillman, “bears sensate witness to what is fundamentally beyond human comprehension.” The communities reflected in this study have embraced that role and the artists have responded. The Zuni stories heard in the performance of “Corn Mountain/Pine Mountain” reflect both the physical and spiritual history of that community. Many of the Swamp Gravy scripts reference the spiritual life of Colquitt. Lily Yeh, the former director of the Village of Arts and Humanities, is unabashed in her assertion that artists fulfill the shaman’s role in the community. She says, “The artist at work in these realms mediates the moral, the rational and the spiritual; the artist sensitizes us to the presence of social and material toxicity.”

We have a belief that attitude and willingness to learn are more important than talent or previous accomplishment.

–Josh Green, Manchester Bidwell Corporation

2.8 The involvement of multiple generations is seen as critical. Reflective of their whole-communities perspective, these organizations have come to include all age groups in their programming. This translates as programs designed both for particular age groups and cross-generational initiatives. (See also, 2.13)

2.9 Respect is the foundation upon which these programs are built. When Lily Yeh, the mother of the Village of Arts and Humanities program in Philadelphia, first started visiting the Germantown community she saw a vital culture. She saw that the impulse to create and reflect on one’s environment was not missing or erased, as she had feared. So, when she began using art to transform a rubble-filled vacant lot into a thing of beauty, she knew she was not bringing art to the great unwashed, but was joining an established culture. The people in the neighborhood appreciated that level of respect. They also let it be known that they weren’t automatically accepting of her good intentions.

Former Director Lily Yeh, describes the Village of Arts and Humanities as “using the arts as the ‘bone structure’...building an urban community where members care for each other and are interconnected.”

Most of the programs represented in this study found out early on that no matter how many validations they received from funders and city officials, they would be outsiders until the community decided otherwise. These programs have learned how to tune their work to the self-interest of the community and local leaders alike, without compromising their program’s integrity. They have succeeded by assuming multiple roles as learners, listeners and creative catalysts. They have provided opportunity and raw materials, given direction and respected the combined power of the art, the artists and the voice of the community.

2.10 Sustainability is a core value. When GRACE started working in senior centers, they began with short workshops. Participants came, but they were not satisfied. They said they didn’t want to dabble. They wanted to get good. The artists lis-

tened and responded. For many of the seniors, these professional artists provided a model of creative self-expression and independence. They also posed a challenge, a challenge that offered a degree of control over a small corner of their lives in exchange for commitment and hard work over time — not a few weeks or a month — but continuously, with opportunities for acquiring increasing levels expertise.

For GRACE, and the other programs in this study, this idea is key. Investing in the triumph or failure of artistic efforts builds a kind of stamina. This is the cycle of sustainable learning. To achieve this, the work has to be rigorous, regular and sustained.

One reason this collaboration worked was because of the amount of time over the years we'd spent sharing and learning about each other.... We got to the point that we could laugh with and at each other. ... I can't understand all of Zuni culture, but there are some things that have to do with the heart and with feeling that I do understand.

—Donna Porterfield, Zuni-Appalachian Exchange

2.11 Accountability keeps them honest. All of our respondents agreed that while scrupulous accountability is basic to good community relations, it can also be complicated, overwhelming, time consuming and unavoidable. Many of these programs operate in communities that feel deserted, in deficit and put upon. In that context, the first thing prospective partners want to know is who's pulling the strings and what's in it for them. According to Mural Arts Program (MAP) Education Director Kathy Ogilvie, responding honestly demands that “you understand the ecology of accountability you are operating in.” She says her artists “need to be accountable to the legacy of their art form and themselves as creators. Then as teachers/mentors they are accountable to their students.” Finally, “MAP and our community partners are accountable to their leadership, their constituents, their missions and their funders. If you recognize that you are not working alone,” she says, “then this interlocking, interdependent system can be helpful and supportive. If not, it can eat you alive.”

3 ***What, kinds of leadership and organizational practice characterize these efforts?***

Leadership

3.1 These programs have forceful, visionary, long-term leadership. The average age of the programs reviewed in this study is 21.6 years. Of the ten, six are still operating under the principal guidance of their founders. The founders of three of the remaining four are still intimately involved with their organizations. The presence of strong and enduring leadership is one of the most indelible patterns to emerge from this study. To understand how and why this characteristic came

about, it is instructive to examine early organizational histories.

Most of these organizations came into being at a time when arts-based community development was in its infancy. Among public officials, funders and the leaders of the mainstream arts community the idea that the arts and community-development realms would find significant common ground and garner mainstream support was not considered credible. Those who undertook such endeavors were, in essence, inventing a whole new field. For a time, during the late 70s and early 80s, there was a plethora of community arts startups that took advantage of new federal and state funding. But very few of these continue in some form today.

The organization provides a nonjudgmental, neutral zone for youth who would not normally connect.

—CityKids brochure

As survivors, the leaders of the programs in this study successfully navigated a complex cross-sector environment of funding, regulation and public policy. Looking back, many considered the fact that they were young and driven nearly to obsession as key to their staying power. Their survival also demanded a clear and forceful articulation of mission that translated to the self-interest of multiple partners. It is important to note that all of these programs were created by artists who were, in essence, self-mandated. Put simply, that mandate was a passionate belief in the power of art to make significant positive contributions to community life. This was, and remains, a hard sell. To gain any credibility in the skeptical, even adversarial, territory they occupied, they had to marshal resources, advocate effectively and produce results, simultaneously. This seat-of-the-pants challenge was a hothouse for the development of effective community leadership. It would not be an exaggeration to say that these programs defined their leaders as much as their leaders defined them. No wonder so many have stuck around.

- 3.2 These programs have organizational structures and leadership that are resilient, adaptive and improvisational.** Like the Wing Luke Asian Museum described in the previous section (2.2), many of the programs we studied have developed dynamic structures to support creative community development. In some cases, this has meant creating administrative systems that regard change as a natural feature of the community landscape. Often, this is as much about adaptive attitudes as it is flexible guidelines or rules. Another characteristic of these dynamic organizational cultures is an understanding that both form and freedom are necessary for integrating creative inquiry and community development. At the Mural Arts Program, this means that the “givens” for collaboration between an artist and a neighborhood (i.e., goals, budget and timelines) are clearly articulated in advance. The collaborating artists and community members are then left free to improvise and invent in the design process. With Isangmahal, this manifests as

The boundaries between “trained artist/teacher” and “untrained person/student” are consciously minimized based on the philosophy that all people, of whatever age, physical capacity or education, have creative potential.

—Lucy Lippard, from
“States of GRACE”

what one artist called “the invisible and predictable structures, rituals and practices that provide the rhythm section for creative improvisation.”

- 3.3 These leaders are highly collaborative.** Another interesting characteristic exhibited by the originators of these programs is the situational nature of their leadership. Because they started small, they wore many hats. In the early days, artistic and administrative duties were shared by small staffs that operated much more like colleagues than subordinates. In this type of environment, hierarchy often takes a back seat to necessity, and collective decision making is much more the norm. With few material resources, the organization’s collective knowledge and connections became an important resource. To make space for the free flow of expertise and information, these leaders have learned how to step back and step up, depending on the situation.
- 3.4 These leaders are entrepreneurial.** The leaders of these organizations are opportunistic, investing their often meager resources in programs and partnerships that have provided significant return. But some identified the organic nature of their community relationships as a critical balance to the impulse to say yes at every turn. They said that community accountability tempers the vision of assertive leaders so that the work is honest, on track and relevant.

Through “one love,” Isangmahal synthesizes word and music into a presentation of self-thought, self-expression, and self-analysis; a coming together of the greater community to join in the experience of Isangmahal.
—Isangmahal Web site

Organizational Practice

- 3.5 The entrepreneurial nature of the work is a blessing and ... a caution.** Colquitt, Georgia’s community play, “Swamp Gravy,” has been incredibly successful in its mission. It has created a poignant and evolving cultural event, attracted hundreds of thousands of audience members and spawned quite a few spin-off projects. Successful community arts programs such as Swamp Gravy, Manchester Craftsmen’s Guild and the Village of Arts and Humanities are regularly generating new prospects for expansion and growth. While this is certainly a positive characteristic, for some it has also been a problem. Without forethought, this entrepreneurial impulse can, very easily, outstrip a program’s capacity to support it. The point made by some was not that success was a problem, but, rather that it is important to anticipate both opportunity and difficulty. Survival tactics born of early-days necessity (i.e., never saying “no”) can set up unreasonable expectations in the community and bury a program once it gets rolling. While having an entrepreneurial approach is critical to success and should be encouraged, it also must be controlled.
- 3.6 “Community-based” and “organic” are related concepts for these community**

arts practitioners. A number of respondents talked about the link between naturally occurring or “organic” systems and effective community work. At the Wing Luke Asian Museum, great attention is paid to supporting the systems of interaction and creativity that naturally emerge from community history. The assumption is that stories and events that are important to each community have a unique ecosystem. The staff at Wing Luke believes that understanding and supporting this system is one of its principal jobs. The Mural Arts Program operates on the assumption that authentic community collaborations cannot be forced. They also use the term “organic” to describe the processes that give rise to strong community partnerships and leadership. Many of the artists we talked to also spoke in a similar vein about how they find their way in the creative process. One artist said, “I know the general direction, but I am dependent on signs that emerge along the way to lead me to each specific step in the journey.”

- 3.7 These programs depend on the quality of the relationships they create in the community.** Many respondents considered relationships both a critical tool and an essential outcome of their work. Ron Chew, the director of the Wing Luke Asian Museum, considers everything he does in terms of relationships. He views the museum’s relevance to the community, its reputation with funders, even his organization’s standing in the museum community, as all resting on accumulating layers of relationships. He believes this so strongly that the number one criterion for employment at the museum is a candidate’s relationship-building skills.

MAP demonstrates respect for people who are largely excluded from government and traditional vehicles of public expression such as the mass media.

–Making Exact Change case study

Chew is not alone. The consensus among interviewees was that community arts are by nature relationship intensive. Two principal reasons for this were cited. First, the work itself is relationship-based. According to Roadside Theater’s Donna Porterfield, most of their two-decade-long collaboration with the Zuni Pueblo has been spent building and maintaining trustful relationships and common ground among members of two cultures separated by 1,600 miles and 9,000 years of history. The Zuni collaborators see their art as the outcome of this relationship, not the other way around. In a similar vein, CityKids has based its entire program on the foundation of a “safe space” where young artists and their adult mentors can speak their minds and take creative risks together.

Second, the work is community-defined. Removed from the context of its community, some artwork can lose its essential potency. This is the reason that efforts to duplicate “successful” community arts programs so often fail. Unlike a Broadway show or a traveling exhibit, community art often finds its fullest meaning in its birthplace. In these instances, context and connection are essential parts of the community arts process. Outside the embrace of the local ecology,

something is missing. In the extreme, this means that some work cannot exist outside of the web of relationships that gave it life.

I believe that if local residents are given positive support and room and time to grow, they can produce beautiful music and wonderful theater and amazing dance and fantastic visual artwork and moving writing.

—LaMoine MacLaughlin,
Northern Lakes Center for
the Arts

3.8 Each program calls upon a larger network of expertise and influence. All of the programs we looked at make use of community networks that offer a wide variety of links and referrals. Over the many years of the Zuni-Appalachian exchange, the program partners enriched their efforts by calling upon the wide network of knowledge within their respective communities. Every time the Northern Lakes Art Center responds to community interests and or needs with new arts offerings they call upon on an extended network of arts practitioners and subject-matter experts in the region. The Wing Luke Asian Museum depends on an expanding circle of constituents for the content and form of its exhibits. These networks provide access to practical resources. They also serve to connect their members to the larger web of community identity and mutual support. This is particularly important for organizations serving small or isolated communities that need to validate their best practices and learn from each other.

3.9 Ownership devolves to community. The Mural Arts Program identifies “community involvement, support and ownership of both the mural process and product” as one of its guiding principles. And MAP puts its money where its mouth is. Fully 90 percent of the time devoted to their mural making in the neighborhoods of Philadelphia involves the community in some way. But the real proof of neighborhood ownership is what happens when MAP leaves. This is when the communities assume responsibility for the works of art. Research conducted by the University of Pennsylvania’s Social Impact of the Arts program indicates that these communities do, in fact, take over by protecting and maintaining both the art and the environment that surrounds it.

Isangmahal is a collective, so decisions tend to be made by those who are most active.

—Jojo Goan, Isangmahal

The programs developed by the organizations we have reviewed are highly sensitive to and in concert with community priorities. They know that community ownership and participation at all levels is crucial for building lasting partnerships. They know these strong partnerships use asset-based, rather than problem-based strategies. This means that, even though problem solving may be a goal, the effort is not defined by and driven by what is wrong, but rather, the strength of the community resources that will be used to address the problem.

3.10 Collaboration is a learned skill. Our interviewees had a lot to say about partnerships, good and bad. Most comments reflected on the intrinsically collaborative nature of community art making. Many shared their ideas about what it takes to develop and maintain effective and lasting partnerships. Here is a summary:

- Good partnerships have long-term goals that are focused and specific, and shared equally by the various partners. These relationships are built on long-term mutual self-interest. Their success depends on leadership that is stable, committed, assertive and inclusive.
- Good partners know that you don't have to have complete and total alignment of beliefs, values or needs among partners. Partnerships can share common goals for different reasons, as long as these differences are on the table.
- Effective partners know that the core driving force in successful partnerships is trust. They know that trust is built on a relationship of deeds, not words. They also know that trust-engendering practice is characterized by the consistency and integrity of the work over time.
- Successful community collaborations require long-term commitment measured in years, not weeks or months. Their proponents know the notion of power will need to be reckoned with. They also know that building trust between the more and less powerful is difficult, and that the greater the gap in power, the greater the challenge. Finally, they know that those who wield power are often unaware of their extent of their privilege and power, and thus they have a difficult time understanding and responding to demands to share their power.

We are not about stuff and projects but about relationships and stories that rise up from the community. The story is more important than the stuff. The museum is more a place of dialogue than stated facts.

—Ron Chew, Wing Luke
Asian Museum

3.11 Collaborative art making is hard but builds strong relationships. A few interviewees likened successful creative collaborations to good marriages. CityKid's Laurie Meadoff said, "Even though it takes three times more energy to find consensus and get things done, the results make the journey worthwhile. Some said they felt that the partnership itself was often the most significant long-term outcome. These successful partners also said that at times the partnership will be tested, and that those tests will not only measure their strength and resiliency, they will be the crucible upon which the real strength of the collaboration will be forged.

3.12 Young people are a priority. All of these organizations have made significant investments in programs that involve young people. This is striking because only one of the ten, CityKids, has a youth-centered mission. This characteristic reflects both community responsiveness and a growing trend among funders. The communities served by the study subjects have all identified youth development as a priority. Funders, reacting to failing schools and a rise in juvenile crime, have dramatically increased support for youth-oriented programming over the past

decade and a half. These programs have responded with significant investments in training and mentorship that emphasize the development of arts skills and youth leadership.

3.13 Active, on-the-job learning is key. These organizations rely principally on workplace learning for staff development. There are a number of factors that contribute to this.

Bill Strickland is a phenomenal storyteller and spirit whose hopes for all young people are shaped by his own life's trajectory... Bill's approach to leadership is that he believes that all people are capable of great things if offered the environment and resources they deserve.

–Josh Green, Manchester
Bidwell Corporation

- **Few formal educational opportunities:** At present, there are only a handful of undergraduate or graduate programs for artists or administrators interested in working in the arts-based community-development field.
- **Many jobs are locally defined:** The site-specific nature of the work undertaken by these programs often necessitates on-the-job training. This work simply does not lend itself to cookie-cutter preparation. The mix of relevant job skills can vary widely from site to site and project to project.
- **Peer training is best for relationship-intensive work:** Many respondents identified trust as one of the most valuable resources in their work. Unfortunately, trust building cannot be learned in the classroom. Learning how to earn trust in a community setting requires mentorship of veterans and practice in the field.

3.14 Planning and design are not given short shrift. Completing a participatory cross-sector arts project within budget and on time is difficult, particularly for new, inexperienced partners. The most successful projects we saw were based on thorough planning and a conservative budgeting of time and money. This type of preparation takes time and money. Many interviewees felt that long-term planning and relationship building were not sufficiently supported by funders. They thought the field would benefit greatly if these processes were supported as intrinsic to the achievement of both artistic and community-development goals.

3.15 The concept of “story” is used both literally and metaphorically by these community arts programs. We found many references to “story” or “narrative” or even “quest” in our conversations. Some spoke very directly about how their work could only be truly understood both literally and metaphorical as a journey. Some expressed the concern that because the powers that be are so often interested in the material outcomes or products of these stories, that the most important part, the messy rhythm of each tale’s unfolding, is lost or ignored. Others described themselves as protectors or guardians of the stories they were

exploring. One artist said she felt that she needed to fold a funder-friendly story around art to protect the true story of the community's work.

- 3.16 Communities of interest and program intentions are clearly defined.** Of necessity, these organizations are very clear about where their responsibility and accountability lies. Though often complex and multifaceted, these constituencies are defined very succinctly. These firm lines arise from constituents themselves who are often very protective of the relationship they have with the program in question.

Another characteristic of these programs is the degree of clarity with which the various partners have articulated their respective roles and the anticipated outcomes. Social, economic, political and artistic goals are not necessarily seen as incompatible. While their combination increases the complexity of the work, the potential for extraordinary outcomes on all fronts may be raised exponentially. This makes the work far more demanding.

- 3.17 Nontraditional hiring practices make for a diverse workforce.** Arts organizations typically hire people with experience making and/or managing the arts. The community arts organizations in this study have allowed themselves a much broader personnel palette to choose from. You will find staff with background in social work and community development at the Mural Arts Program and the Village of Arts and Humanities. At Manchester Craftsmen's Guild you will find educators, computer programmers and community organizers. Conversely, at the Wing Luke Asian Museum there are few people with museums in their backgrounds. Our interviewees view diversity of staff background and experience as a critical asset for their work. They say that cross-sector work demands cross-sector expertise.

I was telling him about how when we planted corn or other seeds we gave one for Earth, one for the crow, and so on. ...That ...became part of one of the songs he wrote about following the seasons. It's ...about two worlds, with miles of difference between them, and how the seasons and planting were the same. That song is another story about how Appalachia and Zuni collaborated.

—Arden Kucate,
Zuni Appalachian
Exchange

- 4 What support strategies (funding, technical assistance, training, etc.) have most contributed to the success of these programs?**

- 4.1 Most have stalwart, loyal funders willing to work outside the box.** Most of the organizations in this study have one or more funders who have provided extraordinary levels of support. In most cases, these special relationships have manifested as grants that exceed the original time or funding limits. In other instances, funders have worked behind the scenes through referrals to other funders and/or individual philanthropists.

CityKids seeks to encourage dialogue between young people to allow them to learn from each other. "Respecting the voice of youth" is the basis of every CityKids program.

–CityKids Web site

Devon, age 6, and Jacinta, age 8, decorate washcloths and aprons with poetic chants that teach them and their families about preventing lead poisoning. Life-size puppets parade around a group of seniors discussing cancer screening in a program called Conquering Cancer Creatively.

–“The Village of Arts and Humanities”, High Performance Magazine #68, 1994

4.2 Partnerships are resources that need to be nurtured over time. A number of respondents have found that it is useful to view their arts partnerships as evolving relationships. They have learned that sometimes relationships have to grow and mature before they can respond appropriately to community needs and ideas. Some spoke positively about funders who work with them as developmental partners rather than grantees. As projects evolve and change, this approach gives both funders and fundees opportunities to reflect on and learn from the ongoing work.

4.3 Governance serves leadership. There are only a few discernable patterns to the way governance manifests in these organizations. All have boards of directors and advisory boards that include community representation. Most board members define their role as providing support for their executive leaders. Some have boards capable of raising money, while other boards provide links to the community and provide advice on a wide range of relevant issues. Boards have also played a significant role in those organizations that have experienced a transition in leadership. Isangmahal, the only program in this study that is not a non-profit organization, operates as a collective. As such, critical issues are identified by a steering group and voted on by the members, who number about 150.

4.4 Real-estate ownership provides stability and credibility. Seven of the ten organizations included in this study own their own facilities. Wing Luke Asian Museum’s Ron Chew, who is in the middle of a capital campaign for a new facility in Seattle’s International District, feels that investing in real estate sends an important message to his community. He also thinks becoming a stakeholder counters the marginal status often accorded to cultural organizations. For CityKids, owning their own facility provided the most critical element in their effort to create a “safe space” for their constituents. Beyond the status and stability that comes with ownership, learning the redevelopment ropes has been a significant factor in the successful growth of three of the study’s subjects. Swamp Gravy, The Manchester Craftsmen’s Guild and the Village of Art and Humanities have all been major players in the physical rebuilding of their communities.

4.5 Moderate but steady growth. Except for a few fits and starts, most of the organizations in this study have experienced moderate but steady annual growth. In many cases, this trend continued even during what were considered down years for the arts sector. This stability can be attributed, in part, to significant levels of support from nonarts sources.

4.6 There are no easy answers. According to CityKids founder Laurie Meadoff, the key to successful community-based arts is knowing that there are no microwave-able short-cuts to participatory art-making. Every community's cultural, social and political ecology is unique. Assumptions and expectations accrued from other sites should be checked at the door — not because those experiences are not potentially valuable and informative, but because the scrupulous learning of a community's culture is an indispensable part of building community trust. And, in the end, trust proves to be the most valuable asset.

4.7 Training is on the job. Our study subjects made it abundantly clear that community-based art-making is not for the faint of heart. This is particularly true, they said, because the necessary skills and experience are often acquired on the job. One administrator likened it to learning to walk the high wire in a hurricane. Given this, many of our interviewees described how at one time or another they had advised others in the arts community to leave community engagement alone.

4.8 Personnel are generally loyal beyond the call of duty. The people who staff these programs are driven by their passion. Despite the typically low pay, these workers are incredibly well educated and quick on their feet. They regularly work extra hours and weekends, and perform a whole range of duties not included in their job descriptions. Unfortunately, after a few years in the trenches, many experience burnout and leave the field.

Seeing this impulse in the residents, Don responded by dropping the "lessons," stepping back and letting the residents explore on their own.
—“States of GRACE”

4.9 Free labor is expensive. All of these organizations use volunteers, but caution that free labor is labor-intensive. For the Wing Luke Asian Museum, coordinating their community docents program is a fulltime job. Northern Lakes' LaMoine MacLaughlin says that dropping the ball with community volunteers can both damage a valuable resource and ruin your reputation in the community. MAP's Kathy Ogilvie says, “Think twice about taking on free labor. When you do, make sure its care and feeding is in capable, compensated hands.” Isangmahal, the one organization in the study that depends entirely on volunteers, views its volunteers as its community members.

5. How have these programs defined, measured, and learned from their successes and failures?

5.1 Most evaluation and assessment has been conducted as an obligation to fun-

Isangmahal operates as a family. New members are invited by existing members to join. Joining means taking a role in helping to organize events and helping maintain the organization, which is all volunteer.

–Making Exact Change case study

ders. Unfortunately, the quality of these assessments is often quite low. This is because these obligatory evaluations are generally unfunded and completed after the fact. For obvious reasons, funds-linked self-assessments also have questionable credibility. And, finally, biased or not, this data has not generally been made available to the field.

- 5.2 There is a strong interest in learning more about long-term community trends and issues in the community arts realm.** There was an enthusiasm for more information and research about community arts practice. But the lack of support for such research was clearly noted, as was the need for consolidated information on community arts practices and outcomes in the U.S. and overseas.
- 5.3 Credible research is lacking.** Our respondents felt that credible research in the field was not well supported. They felt that a small body of good research is only just emerging, but, unfortunately, is not being widely disseminated. Given the marginal status accorded the arts in America, some felt that even the best research would not make many new friends for the community arts sector. Others worried that more compelling research would end up defining the field solely as a therapeutic or remedial methodology.
- 5.4 Community feedback is immediate and relevant.** Although lack of funding has limited research in the field, another, less obvious reason was cited as a contributor. Because of their strong community links, many Making Exact Change programs have no problem getting constituent feedback without formal evaluations. Isangmahal member Jojo Goan puts it this way: “Our community votes with its feet. If they don’t show up, then we know we are not meeting their needs.”
- 5.5 Some good research comes from nonarts partners.** One particularly useful aspect of collaboration is the sharing of information and expertise. The arts programs in our study that partner with human-service, education or community-development organizations have found that research methods and data from these programs can be a valuable resource. Community-development agencies typically have more experience and more resources devoted to research and evaluation. Piggybacking arts-program evaluation onto existing protocols is much easier and cheaper than starting from scratch. And for the increasing number of funders who are looking for specific outcome measures, this type of data is more credible.

The public sector is not used to being constantly challenged by a creative, entrepreneurial entity in their midst.

–Jane Golden, Mural Arts Program

6 ***What persistent issues, conditions or problems have limited or constrained these efforts?***

6.1 Many programs face difficulty translating their work to funders. Although the number of funders was potentially greater for community arts programs, many have found it difficult to convince them to support cross-sector work. Some interviewees expressed frustration with narrow eligibility criteria that focused on single, “siloeed” or isolated disciplines. Others felt that many funders didn’t understand that long-term relationship-building was a necessary part of community cultural development. The issue of control also came up in discussions about funding. Demands for predetermined outcomes were seen as antithetical to community-based, community-owned development.

6.2 Effective translations can be a “catch 22.” As was mentioned previously, (6.1) many of our respondents feel their work is not well understood by public officials, funders and the general public outside of their communities. Because of this, they spend considerable time “translating” their work. Unfortunately, these “translations” are often tailored to the predispositions of their audiences. As a result, human-services and community-development people get one slant and the arts folks get another. While this can be effective in the short run, some worried that over time the complex, hybrid nature of the work is being obscured.

6.3 Street credibility sometimes does not translate. The programs in our sample place great stock in the credibility they have earned with the communities they serve. Without it, they say, the best-laid plans and the hottest technology would have little effect. The importance of “street rep” is not sufficiently appreciated by the “outside world.” It’s also very hard, they say, to document or “prove.” As one artist said, “You either have it or you don’t.” Another described it as “hard to get, but highly perishable.”

6.4 The arts-based community workforce requires training. These organizations have learned that artists who are committed to and capable of doing this work are hard to come by. Because the field has expanded dramatically over the past decade, many have come with good intentions but very little experience. Given the demands of community work, this lack of experience can be dangerous. The skill set needed to forge successful community arts partnerships is daunting. Not only must artists be technically proficient, they also need to bring diplomatic, organizing and partnership skills to the table. Patience, optimism and a sense of humor come in handy, as well. But probably the most important prerequisite for this work is a love for the messy, unpredictable and confounding nature of com-

The Learning through the Arts program includes four interconnected parts: Core Leadership, Open Workshops, Outreach, and Youth Theater. In 2000, more than 2,500 youth participated in Learning through the Arts.
–Village of Arts and Humanities Web site

The GRACE style of training, not surprisingly, follows a similar style to that of the workshops. This approach happens ...naturally, without force or meddlesome efforts.

–Carol Putnum, GRACE

While practicing our profession, we have made two collateral discoveries that we think are noteworthy: A proven way to help a community build bridges across divides of class, race, and ethnicity, and a method to engage all parts of a community in publicly telling its stories

–"Journeys Home: Revealing a Zuni-Appalachia Collaboration"

munity engagement. Although none of the programs in this study have established fulltime professional-development programs for their administrators and artists, they all agreed that it is very much needed.

Even those who possess the requisite skills and experience have a hard time sustaining themselves in the work. There is a high rate of burnout in the field.

Unfortunately, none of the programs reviewed here have developed in-house stress- or trauma-mitigation programs for their staffs.

6.5 Retention can be hard — turnover is damaging. Most of the programs in this study have no problem bringing smart, young artists and administrators into the fold. These newcomers are idealistic and energetic, willing to devote countless hours to the cause in exchange for the sense of community and learning. All too often, though, these tendencies have been exacerbated by organizational cultures that thrive on and demand self-sacrifice and overwork. Though highly productive in the short run, for most, these are not sustainable work habits. So, ultimately there is a price to pay. Thus we find burnout and high employee turnover is a recurring issue with many of these high-functioning community arts programs.

Through this study, we have found that employee loss is particularly difficult in this field. Each community-based organization demands a unique amalgam of expertise and experience from its personnel. It can take two-plus years to learn the culture, acquire the community-specific skills and establish the relationships necessary to do these jobs well. So, when these organizations lose employees who have reached this threshold of experience, it is particularly costly. No matter how qualified the replacement, the organization is often starting from scratch.

6.6 Leadership transitions can be difficult. Three of the organizations in this study have changed leadership in recent years. Their experience indicates that what some call “founder’s syndrome” is not a stranger to the community arts sector. In some ways it may be worse because of the complex web of relationships that typically undergird the work. Hybrid programs are often a hard sell. Very few have what it takes to successfully build, run and promote community-based arts partnerships in our culturally estranged society. Those who do often become so intimately identified with their programs that it is very difficult to separate the person from the institution.

6.7 Constituent boards are not fundraisers. Board roles vary significantly among the programs in this study. (See 4.3) The boards in our sample that had high community representation did not have strong records as fundraisers. The credibility and

expertise these boards provided were seen as a major asset. They also felt that it was important for funders not to judge board effectiveness solely on fundraising ability.

- 6.8 Many expressed an aversion to overly directive funding relationships.** This was one of the most consistent views expressed in our conversations regarding funding. In the words of one artist, “If the support comes with too many strings, we just end up pretending.” Most respondents were quick to point out that this sentiment did not mean they felt that all guidelines and accountability measures were counterproductive. In fact, many said they welcomed guidelines that were focused, simple and clear. The central point that emerged was that community-based creative inquiry needs supporters who trust the people they invest in. A higher than usual tolerance for “failure,” or unexpected outcomes, was also seen as an important.
- 6.9 Unfunded mandates are disruptive.** When our interviewees asked what advice they would like to pass on to funders, the issue of unfunded mandates came up often. They felt that funders need to be more sensitive to the fragile economic and social ecologies that characterize arts-based community-development efforts. They also said that the labor required for administrative and evaluative mandates should be funded and realistically framed to accommodate each organization’s economic and labor conditions.

...the [Mural Arts] program is very picky about who they select to design and lead each project. Their insistence on quality is also represented by the excellence of the artwork on the walls, which they see as the physical representation of their community engagement process.
 –Making Exact Change case study

Part Four

Recommendations

The following recommendations are provided to inform and guide Art in the Public Interest as it continues its work in support of the community arts field. It is also hoped that these suggestions will respectfully challenge some assumptions about the how community-based creative inquiry can be encouraged and provoke further inquiry. Consequently, all that follows does not necessarily suggest direct action by API. Some recommendations are for joint action or advocacy with appropriate partners, while others propose facilitation, and in some cases, further study.

Specifically, the first section's recommendations address the next steps for continued research. The second section deals specifically with how API might contribute to the further development of the country's community-art support system. The last section addresses issues relevant to the funding community.

Our ability to survive and grow has been dependent upon and in response to meeting needs within our community. We have never been perceived as money scroungers with our hand continually in someone's pocket or continually looking for contributed financial support from local businesses.

—LaMoine MacLaughlin,
Northern Lakes Center for
the Arts

It is clear to us that the values and instincts that have guided API's efforts to date have served the field well. Any and all suggestions related to API's programs should be considered with this in mind. Flexibility, accessibility, responsiveness and, most important, respect are the principal hallmarks of API's current efforts. It is our hope that the following recommendations will help API perpetuate these core qualities as it responds creatively to new opportunities.

1. Next Steps for Making Exact Change

Recommendation 1.1

Expand the study sample to test Making Exact Change findings and methodology.

The ten programs reviewed in the study are a small sample of a large and growing field. In response to our initial outreach for the project, more than 100 different programs were recommended as possible research subjects. We believe this is just the tip of the iceberg. Given this, we recommend expanding the study cohort by another 20

programs. This larger sample would allow us to:

- Deepen our observations and test the preliminary conclusions reached in the first phase
- Broaden our understanding the trends, characteristics, patterns reported herein
- Increase the diversity of the programs in the study
- Further investigate potentially interesting findings that lacked sufficient data
- Refine and test the study's methodology

The organization has many partnerships. We always look at how we connect to individuals within organizations before we commit. In the end it is relationships between committed individuals that make partnerships.

–Ron Chew, Wing Luke Asian Museum

Recommendation 1.2

Enlist the field to help expand the library of case studies.

As was indicated previously, Making Exact Change has only scratched the surface of potential study sites. Given the potential lack of funds for such an effort, API might consider other methods for growing this section of the CAN digital library. Here are a few:

- Commission additional case studies using the Making Exact Change methodology and template.
- Invite programs to use the Making Exact Change template to create their own case studies.
- Create an online “how to” pamphlet on the Making Exact Change case-study methodology.
- Create a case-study database that allows users to compare and contrast the case-study data across a variety of indices.

Since the purchase of the building in 2000, GRACE completed a limited capital campaign and reduced the mortgage debt by 70 percent and completed the first phase of building renovations.

–Making Exact Change case study

Recommendation 1.3

Apply in-depth narrative research methods to a smaller sample to deepen the findings.

Given the importance of context in the community art field, we recommend a third phase of study. We suggest using narrative research protocols pioneered by Harvard sociologist Sara Laurence Lightfoot in her book “The Good High School” to study five to seven of the 30 case studies in more depth. This process, which is often referred to

as “portraiture,” is a disciplined process of description, interpretation, analysis and synthesis. The resulting program portraits would provide a contextual shape for the data developed in the shorter case studies. We feel this approach will increase the relevance and accessibility of the Making Exact Change research.

Recommendation 1.4

Use further research to address more nuanced questions about the field.

The first phase of this study takes a relatively quick look at ten diverse programs. As such, it is more descriptive than it is analytical. If the additional research recommended above is undertaken it will allow more complex contextual questions to be addressed. Here are a few that might be considered.

- What leadership qualities were instrumental at critical junctures in these histories?
- Are there any discernable patterns in the historic trajectories of these programs?
- Beyond organizational leadership, what roles among funders, community leaders, artists and board members were instrumental to these sustained successes?
- Beyond the easily discernable cause/effect outcomes, what are the extended influences of these programs (i.e., other programs, leadership, funding patterns) ?

Nonprofits with the complex and somewhat hybridized identity of Manchester Bidwell do not fit neatly into current funding categories.

Current public policy does not let tax dollars flow easily to community-based organizations that offer viable and valuable educational assets that enrich schools and the communities they serve.

–Josh Green, Manchester Bidwell Corporation

Recommendation 1.5

Expand the Making Exact Change model to include hybrid arts/social-science approaches to evaluation, documentation and research.

The research methodology use for this study should be refined and expanded. In future investigations multiple data-collection tools should be employed, bringing together both the quantitative with the qualitative. This could include: surveys, structured interviews, careful textual analysis of documents and interview data, participant observation, interpretative observation by journalists or other artists, comparative data from other sources and research, case studies and focus groups. The results from one source can then be checked against the results from others, allowing evaluators to approach the standards of validity and reliability necessary to good social science. While quantitative measures provide an assurance that one’s conclusions are broadly accurate, qualitative sources provide the deep meaning — the heart — of the matter.

2. API and Improving the Community Arts Infrastructure

The recommendations in this section are made in response to some of the broader community-arts infrastructure issues identified in this study. We would advise API to address the recommendations in this section systematically, emphasizing partnerships or alliances whenever possible.

Recommendation 2.1

API should continue its key leadership role for the community-arts sector in the U.S.

API's track record justifies its continued development as a prime community-arts learning center. API's service-oriented philosophy and long-term approach is very compatible with effective community-arts practice. Based on the conversations conducted for this study, it is clear that the organization has a good reputation in the community arts sector as an honest broker and supporter in the field. This provides a good foundation for any of the new initiatives discussed in the recommendations that follow. I also feel it would be worthwhile to continue convening the kind of working group that gave impetus to this study. We would encourage broadening this group to include representatives from the human-service and community-development sectors. The regular interaction of such groups will precipitate needed cross-sector discussions and debate.

Recommendation 2.2

Continue to develop CAN as a meeting place and learning center.

There is a strong interest throughout the community-arts field for quality information and learning opportunities. The learning resources and materials that comprise the CAN Web site respond well to this need. Hopefully, the publication of the case studies in this study will add to the site's usefulness. As API continues to build its digital library, we would encourage further development of curricular units and/or syllabi that could be used for training. For example: articles and case studies that describe particularly effective community partnerships or innovative funding strategies could be linked or digitally packaged for use in a class or workshop. Doing this would allow CAN to function as both a traditional library and serve the learning and mentoring needs of the broader field.

Volunteers have also played a big role in the organization's ability to sustain itself. Volunteers are active in everything from performing to fundraising to providing refreshments following the concerts to cleaning the facility.

—Lamoine MacLaughlin,
Northern Lakes Art
Center

The [GRACE] staff recognizes the value of this for program development and fundraising, but does not at this time have sufficient resources to devote to formal assessment.

—Making Exact Change:
case study

Murals often serve as an indicator of a neighborhood that has the ingredients to create revitalization, including a diverse population and a strong civic life. To the extent that murals serve as an expression of that transformation, we can say that they have an impact in stabilizing and sustaining processes of community revitalization.

—From a University of Pennsylvania-sponsored study of MAP

Recommendation 2.3

Consider a CAN fellows program.

The Community Arts Network has rapidly evolved to become the journal of record for the community-arts field in the U.S. Over the years, CAN has developed a stable of writers and researchers who have provided a broad and balanced view of the emerging community-arts field. We encourage CAN to formalize some of these relationships as research fellowships. Using the model employed by Carnegie Mellon’s STUDIO for Creative Inquiry, these fellows would provide articles for publication and the peer review of articles. Like Mellon’s “STUDIO,” their only “compensation” would be the imprimatur of their CAN association, which should increase with time. This, in turn, should improve the rigor and consistency of discourse and debate in the field.

Recommendation 2.4

Use CAN to further develop the foundation for a community-arts support network.

We view the ongoing building of a core network of community-arts fellows, practitioners and supporters as essential to the development and continuity of the field. The originating network would likely be CAN fellows and their cross-sector partners. Over time, this could evolve into an extended network of community-arts practitioners, subject-matter experts and new and veteran learners with widely varying levels of expertise. The network would offer a variety of ways of providing links and referrals. These might range from a directory of case studies and practitioners, to seminars and symposia on specific topics related to the field, to internships, apprenticeships and mentorships, and one-on-one technical assistance. This network would not only provide access to practical resources, but give the field a strong sense of identity as a group that is committed to high standards and mutual support.

...foundations are increasingly looking for more measurable outcomes. The challenge is to create outcome chains which are organic to programs rather than simply responsive to foundation requests.

—Liz Sak, CityKids

Recommendation 2.5

Develop an online arts-based community-development presentation series.

The series should be seen as an opportunity for both learning and network building. The format should provide opportunities to hear about exemplary programs and threshold issues relevant to the field, as well as active contribution and interaction by participants. One approach might be to commission exemplary practitioners to create and deliver online presentations on their work or on a specific issue. Presenters could be asked to design a program that both instructs the field and promotes the development of the CAN network. We would recommend starting with a pilot one-year series with a minimum of one formal event every other month.

Recommendation 2.6

Educate funders about the complex ecology of community-arts development.

Many in the community-arts sector feel misunderstood. Some point to funders who do not appreciate the complex web of interdependent relationships and resources they depend upon. Others feel that the field suffers from a negative stereotype. Another common perception is that the field suffers from its own internal blindness and needs to learn more about itself before it can seek to improve its status and health.

Within the field, there is a great awareness of the network of artists, arts organizations, local arts agencies, health and wellness providers, government agencies, funders and the public that make up this ecology. Nevertheless, neither the geography nor the condition of this creative system has been clearly represented to funders, the arts community or the general public. Because of this, some in the community-arts field feel that available support does not respond to their needs or values. Given the meager resources available to community artists, it is incumbent on the field to make sure that its investor partners are well informed.

We encourage API to explore ways to help increase funder awareness about the complexity, diversity and effectiveness of the community-arts field. The data gathered through this study and similar efforts could be used to illustrate the complex and fragile community-arts ecology. Increased awareness of this system among funders and policy makers could help to improve the creativity and efficiency of the country's community-arts support system.

...their rural location and small staff means that [GRACE is] not able to do the cultivation necessary to "get on the radar screen."

–Making Exact Change
case study

3. Issues and Opportunities Relevant to the Funding Community

Recommendation 3.1

Consider investment-oriented funding strategies that can respond directly to specific community ideas, needs, situations and opportunities.

Some of the projects initiated by the Village of Arts and Humanities have not been completed or have not fulfilled their goals. These “unsuccessful” efforts are seen by Yeh as, “the price of doing business in a community that has struggled for its survival for decades.” She describes the pattern of her work as “three steps forward and two steps back.”

—Making Exact Change: Village of the Arts and Humanities case study

According to our sample, traditional, directive grant making and community arts programs do not work well together. The problem, they say, is that some funders view the shifting dynamics inherent to community-based work a liability. Those interested in replicable models also find themselves at odds with the kinds of community-specific approaches identified in this study. We feel these apparent incompatibilities present a unique opportunity for funders to question the assumptions that have informed traditional approaches to community-arts funding and develop a more flexible, investment-oriented support strategy.

We encourage funders to respond to this situation by developing support programs and services based on a venture-capital, community-development investment model. This approach would request proposals for projects that address specific arts-based community-development investment goals and objectives. This differs from the traditional grant approach in that it is driven by the field. The core assumption here is that the most productive ideas and opportunities will come from community-arts partnerships in the field, not grant guidelines. These investment goals and objectives could include:

1. Artistic excellence
2. The project’s feasibility
3. The project’s contribution to one or more of the following:
 - The creation of innovative arts-based community-development programs of high quality
 - The building of a sustained support system or infrastructure for the creation and delivery of arts-based community-development programs
 - The development of new constituencies or venues for arts-based community-development programs
 - Increased awareness of and support for arts-based community-development programs as a valuable community resource
 - Increased investment in the creation and delivery of arts-based community-development programs

With this type of program orientation, the specific design or methodology employed by applicants to achieve these objectives would not be mandated or directed. The onus, then, would be on the applicant to articulate how the proposed investment would produce one or more of the investment program’s desired outcomes. The object here would be to provide broadly defined program guidelines and categories that:

1. Allow the broadest range of artists and organizations to apply
2. Minimize mandates and restrictions
3. Are responsive rather than directive
4. Are focused on systemic outcome and impact
5. Invite authentic articulation of needs and opportunities
6. Encourage proposals along a continuum that ranges from the mundanely practical to the wildly inventive
7. Support the development of innovative leadership in the field

The Village went through a long and deliberate process when Lily decided to leave. It has been hard, but it has worked out well.

–Kumani Gantt, Village of Arts and Humanities

Related Strategies:

- Examine appropriate arts and nonarts investment-related funding models operating in the U.S.
- Provide significant resources and time for program planning and design.

Recommendation 3.2

Develop an investment regimen that is timely, adaptive, flexible and developmental.

Our survey of artists and arts organizations has shown that the community-arts environment is modest in capacity and experience. Given this, we feel funders should provide maximum flexibility to respond creatively to unanticipated opportunities, needs and ideas. There are a number of ways this can be achieved. One is to create a selection process that allows for a very broad and creative range of responses to proposals. This approach allows panelists or staff the leeway to make “extraordinary” recommendations regarding the amount and duration of resource allocation. Another strategy is to approach some recipients of grants and/or services as developmental partners rather than grantees. These approaches give funders and their investment partners (grantees) an opportunity to work more closely together, over time, as projects evolve and change. Another developmental option is to produce requests for proposals (RFPs) for innovative approaches to specific issues, opportunities or ideas related to the development and delivery of arts-based community development. The RFP option combines

...this ad hoc way of working takes its toll. But the outcome is often extraordinary. They are also struggling with newcomers who do not bring the same level of commitment and energy as the founders

–Jojo Goan, Isangmahal

many of the program characteristics described in Recommendation 3.1 with the developmental strategies discussed here. One other approach to increasing programmatic flexibility and adaptability is the sudden-opportunity/quick-turnaround funding strategy described in Recommendation 3.3.

Recommendation 3.3

Make both sudden-opportunity/quick-turnaround capacity and long-term investment a key element of any new funding strategy.

One of the most consistent concerns articulated by our interviewees is the long lead-time inherent in most grant programs. Based on this feedback, it is clear that many short-term opportunities and/or critical needs are going unmet because of a lack of quick-response capacity by funders or service providers. We anticipate that this need/demand for quick-turnaround resources will only increase as technology and the growing community of entrepreneurial administrators make their presence felt in the arts and health and wellness fields.

In response, we recommend that quick-response funding be considered an essential component of any community-arts support program. We define quick response as a completed request and award sequence of four to six weeks. We would advise a very simple application and decision process, vetted by a small number of readers and staff representing both the arts and community-development sectors. We would also encourage giving the program the power to both solicit and initiate applications to this fund. The criteria should be broad and flexible, but have as its primary focus investment opportunities that 1) fulfill one or more community-arts investment objectives and 2) could not be addressed through normal grant or service-program timelines.

There really have been very few bumps. Those that have occurred have usually resulted from our own ignorance or marching backwards into the future.

—Lamoine MacLaughlin,
Northern Lakes Art
Center

Another common concern of the field was the lack of sustained support, particularly for the development of infrastructure needs, such as program design, training, evaluation and long-term collaborative arts-based health and wellness endeavors. We would recommend the development of guidelines that invite and encourage requests for support for such sustained efforts. We also recommend giving staff and peer-review panelists “permission” to both identify and recommend support for large multiyear projects that offer significant and unique opportunities for artistic and/or infrastructure development.

Recommendation 3.4

Provide funding for evaluation, documentation and research as an integral element of any arts-based community-development investment strategy.

We recommend that funded programs both require and provide support⁵⁶ for evaluation. Technical assistance in evaluation design and implementation would also be helpful.

In our view, effective evaluations of community-arts programming should embody the following principles:

- The evaluation strategy to be followed should be an integral part of the initial program planning. Effective evaluation cannot be viewed as a *post facto* add-on.
- Desired outcomes should be explicitly identified at the outset. These outcomes should be reasonable, given the existing state of theory and research in the field.
- A balance should be struck between observation and documentation done by project staff and by external evaluators. This balance will assure both deep insight and objectivity.
- The data-collection strategy should focus on *process* as well as *outcome*.

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Appendix A: Request for Study Subjects

Letter requesting suggestions for Making Exact Change study subjects

October 20, 2004

Dear Colleague:

Over the next six months Art in the Public Interest and the Center for the Study of Art & Community will be working together to document arts-based programs that have produced significant and sustained positive impact on their respective communities. The goal of the project, called Making Exact Change, is to better learn how these programs have managed to thrive and make consistent, measurable contributions over time. Our intention is to help the growing but largely disconnected community-arts field learn from its most venerable and successful colleagues. We are writing to ask your assistance in identifying programs for this study.

To help you help us we have created a set of criteria to give you an idea of what we are looking for. Understanding that conditions differ widely from place to place, these should be considered general guidelines, not hard and fast rules.

We are interested in arts-based programs or initiatives that have produced one or more of the following Outcomes:

- **Programs of high artistic quality and significant and sustained community impact.** By “significant and sustained impact” we mean: change leading to the long-term advancement of human dignity, health and/or productivity for a minimum of ten years.

We know the ten-year threshold is a steep one. We are interested in programs that have established themselves as an essential part of community infrastructure. We will leave it to your best judgment as to how this translates in your neck of the woods.

- **The development of a sustained support system** or infrastructure for the creation and delivery of arts-based community development programs.
- **A measurable and indelible increase in awareness of and support for** arts-based community-development programs as a valuable community resource

- **Significantly increased investment** in the creation and delivery of arts-based community-development programs.

As you consider possible study subjects, please don't overlook programs that have been developed in partnership with or solely by nonarts entities. Also, we recognize that all good things do not last forever. So, if there is a particularly extraordinary program you are aware of that at one time met the criteria above, but has faded from the scene, let us know about that too.

In your response we would appreciate your providing us with as much of the following as possible.

- Your Name:
- Program Name:
- Contact Person:
- Address:
- Phone Number:
- E-mail Address:
- Web site:
- Why you think this program should be included:

Forward your suggestions to bill@artandcommunity.com with the reference "Exact Change"

Thank you in advance for helping with this effort. If there is someone else you think might have some good suggestions for us feel free to pass this letter on. Finally, please share any suggestions you have to make this project fruitful.

Respectfully,
Bill Cleveland

Center for the Study of Art & Community

Appendix B: Questions for Study Sites

January 10, 2005

Making Exact Change Questions for Study Sites

Thank you for considering participation in Making Exact Change. Through this project Art in the Public Interest and the Center for the Study of Art & Community will be working together to document arts-based programs that have produced significant and sustained positive impact on their respective communities. For the purposes of this inquiry, “significant and sustained positive impact” is defined as change leading to the long term advancement of human dignity, health and/or productivity. “Long-term,” in this context, is defined as a minimum of ten years. We are particularly interested in learning how programs such as yours define and measure your “change-making” efforts, and the program factors, history and environmental conditions that contribute to your those successes. Our ultimate aim is to help the growing, but largely disconnected community arts field, learn from its most venerable and successful colleagues.

We recognize that participating in this study will take time away from your ongoing work. Many of the questions that follow can probably be addressed with existing materials. Other information might be best passed on via interview or e-mail. After you have time to review these questions, we will be contacting you to discuss your interest in participating and the best way for us to collect the needed information.

1. Mission/Values

- What is your current mission?
- What ideas, values, and standards, have influenced the design, policies and delivery of your programs?
- What assumptions and expectations have informed your efforts?

2. Success/Change

- As the organization has evolved over time, how have you defined and redefined success?
- What projects or initiatives have been most representative of that definition? (Please describe).
- Has making positive community change been a specific intention of your work? If, so how has that change been defined?

- What unanticipated impact has your program had on the community(s) you work with?

3. Outcomes/Impact

- How have you measured and learned from your work?
- Which of your program's characteristics have most contribute to the program's significant and sustained positive community impact?
- What specific documentary, research or evaluation methods have been used to measure your community impact?
- What significant outcomes, particularly those related to community change, have emerged from your assessment efforts?

4. Environment

- What external conditions, situations or events have most impacted your efforts? How? Why?

5. Leadership

- What leadership practices and behaviors have characterized the program over the years?

6. Resources

- What is the current annual budget?
- How have the organization's finances changed the life time of your organization?
- Generally, what are the organizations sources of support?
- How has that changed over the lifetime of the organization?
- What support strategies have been critical to the program's positive community impact and sustainability?
- What non-financial support strategies (volunteers, technical assistance, etc.) have contributed most to the program's success?

7. Governance

- How is the organization governed?
- If you have a board of directors, what are its roles?
- How has the organization's governance contributed to, or limited your ability to provoke positive community change?

8. Partnerships

- What, if any, are the significant organizational partnerships, outside of funders, that have emerged in support your community efforts?

9. Training

- What preparation, orientation, or training is provided for staff, artists and/or nonarts personnel in support of your goals?

10. Constraints:

- What have been the bumps in the road? What persistent issues, conditions or problems have limited or constrained your ability to fulfill your mission.

11. Advice to Funders:

- What advice or reflections do you have to share with funders or other supporters about funder behaviors and attitudes that can advance or limit your program's efforts?

Project Personnel

William Cleveland, Principal Investigator

Cleveland is a writer, musician and director of the Center for the Study of Art and Community in Seattle, Washington. CSA&C works to build new relationships between the arts and the broader community in the U.S. and overseas. Prior to establishing the CSA&C in 1990, he directed, the ArtReach Program in Sacramento, California, California's Arts-in-Corrections Program, the California State Summer School for the Arts and the Walker Art Center's Education Department. His book "Art In Other Places" is published by the University of Massachusetts. His current book project, "Art and Upheaval," will document the efforts of artists working to help resolve conflict, promote peace and rebuild civil society in communities in crisis around the world.

Linda Frye Burnham, Editor

Burnham is founding co-director of Art in the Public Interest in Saxapahaw, N.C., and the Community Arts Network. She was founder of High Performance magazine and co-founder of the 18th St. Arts Complex and Highways Performance Space (all three in California). Burnham is a nationally recognized writer on performance art and community art, and co-author of "The Citizen Artist: 20 Years of Art in the Public Arena" (New York: Critical Press, 1998). She has been a staff writer or contributing editor for Artforum, The Drama Review and the Independent Weekly of North Carolina. She has acted as consultant, panel member or writer for a wide variety of national projects; recently she has worked with the Rockefeller Foundation PACT Program, the National Performance Network's Building the Code Project, the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies' "Increasing Engagement in Arts and Cultural Activities" project and Americans for the Arts' Animating Democracy Initiative. For the Community Arts Network, she edits APInews and develops and edits all other material appearing on the CAN Web site and writes and directs Special Projects.

Steven Durland, Designer

Durland is founding co-director of Art in the Public Interest in Saxapahaw, N.C., and the Community Arts Network. He was editor of High Performance magazine (1985-1997); co-founder of the 18th St. Arts Complex in Santa Monica, Calif.; and co-author of "The Citizen Artist: 20 Years of Art in the Public Arena" (New York: Critical Press, 1998). Durland is a visual artist whose art has been present in solo exhibitions in New York, Los Angeles, New Mexico, Pennsylvania and Massachusetts. He has received a South Dakota Arts Council Fellowship and an Asian Cultural Council Grant for travel and research in Japan. Durland is owner of Durland Communications, an Internet design company. For the Community Arts Network, he conceptualizes, designs and manages the CAN Web site.

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Making Exact Change

How U.S. arts-based programs have made a significant and sustained impact on their communities



CityKids
NEW YORK, NEW YORK



Grassroots Arts and Community Effort (GRACE)
BANDWICK, VERMONT



Isangmahal Arts Collective
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON



Manchester Craftsmen's Guild
PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA



Mural Arts Program
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA



Northern Lakes Art Center
AMERY, WISCONSIN



Swamp Gravy
COKQUITT, GEORGIA



Wing Luke Asian Museum
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON



Zuni-Appalachian Exchange & Collaboration
ZUNI PUEBLO, NEW MEXICO & WHITESBORO, KENTUCKY

Front Cover: Village of Arts and Humanities
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA



The Community Arts Network
P.O. Box 68, Saxapahaw, NC 27340