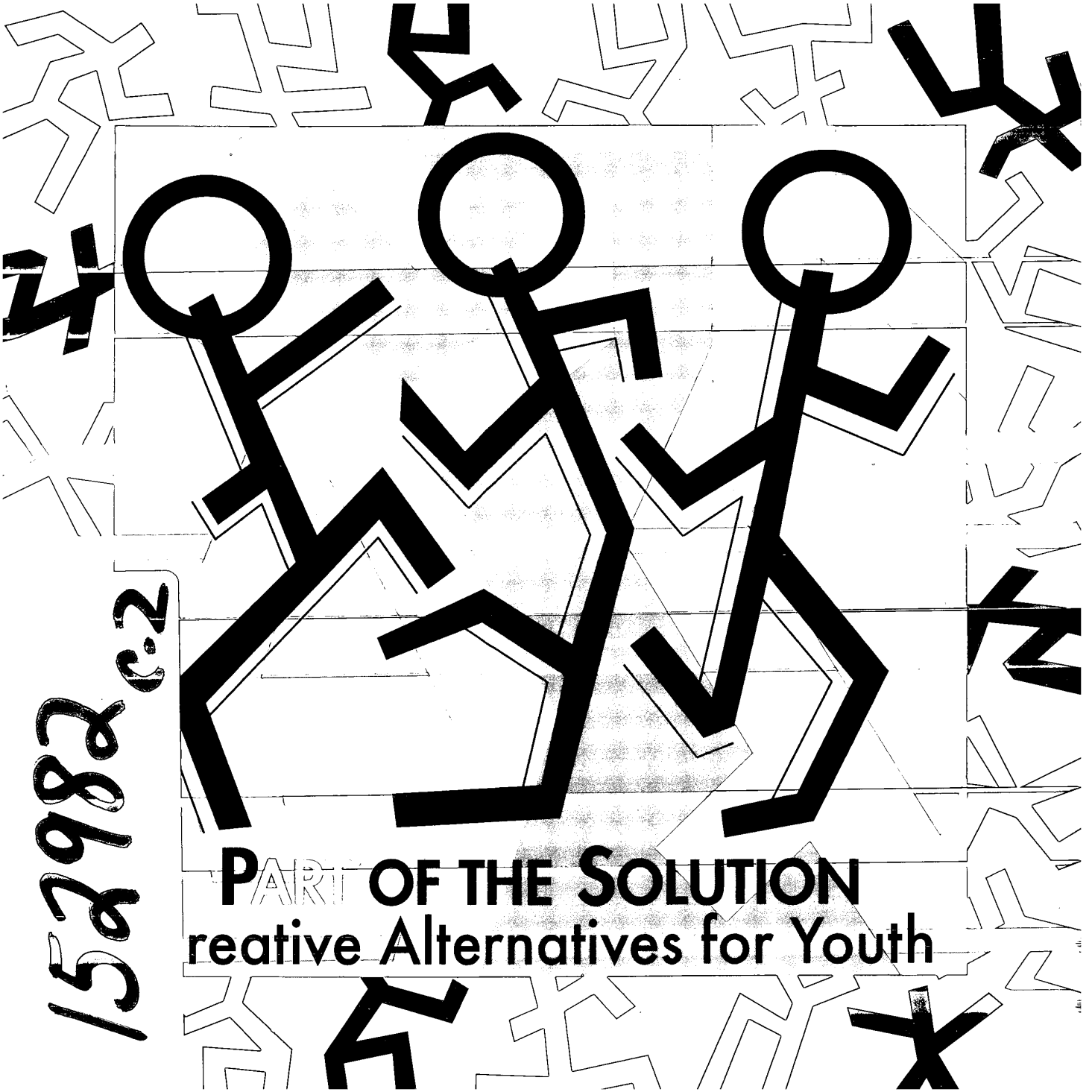

PART OF THE SOLUTION

reative Alternatives for Youth

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Creative Alternatives for Youth

Edited by Laura Costello

Published by the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies in cooperation with the National Endowment for the Arts and the United States Department of Justice

The National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA) is the membership organization of the nation's state and jurisdictional arts agencies. The members, through NASAA, participate in the establishment of national arts policy and advocate the importance of the diverse arts and cultures of the United States. NASAA's mission is to provide its member agencies with the information, resources, and representation they require to engage issues proactively and serve the public effectively.

The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), an independent agency of the federal government, was created in 1965 to encourage and assist the nation's cultural resources. The NEA is advised by the National Council on the Arts, a presidentially appointed body composed of the chairman of the endowment and twenty-six distinguished private citizens who are widely recognized for their expertise or interest in the arts. The council advises the endowment on policies, programs, and procedures, in addition to making recommendations on grant applications.

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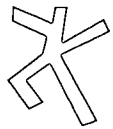

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Finally, we want to acknowledge Rondell Crier, a student pursuing a career in computer graphics and an Alumni of YA/YA in New Orleans (featured in chapter 5), who designed our cover and much of the book's interior. His work is a tribute to the vitality and creativity of America's youth and a positive reflection of the power of the arts to help shape young lives.

Laura L. Costello
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National Assembly of State Arts Agencies

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Foreword

The arts are part of the solution to problems that endanger America's youth — problems of teenage pregnancy, violence, drug abuse, and dropping out of school. This assertion is supported by an ever growing number of success stories from communities of all sizes and economic circumstances. The purpose of this publication is to share some of these stories that illustrate the positive difference made in the lives of children and their families by artists, arts organizations, and community groups with assistance from the National Endowment for the Arts, the fifty-six state and jurisdictional arts agencies, and the seven regional arts organizations.

The arts have always been, and always should be, valued and supported for their inherent worth. But we should not overlook their other public benefits; the arts enrich, transform, and even save lives. And in so doing they help to address some of society's greatest challenges, especially those involving youth. This is recognized by leaders of federal, state, and local agencies concerned with education, law enforcement, drug prevention, and other social services. The assistance of the Department of Justice in the production and distribution of this publication reflects the growing interest in the arts as a resource for addressing these public purposes.

Part of the Solution follows *Celebrating America's Cultural Diversity* and *A Rural Arts Sampler*, which document some of the ways the Arts Endowment and its state and regional partners are working together to foster America's diverse cultural heritage and promote the arts in rural areas. This series of publications is intended to share successful strategies and show how the arts address public priorities, delivering remarkable benefits to a great variety of people and communities.

The arts have great attraction. Like nothing else they engage the hearts and minds of children. And once engaged with the arts, children are more likely to develop the discipline, self-confidence, and creative thinking that can help them succeed in other endeavors and contribute to the economic and social health of their communities. Of course, the arts cannot by themselves address all of the problems that affect the lives of children. But the chapters that follow demonstrate just how much we can accomplish with a small investment in projects that offer creative alternatives for youth.

Jonathan Katz
Executive Director
National Assembly of State Arts Agencies

Edward Dickey
Director
State & Regional Program
National Endowment for the Arts

Introduction

"Of all people," Thomas Macaulay wrote, "children are the most imaginative." That certainly has been my experience. When I ask a classroom of elementary school kids how many can draw or sing or dance, the hands go up in unanimity. Our great challenge as adults is to tap that creativity, to channel that positive energy so that it's their imaginations that are running wild, not the kids themselves.

It is not enough to love, feed, and house our children. Teaching them values and giving them good schools and an environment safe from crime are important, and yet they need more. To help our future generations reach their full potential, they require opportunities for creative expression, opportunities the arts can provide.

Sadly, many children today are "at risk" of dropping out of school, of dropping out of society at large, not only in impoverished inner cities, but in rural areas and middle class communities. The incidence of drug use and violence, of pregnancy and suicide among our young people is tragic. To save our children, to open their lives to new possibilities, we as parents and family members, teachers and volunteers, civic and religious leaders must marshal all our resources, public and private.

The arts are one such resource, rich and inexhaustible. Disciplined and creative work — in music, dance, and theater; in visual arts and folk arts, in film and video, in literature and design — can help instill values, create pride in our cultural heritage, and engender a sense of self-worth. Children who pick up a paintbrush or a pen, a clarinet or a fistful of clay are less likely to pick up a needle or a gun. They've got better things to do.

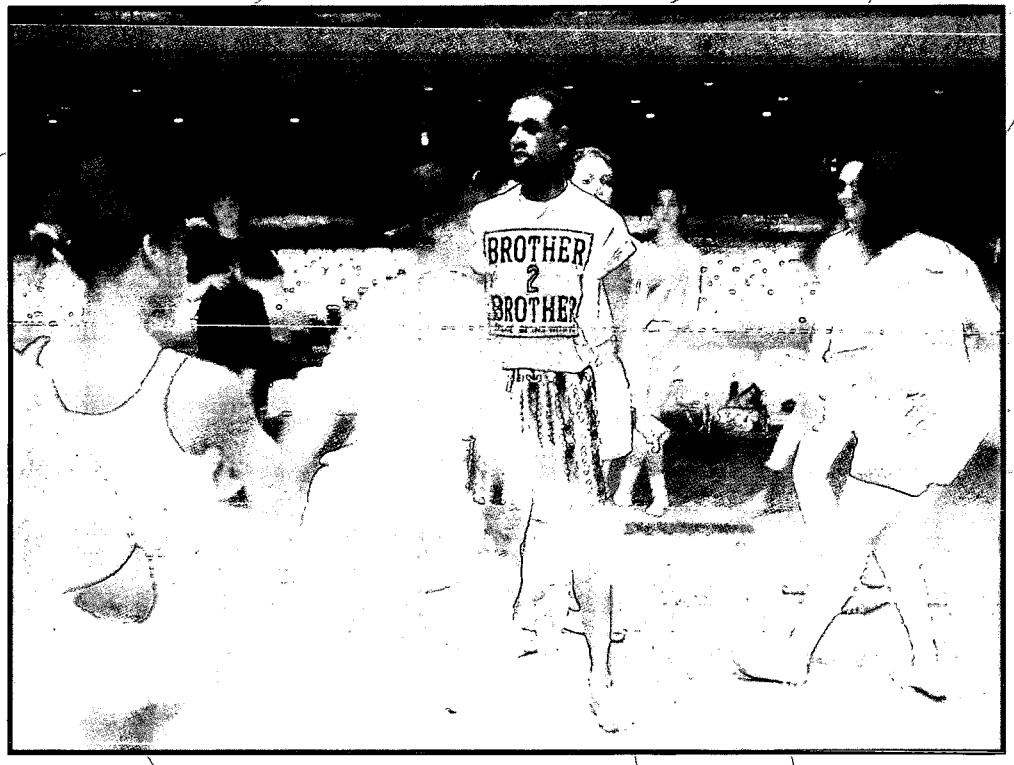
In my visits to communities in every state, I have witnessed over and over again the almost magical power that the arts have to instill pride, wonder, and creative purpose in youth. The stories that follow describe just a few of the projects that are successfully drawing on this power.

While support from the National Endowment for the Arts and its state partners helped to make these projects possible, none could have happened without the dedicated commitment of individual artists, often working with parents, teachers, arts institutions, and local agencies. These projects draw their energy from the local level, and the people who make them happen are grass-roots heroes. Such success requires hard work and careful planning with concerned professionals and volunteers who understand their communities and young people.

This book was developed and supported through the cooperative efforts of the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA), the Department of Justice, and the National Endowment for the Arts. I would like to thank our partners for helping us share so vividly the powerful evidence that the arts are truly part of the solution. And I trust the stories in this book will inspire others to reach, to teach, to give of themselves for the good of our children.

Jane Alexander
Chairman
National Endowment for the Arts

Dancing into the Future



Samuel LeSane, a former dancer with the Ailey Repertory Ensemble, teaches a jazz class to kids at the AileyCamp in Baltimore, Maryland.
Photo by Barbara Haddock, *The Baltimore Sun*

by Jean Marbella

They make their way onto the stage of the cool, dark auditorium, some slouching, some snapping gum, most with that arms-folded, don't-mess-with-me attitude of the preteen set.

But Samuel LeSane will have none of it. The trim and finely muscled dancer strides to center stage, issues some crisp commands, and rearranges the clumps of students into neat, staggered rows. He signals a pianist and drummer in the corner, the music begins, the chattering and horseplay stop, and, almost imperceptibly, heads are held a little higher and backs a little straighter. Class is underway.

Such is the transformative power of dance.

While their friends were sleeping late and lazing away the summer, some one hundred Baltimore middle school students, many from the city's most disadvantaged neighborhoods, spent their Mondays through Fridays, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., at AileyCamp, an intensive, six-week program of dance taught by faculty of the renowned Alvin Ailey American Dance Center and local professionals from the Baltimore city schools.

With little if any prior dance training, the students initially struggled to master the formal art of ballet, the explosive energy of jazz, the intense and grounded movements of modern, and the Afro-Caribbean-based technique of Katherine Dunham. Yet after six weeks, the campers put on a performance for their parents, friends, and other supporters, taking proudly to the stage to show the happy results of all their hard work.

But beyond the sweat and the sore muscles, the *pas de bourree* steps and the *port de bras* arm movements, larger and perhaps more important lessons were learned as well: the rewards of discipline, new modes of self-expression, and new avenues toward self-esteem. And they've learned to trust and work with their peers who, just six weeks ago, were strangers from other neighborhoods and backgrounds.

"Alvin envisioned dance as a sort of tool, a camouflage of what the real purpose of the camp is about," says Mr. LeSane, a former dancer with the Ailey Repertory Ensemble who now teaches jazz at the camp, as well as at the Alvin Ailey American Dance Center. "He wanted to create something specifically for what middle-schoolers need at their age — to help them develop their self-esteem and learn to bond with one another. That was his mission, and I do believe in it. Just being physical, you feel better about yourself, you're more energized, you're much more alert. That's all part of personal development."

Growing Every Year

Now in its fourth year in Maryland, AileyCamp began in 1991 as a small pilot program for twenty-five students in Baltimore. It has grown to the point that in 1994, more than eighty-five students attended a six-week camp at Morgan State University in Baltimore, and about thirty participated in a two-week minicamp at Frostburg State University in western Maryland. The program in Maryland is modeled on the Ailey company's first camp in Kansas City, which began in 1989.

Funded by both public and private grants (about a 60-40 split), AileyCamp has won plaudits from the community for bringing world class dance to children who ordinarily would not be exposed to such riches.

"It is so extraordinary, to the point that it's almost unique, that dancers the caliber of the Alvin Ailey company would settle in here and do something like this," marvels Jim Backas, executive director of the Maryland State Arts Council, which along with the National Endowment for the Arts has supported AileyCamp since its inception. And the contribution of the Ailey staff goes beyond artistic excellence, Mr. Backas adds. The Ailey staff also brings a genuine

dedication to serving its communities. "They're such wonderful teachers. They relate so well to the community," he says. "Alvin [Ailey] himself was like that. He really cared. They're such positive people; they don't dwell on the underprivileged aspect. They instead dwell on the richness of the American experience."

In 1990 the arts council also helped to establish the Alvin Ailey Dance Theater Foundation of Maryland, which is a separate organization dedicated to promoting the work of the Alvin Ailey Company and to sponsoring the AileyCamps in Maryland. The camp is one part of the foundation's ongoing community outreach program. During company tours, the dancers often visit local schools, conducting master classes and workshops. The second company, the Repertory Ensemble, tours the state as well, often performing in small-town venues. The performances and the outreach programs have developed a symbiotic relationship — one creates an interest in the other. The performances attract children who want to participate in the camps or workshops, and those programs in turn create audiences for the performers.

> "Middle school children are at risk, period, no matter what. This is when they're at risk for pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, alcohol, drug abuse."

While Maryland's AileyCamp is designed for "at-risk" children, Community Outreach and AileyCamp Director Phadelma Ashley dislikes the label, saying, "Middle school children are at risk, period, no matter what. This is when they're at risk for pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, alcohol, drug abuse."

Many of the campers come from single-parent, economically disadvantaged families. Some have lost family members to crime, divorce, or AIDS, and lack the role models and support systems they need during this critical time in their development.

Camp administrators realize six weeks can't begin to make a dent in these problems, and so they follow up with the campers. They invite the kids to regular monthly activities run in partnership with community organizations like the YMCA and Camp Fire Boys and Girls and keep tabs on their progress.

"We stay in touch with [the kids'] guidance counselors and principals through periodic communications. We see how their grades are progressing," says Ms. Ashley. "And we get letters from families. Sometimes we don't realize the impact the camp has had until we hear from them, how they feel the camp has changed their children's lives." She takes pride in the success stories: One of the white campers went on to win a Black History Month competition run by a television station. Others have returned to camp a second year as "ambassadors" who help the new campers.

Bringing Together a Diverse Group

Potential campers are recruited through school systems and community organizations. The kids apply for the program and are interviewed by staff members. "That's the hardest thing," Ms. Ashley says. "We look for a mix — some of them may exhibit leadership skills, and some don't — so we think they can help each other. We look for students who seem on the edge — some, for example, come from single-parent homes or have had a death in the family or a sister who has become pregnant. Others who have not been functioning well in school, or have sought counseling, or do not necessarily get to experience cultural activities."

For Aaron Ellis, a divorced father who has custody of his two young daughters, the camp seemed

like a godsend. "She was going through changes in her life, and she needed a little help," Mr. Ellis says of his eleven-year-old daughter Helena. "I've noticed that she really seems to have matured through this program. She enjoyed meeting and making a lot of new friends. She liked the teachers; they would talk to her and suggest books she could read."

Helena was one of six girls placed in the camp through a community group, the Coalition of 100 Black Women, which pairs the young women with mentors. "I'm impressed with the total experience," says Dr. Ann Emery, president of the coalition and a retired assistant superintendent for Baltimore public schools. "You develop the whole self."

Indeed, in addition to four dance classes, the campers take classes in creative writing and personal development. Between those six classes, the children generally can find at least one if not more places in which to shine. "They push you a lot. They push for your effort, like, your willpower," one camper, twelve-year-old Margaret Wilson, says of her teachers. "But I like it. I like creative writing. We have to make up stories — and I have a lot of ideas."

In creative writing, the students work on stories, monologues, and scenes. Reading their composition books can be a surprising, sobering glimpse into what these youngsters confront on a daily basis: there are stories about pregnant girls and scenes of shootings outside their windows and homeless people living in the filth of the streets. It's no wonder that for some students, the camp is a refuge of sorts. "I have to wake up early to catch the bus to get here, but I like it," says LaDeia Lashley, age eleven. "It's better to be in camp and stay off the streets and get away from the violence."

Teaching the non-dance classes are Shella Davis, the chairman of the guidance department at a Baltimore middle school, who teaches the personal development classes; and Tony Tsendeas, a teacher at the Baltimore School for the Arts, who has taught creative writing to the campers for four years. As another form of creative expression, the students' writing is used in the performance that concludes the camp: some perform monologues they've written, others act in scenes written by their classmates.

An Emphasis on Discipline

Whatever the class, the teachers demand both effort and compliance. Goofing off, talking in the back of the room, or showing disrespect for the teachers or fellow students simply isn't tolerated. Yet within the structure, there is room for individual attention and caring — if there is one thing that this diverse group of children share, it's a tangible need for someone to just listen and take their concerns seriously.

"I like my teachers. They have more time for you than teachers at school," says Crystal Jones, age twelve. "They listen to you. When I first came here, I didn't know anybody. I was, like, shy. But now I've made friends. Your friends, you can tell them things."

"You like me, you enjoy having me in class, don't you? Can I stay for your next class?" one girl cajoles, throwing an arm around Doris DeMendez, who teaches the Dunham technique. "Oh, I don't even want you in this class," the teacher jokes, even as she returns the hug. "We don't realize sometimes how much attention some of these kids need," Ms. DeMendez says later. "It's amazing how much they crave it."

Ms. DeMendez, who has danced on Broadway and appeared in movies such as *The Wiz*, has been with the AileyCamp for five years, joining the Baltimore staff after serving as both a teacher and the artistic director of the Kansas City camp for two years. "The

hardest part, I would say, is getting the kids used to the discipline of dance, whatever technique is being taught," she says. "It's hard getting them to just stand still; they keep asking, 'Why can't we just move around?' "

That, of course, is what makes dance an art: It is controlled rather than random movement, purposeful rather than meaningless. And it is what makes dance the perfect vehicle for what the teachers want to impart to their students.

The lessons begin with the dress code. Campers are issued tights, leotards, shorts, AileyCamp T-shirts, and ballet shoes. Hair must be off the face. The uniforms serve a dual function: They're necessary for the stretching, bending, and jumping of dancing, of course. But more subtly, they make clothing less important and less of a means for getting attention and feeling good about yourself. Rather, performing well in class is the way to succeed.

And the dress code is enforced. "This is not acceptable," Tom Stevens declares after half a dozen of his ballet students show up without their slippers and he takes down names to call their parents. "All of the rules should be very clear by now." The students have to sit out the class — which initially may seem like a treat, but there's no socializing allowed, just silent auditing from a corner of the airy dance studio.

Building on the Basics

The classes are run in the time-honored progression of warm-ups, simple exercises, larger movements, and, finally, combinations that link steps, turns, and/or jumps in a memory-challenging way.

In Mr. LeSane's jazz class, for example, class begins with head rolls, then shoulder rolls, moving incrementally to arm extensions, torso isolations, hip swivels, and on to patterns that take the students upstage, downstage, and diagonally across. As the exercises become more strenuous, the class is divided into smaller groups so that some can do the sequences while the rest take quick breathers. It's a popular class among the students. The showy, Broadway-style moves are a perfect outlet for their energies. Students immediately line up to do the exercises a second and even third time.

"What I try to do is capitalize on all this energy," Mr. LeSane says. He teaches the students how, once they've completed their exercise, to circle around the perimeter of the stage, rather than straight across the center where their classmates are dancing. "It's not only dangerous," Mr. LeSane says of the collision factor, "but it's disrespectful to the performer."

As the camp progresses, the children seem more of a unit. They've come from all over the city, as well as some surrounding counties, and most knew no more than one or two of the other campers from their schools or neighborhoods.

The majority of those attending the camp at Morgan State are African-American, reflecting the racial makeup of Baltimore. The minicamp at Frostburg draws more white students, given western Maryland's population base. The organizers continually strive for more diversity, and have reached out to Jewish, Asian, Hispanic, and Native American communities in an effort to draw more applicants. In addition to their dance and writing classes, the campers have once-a-week cultural celebration activities, where, for example, they've watched performances by African, Israeli, and Korean dancers.

While the camp is not designed to turn out professional dancers, the students work towards a performance that they give at the end of their six-week stint. This year the performance was held at Morgan State's Murphy Auditorium on the night before the final day of camp. The performance drew parents, friends, and sup-

porters of the camp. The occasion marked an achievement for them, too. For parents, it's a chance to see for themselves what their children talked about all summer — the new dance steps, the new friendships, the new experiences. The performance is like a graduation ceremony, one of those rites of passage where parents stop and marvel at how their children are growing up so fast. For supporters, it's a chance to see their fund-raising efforts pay off.

A Triumphant Finale for All

"I think our accomplishments are two-fold," says Richard C. Hackney, an investment counselor who serves as chairman of the board of the Alvin Ailey Dance Theater Foundation of Maryland. "First are the wonderful audiences that we've been able to attract for the performances in Maryland by the Ailey dance companies, and second is what you're going to see tonight: the accomplishment of the kids and their pride."

Before the performance, the children are practically bouncing off walls. One girl needs ballet slippers, one boy needs a bobby pin for his yarmulke, a group practices their part of a dance. They're all bundles of barely containable emotions, ranging from nervousness to excitement to a rather poignant sadness that the experience is almost over. Hugs and photos abound. "I can't handle this, I'm going to miss everyone," one girl whispers to another.

The teachers, beaming with pride and joy themselves, work to settle and focus their students. The now familiar signal to quiet down — arm raised, two fingers up — circulates from teacher to teacher to student to student until everyone is silent and the group takes on a remarkable calm.

Just before going on stage Ms. Ashley tells the students softly, "All our spirit will radiate through dance tonight." And indeed for AileyCamp's teachers, parents, and audience members the spirit was there.

Once on stage, they turn into pros. They stride confidently on stage to perform the choreography of their teachers, who are the real pros and have created dances that are imaginative yet appropriate for the students' abilities. Dances are mixed with monologues and scenes that the students wrote.

There is an extended dance that starts with two groups of gangs, warily circling one another like *West Side Story*'s Jets and Sharks or real life's Crips and Bloods, until two begin a fatal fight and they all disappear. A group of girls dressed in long black skirts begins another seemingly unrelated number, but then, as gasps of realization flicker through the audience, it turns into a funeral for the dead gang member. Some of the dancers pick him up and carry him high above their heads and off the stage, followed by a group of swaying, mournful girls who link arms and slowly disappear as well.

The recital ends on a high note as all one hundred campers return to the stage to the applause and cheers of the audience. The restraint required to get through the demanding performance gives way to the students' natural energy, and they bask in the limelight of this one special night. But they know they didn't get there alone. Soon they're sharing the stage with their teachers, who each take a well-deserved bow and get pelted with handfuls of glitter from their students. The applause goes on and on for an experience that no one wants to end. □

Jean Marbella is a feature writer for The Baltimore Sun.

For further information on AileyCamp, please contact the Maryland State Arts Council at 601 North Howard Street, 1st Floor, Baltimore, MD 21201; phone 410-333-8232.

A.P.P.L.E. Corps
A Unique Partnership

Elementary school students in Casa Grande, Arizona, met daily for two weeks with artist Keith Johnson during an after-school residency in traditional African music, storytelling, and mask making.
Photo by Barbara Doble

by Rose McBride

It's three o'clock on a Wednesday afternoon, and the final school bell has rung. Do you know where your children are?

If your children are students at Cottonwood Elementary School in Casa Grande, Arizona, they're in the school cafeteria, listening to African folk tales and learning about African music and dance. "These guys have never played an African drum before," says guest artist Keith Johnson, referring to two boys who are busily teaching the drumbeats they've learned to their classmates, "but they've practiced enough in the last couple of days that they can teach the others a simple beat. And that makes them leaders in this group of kids." As participants in an after-school program run by the town's Parks and Recreation Department, the kids are spending two weeks with Johnson in an A.P.P.L.E. Corps residency.

As a special program of the Arizona Commission on the Arts, the A.P.P.L.E. Corps provides grants to after-school programs in schools, community centers, and parks and recreation programs across the state to fund guest artist residencies. Its purpose is to facilitate and support programs that help Arizona's children, families, and communities reject drugs. The A.P.P.L.E. Corps is a partnership of Artists, Private enterprise professionals, Prosecutors, Law enforcement officials, and Educators. These partners are unified by the belief that experiences in the arts are opportunities to build confidence, self-esteem, and pride, providing children and adults with productive activities that strengthen their resolve to turn away from substance abuse.

During its five-year history, the A.P.P.L.E. Corps program has reached approximately 33,000 educators, after-school program staff, students, and parents across the state of Arizona. It is currently funded by the National Endowment for the Arts and the Maricopa County Attorney's Office.

Developing New Partners

The origin of this unique partnership dates to 1989. At that time, lobbying efforts of the statewide arts advocacy organization, Arizonans for Cultural Development, and the Arizona Commission on the Arts resulted in the establishment of an increased fee for profit-making corporations filing annually with the Arizona Corporation Commission. The fees created the Arizona Arts Trust Fund, a fund of approximately one million dollars annually, which in addition to the state appropriation to the arts commission was dedicated solely to the Arizona arts community.

Immediately after the fund was established, a strong movement began in the Arizona State Legislature to divert the arts money for non-arts programs that addressed crime prevention. Although not previously allied with the arts community nor responsible for the administration of the fund, Maricopa County Attorney Richard M. Romley spontaneously stepped forward to speak out against shifting the money away from arts-based programs to crime prevention programs.

"After studying the issue I decided not to support the transfer of these monies to law enforcement," said Romley, in his recent testimony before the United States House of Representatives Interior Appropriations Subcommittee with oversight for the National Endowment for the Arts. "In view of my position as a prosecutor, my opposition to transferring more money to law enforcement surprised some. However, I believed then, as I do today, that if we abandon the positive contributions of art to our society in order to fight the drug war, then the drug dealers have won again. They should not be permitted to take from our community that which is good."

Romley initiated a lobbying effort and eventually persuaded state legislators not to divert the

Arizona Arts Trust Fund to non-arts programs. His leadership also opened the door for two diverse groups — the arts community and law enforcement — to come together and explore solutions to the extraordinarily complex problem of drug abuse. During early brainstorming sessions, several mutual beliefs surfaced: that unusual, creative partnerships were required to address issues of drug abuse, and that the arts had special qualities that could be applied to such partnerships. Resolving to seek additional community input, representatives from the Maricopa County Attorney's Office, Arizonans for Cultural Development, and the Arizona Commission on the Arts approached the Phoenix Police Department, the Arizona Department of Education, local artists, arts organizations, and arts agencies. This varied cross-section nonetheless shared common ground. With the gathering of these proponents, the A.P.P.L.E. Corps was formed — a partnership based on the premise that drug problems pose a serious threat to the community and that creative solutions from all parts of the community would be necessary to create change.

> " . . . if we abandon the positive contributions of art to our society in order to fight the drug war, then the drug dealers have won again. They should not be permitted to take from our community that which is good."

Recognizing a New Constituency

Initially, the A.P.P.L.E. Corps functioned as a resource listing of arts groups across the state offering programs with an antidrug message for school-age audiences. When the Arizona Department of Education announced that schools would be permitted to use drug prevention funds for arts events, it soon became clear that the demand for antidrug arts programming would exceed the availability of such offerings. In his role as county attorney, Romley administers the Maricopa County Anti-Racketeering Revolving Fund (or RICO fund), created by state statute and consisting of assets seized from drug dealers. Demonstrating his commitment to the A.P.P.L.E. Corps, Romley awarded $20,000 from the RICO fund to the Arizona Commission on the Arts to regrant to arts organizations for the development of programs with antidrug themes. Immediately afterward, Romley further strengthened the partnership between the arts and law enforcement by successfully advocating that the legislative language on the uses of RICO funds be broadened to include prevention programs.

While researching new outlets for serving Arizona's youth through the A.P.P.L.E. Corps, the arts commission became aware of the increasing number of quality after-school programs across the state, which often lacked both arts programming and the opportunity to receive arts funding. Further, after-school programs were operating in a variety of community-based settings, such as YMCAs, Boys and Girls Clubs, and parks and recreation centers, but were not participating in any of the commission's funding programs. Since they operate during hours when children are often not supervised, the connection with potentially at-risk youth was clear.

"Today, all kids are at risk, some to a higher degree than others because of environmental factors such as poverty, crime, and abuse," says Linda Siciliano, child care director at Phoenix's South Mountain YMCA, "But the kids who are most at risk are those who are alone

after school. Teen sex, drug use, gang activity — these things are most prevalent when the school day ends and there's nothing else to do." According to Pam Willier, recreation coordinator for the Phoenix Parks, Recreation, and Library Department, "One of the problems facing kids is the abundance of free time, especially after school. One of the things we try to do is fill that time with positive activities — and that doesn't mean just volleyball and basketball. The arts should be a part of it, too, because they can really hook a kid and steer him or her in a positive direction." With these considerations in mind, the arts commission identified after-school programs as ideal candidates for a new funding program. Subsequently, grants were sought and received from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Maricopa County RICO fund to develop a program that would connect after-school programs statewide with artists and arts organizations.

Getting Started

After-school program directors immediately responded with excitement. Recalls Gwen Worthington, community education director of Phoenix's Creighton School District, "My first thought was that finally we would have an opportunity — and the means — to enrich our after-school program through the arts, in a way that addressed our specific needs. Other grant programs were not as accessible to us, because they were limited to a regular school day schedule. But learning continues throughout the day."

Eligible applicants, who were defined as established after-school programs affiliated with parks and recreation programs, neighborhood centers, boys and girls clubs, or school districts, were encouraged to apply to the arts commission through a competitive process. Funding priority would be given to sites with limited access to arts programming, sites with youth populations at a high risk for drug abuse and gang involvement, or sites located in rural communities. Applicants also had to demonstrate their administrative capability to complete the project, prove their projects focused primarily on working with children and increasing staff skills in the arts, and show they had worked collaboratively with the guest artist in planning the project.

The Residency Design

To date, seventy-eight A.P.P.L.E. Corps grants have been awarded. Since some grantees choose to use their funds at more than one site, a total of 174 separate after-school programs will have participated in residencies by the end of the 1994-95 school year. Projects feature diverse artists and disciplines within a wide variety of structures. In each of the projects, after-school program directors select artists from the commission's artist roster. After-school program directors and artists collaborate to develop short-term residencies featuring three types of activities: staff training, workshops for children, and professional presentations of the artists' work to the community.

In training sessions with staff members, artists concentrate on increasing skills in a specific arts discipline, using videotapes, slide shows, lesson plans, and the same hands-on activities that will be presented during workshops with children. The benefits of the arts in building communication skills, promoting creativity, and encouraging self-expression — all tools in drug prevention — are also emphasized.

"I particularly liked the hands-on experiences the staff received as they made their own puppets and experienced success at creating something of their own design," said Nancy Kiser, after-school program director of Phoenix's Alhambra School District. "I believe that

they have found a creativity and resourcefulness that they did not realize they possessed."

Helping after-school program staff develop skills and ideas for using the arts to work with kids during — and more importantly, after —the project is the primary goal. "The beauty of this program is in the staff training," says Gwen Worthington, "After-school programs have a very high student turnover during the year, so a project that includes exciting, lively experiences specifically for staff really has an impact. Maybe it's not seen immediately, but the artist's influence is long-lasting and pervasive. We could never have trained our staff in the way that the artists have."

Artists also work directly with the children in workshops that don't necessarily focus on antidrug themes, but which do use the experience of making art as a vehicle for practicing cooperation, finding alternate solutions to conflicts, and increasing pride, self-esteem, and confidence. "We wanted the kids to realize they have talents and abilities and have a valuable contribution to make," said Downtown Phoenix YMCA Executive Director Lisa Druin on her project with muralist Martin Moreno. "It's a strategy to build their self-confidence so they won't feel like there's nothing better for them to do than get involved in drugs and other forms of antisocial behavior." The resulting mural from the YMCA project is on permanent display in the cafeteria of Phoenix's Wilson Elementary School. It is painted on three four-by-eight-foot panels, and depicts shadowy figures of children rising above images of pollution, crime, and poverty. "I've always wanted to paint a mural," said José Lopez, an eighth-grader who volunteered his skills to help the grade-schoolers who participated in the residency. "This was the only chance I'd ever have."

> "...the kids who are most at risk are those who are alone after school. Teen sex, drug use, gang activity – these things are most prevalent when the school day ends and there's nothing else to do."

A.P.P.L.E. Corps projects must also include a professional presentation of the artist's work, and project directors have been very creative in showcasing their guest artists. Residents of Page, a rural community on the edge of Navajo Indian Reservation, had the opportunity to visit the town's only art gallery during a two-week exhibition of Navajo rugs and jewelry crafted by artist Nanaba Aragon, who presented a residency at Page Middle School. In preparation for a project with muralist Martin Moreno, the Scottsdale Recreation Division held a public meeting for residents living adjacent to the site where a large outdoor mural was to be painted. Moreno discussed the history of mural art, presented a slide lecture of his work, and described the process through which the mural would be developed. Once a magnet for spray-paint "taggers," the wall on which the mural was painted remains free of gang graffiti more than a year after its completion.

A Challenge With Rewards

Artists have found that working in after-school programs is a challenging endeavor with many rewards. "It was a totally new experience, working with the South Tucson Youth Center and the children involved in the after-school program," said Leon Myron, a Native American artist whose residency, sponsored by the Tucson Parks and Recreation Department, taught grade-schoolers about traditional Hopi Kachina doll carving.

Photo by Brad Armstrong, *Scottsdale Progress Tribune*

Photo by Lois McFarland, *Scottsdale Progress Tribune*

A graphic testament to the impact of art, these two photographs depict the same wall in Paiute Park in Scottsdale, Arizona. On the left, the graffiti-covered wall before the Scottsdale Recreation Department's A.P.P.L.E. Corps Project. On the right, students work diligently on the mural, whose theme and content they decided during a residency with Phoenix artist Martin Moreno.

"They really got me thinking about how we as artists can challenge ourselves to give more of ourselves and help change kids' attitudes about themselves — and about other cultures." Since many of the projects focus on art forms that have specific cultural origins, participating students have the chance to learn about another culture firsthand — a valuable experience in developing respect for others.

Tucson musician Chuck Koesters, who worked with his wife, dancer Anne Bunker, in a residency with the Boys and Girls Clubs of Tucson, adds: "Most of the students we worked with were fairly young, and most expressed a real fear of gangs and drugs. In a community ravaged by gangs and drugs, children have to 'grow up' or 'harden' to survive. I feel our project gave our students a chance at self-expression that could free them, if only for a moment, of the pressure from their environment and show them that opportunities do result from choosing a different way of acting and reacting."

After-school programs have evolved over the last ten years to meet the changing needs of the family, according to Renee Chambers, community education director of Madison School District in Phoenix. That means accommodating a wider age range of kids, allowing for flexible scheduling and attendance, and understanding that the kids have already had a full day of structured classroom work by the time they get to work with the artist. Still, says mask maker Maria Luisa Ruiz, "These are wonderful kids. They need after-school activities to keep them busy, where they can share ideas and interact with each other in a safe setting. You have to be able to relate to them and become their friend and respect their traditions." Adds Chambers, "The love that the artist has for his or her work is absolutely contagious, and the kids pick up on that when they work together." Participating artists have responded by reevaluating their ideas and adapting their methods of bringing art to children.

Although A.P.P.L.E. Corps is still a pilot project, participating after-school directors attest to the impact of arts programming on the kids served by their programs. As Pam Willier says, "The arts have a very therapeutic value that can help kids communicate their state of mind. It gives them a chance to express things going on in their lives in a powerful and unusual way."

Project directors have also found that kids are attracted to after-school programs in larger numbers when an arts project is included. Reports Laura Fredericks, project director at Page Middle School, "It was so great to see the number of kids who wanted to be here instead of on the streets. Half of our kids were reservation kids, who may never have had this opportunity otherwise." Noreen Wernick, community education director of Sunnyslope Extended Day Program in Phoenix, recognized this benefit as well: "We had many more children in our program during the residency. Therefore, more were with us rather than home alone. This unique opportunity provided new exposure and opened new doors for our Extended Day Program."

Future Directions

After-school programs, whether offered through school districts, parks and recreation departments, or other community organizations, are here to stay. As professionals in a growing and developing industry, after-school program directors are continuously fine-tuning their offerings to reflect the changing needs of the families they're trying to serve. In spite of this, money continues to be tight. "After-school programs do not typically have funding," says Renee Chambers, "and that means we have to be very creative in finding new partnerships, like the one with the Arizona Commission on the Arts, in order to offer better programs each year."

The dedication of after-school program directors to present quality arts opportunities to the kids whom they serve cannot be ignored, nor can the anecdotal evidence that the arts do have an impact on participating youth. "The Arizona Commission on the Arts is committed to this program. We have reached new constituents: both students and after-school staffs. This program has challenged artists to adapt their presentations to nontraditional settings. Based on the response from the first three years of activity in after-school programs, we will find the resources for the A.P.P.L.E. Corps to continue," says Shelley Cohn, the arts commission's executive director.

"Gangs and drugs are examples of the attempts people make to plug the holes in society and to reduce the pain of poverty and low self-esteem," Chuck Koesters adds, "It will be a long process to fill the holes with art instead. But I think one big advantage of art is it's ability to improve self-confidence and self-worth, through the students' realization that they can produce something of beauty." Gwen Worthington agrees: "Anything that enriches a child's life has value, and the arts, in particular, get through to the soul of a child." □

Rose McBride is the Anti-Drug A.P.P.L.E. Corps Coordinator for the Arizona Commission on the Arts.

For further information on A.P.P.L.E. Corps, please contact the Arizona Commission on the Arts at 417 West Roosevelt Avenue, Phoenix, AZ 85003; phone 602-255-5882.

Voices of Youth

The Arts and Prevention in Vermont

Photo by Elizabeth Lawrence

Detail of a mural created by Vermont teens in foster care for the waiting room of the State Office of Social and Rehabilitative Services. The mural expresses the sense of isolation the teens felt in entering foster care.

by Elizabeth Lawrence

"You break it, you die," may not sound like a personal and artistic breakthrough, but for fifteen-year-old Corey from Vermont's rural Addison County, it was a strong expression of success and pride in his art. For over three months he had worked in the ceramic studio of the Frog Hollow State Craft Center and destroyed almost everything he created. In uttering these words while presenting his tile for a mural project, he indicated his personal investment and pride in his work. From then on Corey achieved remarkable success. He created a mask, a biographical totem pole, and a mythical creature that embodied fantasy and reality in a sophisticated three-dimensional work.

This opportunity for Corey and nine other high-risk teens was the result of one of the Vermont Council on the Arts' (VCA) Voices of Youth projects. Entitled Metamorphosis, this project was a collaborative effort between Middlebury High School's Alternative Education Program, Addison County Counseling Service, and Frog Hollow. For ten months in 1992-93, students met twice a week in the Frog Hollow Studio with Henry Tanaka, the resident ceramic artist, who shared his experiences and expertise. Ann Russell, a counselor from the high school, attended the sessions and observed the behavior and personal development of the youth involved. Metamorphosis was an appropriate name for this project, as the youth were transformed both by their work in clay and their experience with Henry.

Corey would say, "It will come out in the clay." He was right. Out of his work in clay came remarkable creations, a sense of pride, improved self-esteem, and the mastery of new skills. The project concluded in May of 1993 with an exhibition at the craft center. That fall, Corey was among four former students who went to Frog Hollow asking for another workshop, and so the project continues.

Henry Tanaka's desire to work with this group of young people at risk of dropping out of school, due to drug abuse or the stress of teen parenthood, came from his own experience. As a young adult, he discovered that by working in ceramics he was able to work through problems and put the issues he was facing into perspective. He was hoping for the same results with his students. "Corey came to the first classes exhibiting a lot of anger and violent tendencies. He never seemed able to complete a piece and he was a very reluctant participant. But he was the first student to master throwing on the wheel, and he developed remarkable textural skills. As much as I'd hoped for this to work, I was quite surprised by the dramatic change in his behavior compared with his initial attitude. It was quite amazing how the students' newly discovered skills seemed to relate directly to their self-confidence."

Metamorphosis was one of twelve VCA Voices of Youth projects funded in 1992 to create partnerships between the arts and human services for at-risk youth. The concept emerged from a series of meetings held around the state in which the VCA gathered ideas for an application to the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). Artists and individuals representing arts organizations, state and local human service agencies, drug abuse prevention programs, people with disabilities, and the Native American Abenaki community discussed the problems and needs of a number of populations. At every meeting concerns about the isolation and alienation of youth, and the lack of after-school programs for the teenage population were raised.

It Does Happen Here

A 1990 study by the National Rural Development Institute found that rural youth are more likely than their city or suburban counterparts to face failure due to

involvement with crime, substance abuse, and parental neglect. Rufus Chaffee, from the Vermont Office of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Programs, elaborated on this: "Vermont's economic and social problems certainly threaten the health and well-being of youth. But in rural areas, perhaps the greatest contributing factor to the possibility of failure for youth is isolation."

Most of Vermont's residents live on farms or in small communities set far apart from one another. Mountainous terrain, poverty, extreme weather conditions, limited services, and lack of transportation contribute significantly to a real and perceived sense of isolation. Outside of school, rural youth lack alternatives to the television culture. Few, if any, music, dance, or visual arts programs exist and there is little opportunity for the youth to explore a sense of place and identity.

Hearing what Vermont's citizens were saying, and recognizing that art and creativity are significant resources for preventing failure and increasing opportunities for at-risk youth, the VCA began to explore ways to bring the arts and human services communities together. The idea of developing partnerships with human service organizations and encouraging the use of artists and quality arts programming seemed to be an ideal way to use existing resources to help Vermont's youth.

In 1991 the VCA received funding from the NEA to support the Voices of Youth program, to develop local arts and human services partnerships and projects, and to foster long-term cooperation between Vermont's arts community and the Agency of Human Services. Working closely with the agency's Office of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Programs, the VCA developed a grants program to provide rural youth with opportunities to develop their own artistic voices.

Funding from the NEA, the VCA, the Vermont Office of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Programs, National Life, NYNEX, the Windham Foundation, and the Josephine Bay Paul and C. Michael Paul Foundation, as well as from local businesses and individuals has helped support Voices of Youth. Twelve different projects around Vermont have reached incarcerated young men; youth in foster care; homeless children; youth with disabilities; emotionally, sexually and physically abused adolescents; teen parents; and youth in alternative education programs.

> "You have to have some kind of passion in life. There is an excitement with drugs and crime, but art provides an excitement and passion that is positive."

Through Their Eyes

In an effort to document the feelings and experiences of adolescent participants, and create a vehicle for listening to the Voices of Youth, the VCA conducted a video evaluation of several projects, among them Metamorphosis and Voices of Woodside. In each the youth received training and guidance from videographer Stu McGowan and playwright Dana Yeaton on how to use a video camera, conduct interviews, develop scenarios, write scripts, and edit. With cameras in hand, the youth created videos that show their unique view of the projects.

In Metamorphosis, the students each took turns with the camera and combined many personal interviews to show how their initial reluctance was replaced by enthusiasm and pride. Two residents of the Woodside Juvenile Rehabilitation Center, Vermont's facility for juveniles who commit adult crimes, created a rap video. Both of these videos give a youth-focused

Photo by Henry Tanaka

This ceramic mask was created by a student in the Metamorphosis program, which resulted from collaboration between an alternative high school education program, a county counseling service, and a craft center.

evaluation of the Voices experience. Because of the popularity of music videos, adolescents are familiar with the medium of video and the Metamorphosis teens were no exception. They were very eager to use the camera and gain technical skills, but that wasn't necessarily the case with other art forms.

CoCo's Voice

Visual artist Sally Linder, who developed and coordinated the Voices of Woodside, says, "most at-risk youth find it very difficult to do art. They have almost no knowledge of art and the doors of creativity are closed to them. The first step is to expose them to a variety of art forms, but even then they remain frozen on the outside because they are afraid of being judged, afraid to fail. They have to be coaxed, nurtured, and loved so they can gain trust in the artist and discover the creativity in themselves."

Sally and other area artists introduced the residents to many art forms: music, photography, painting, poetry, video, and movement. Woodside residents created individual and collaborative works, including a mural on the basketball court, masks, musical tapes, and videos. Two residents, Sean and CoCo, created *Maximum Security*, a rap video depicting both a realistic and fictitious view of what it's like "inside" Woodside. While Sean's sophisticated camera work shows the negative aspects of being incarcerated, the lyrics and the tape as a whole are a creative vision of CoCo's experience and the consequences of a young life given over to criminal activity.

"I started dealing when I was 13," says CoCo. "Money can buy you success, recognition, and respect. You can't always get those things in your family, in school, or on the job."

Steve Coulman, director of Woodside, thought the Voices project was successful because the arts provide alternatives to destructive patterns and behaviors. "You have to have some kind of passion in life. There is an excitement with drugs and crime, but art provides an excitement and passion that is positive."

Creating *Maximum Security* gave CoCo a whole new avenue for success. Having never written a line of poetry, composed music, or performed, he created the storyboard, wrote the rap lyrics, directed, performed, and edited *Maximum Security*.

"My time's too hard, the windows is barred, mind is scarred . . . You don't want to join me, you want to be free, don't get lost in maximum security."

Maximum Security had its world premiere screening at the 1994 Vermont International Film Festival and received critical acclaim. CoCo's success is evident in the eloquent letter he wrote to Sally after he left Woodside. "I've gained positive recognition for my creativity and artistic talent through this video. Talent, art, and beauty lie within everyone, but [creativity] can go unnoticed . . . if it is not given a chance to show itself. So, again, I thank you for helping me find mine."

Seeking A Common Language

The first year of Voices provided valuable lessons in combining the arts and human services. Voices of Woodside, Metamorphosis, and other projects proved the value of the arts in programs for at-risk youth, but demonstrated some of the challenges as well.

It is important to recognize that creating and sustaining partnerships between the arts and human services are a process. It takes time, coordination, flexibility, and attention to the needs of the various organizations, artists, and youth involved. Both partners need to know that their organizations and staff have the capacity to create and sustain programs, to work cooperatively throughout the life of the project, to insure communica-

tion, and to deal with problems, if and when they arise.

Through Voices of Woodside the partners learned that artists need to be trained to understand the population they are working with and the goals and objectives of the human service program, and to be aware of how arts activities fit into the overall scope of the program. In the Metamorphosis project the partners learned that human service providers need to differentiate the creative environment from the "therapeutic environment," and to understand the nature and value of the arts and creative self-expression.

The value of fostering collaborations between the arts and human services and providing youth with tools to develop their artistic voices is gaining broader acceptance in Vermont. Youth involved in Voices projects have presented workshops, and even gave a keynote performance at the annual Governor's Prevention Conference.

Committed to the idea that the arts and creative expression are essential to human growth and development, the VCA, with support from the NEA, is continuing Voices by expanding the program to include young children and families. The second evolution of Voices will strengthen existing partnerships, and initiate a training program to improve communication and understanding between the arts and human services in an effort to promote the use of the arts as a resource for prevention.

"A program like Voices is not something that you establish and then expect to run by itself," says Nicolette Clarke, executive director of the VCA. "You have to take every opportunity to explain the process, pay attention to the needs of the artists and human service providers, and support the needs of the youth. It's not a concept that is readily understood by funders, legislators, or even the human services world, but when you show them the results and they actually listen to the voices of youth through the art they have created, they understand. Voices is better than magic, it works!" □

Elizabeth W. Lawrence is the Voices of Youth program consultant for the Vermont Council on the Arts and Prevention Unlimited. She is an artist and cofounder of Green Mountain Prevention Projects.

For further information on Voices of Youth, please contact the Vermont Council on the Arts at 133 State Street, Drawer 33, Montpelier, VT 05633-6001; phone 802-828-3291.

Soothing the Aching Heart of Young Los Angeles

Students interview residents of Lincoln Heights in East Los Angeles for a video class sponsored by the Summer Arts Recovery Program.
Photo by Aurelio José Barrera

by Max Benavidez and Kate Vozoff

When three Los Angeles youths dragged truck driver Reginald Denny from his big rig in the aftermath of the 1992 Rodney King trial and beat him almost to death, their brutality shocked the nation. Nevertheless the crime exposed all too clearly the way many residents feel here in the City of Angels — that no act of violence is too harsh a pay-back for what are perceived as society's inequities. As the city cast about for ways to curb or control the violent urges that lay just below the surface of its ethnic urbanites, the California Arts Council (CAC) took action to rebuild L.A.

A Pivotal Role for Government Funding

"There was a real concern among everyone in the council that we respond to the riots," explains Carol Shiffman, director of CAC's Artists-in-Residence Program, which with the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) funded the Summer Recovery Project. "We know the incredible power that artists can have in helping to build self-esteem, and we believe in the difference that self-esteem can make in kids' lives. So we thought arts programming would be a wonderful and realistic way to help."

The details of the CAC plan were unclear in the beginning. The arts council did know that whatever they did would require a director with genuine vision. The CAC found that leadership in actress Sheila Scott-Wilkinson, who had been involved in other artist residencies funded by the council. An acting teacher who had run arts workshops for prisons and correctional youth facilities, Wilkinson saw the developing program as a unique opportunity to use the arts to reach out to children in troubled neighborhoods.

What she did was create a grass-roots series of arts workshops for inner-city youths that employed local artists committed to quality work. Within a matter of weeks, she had placed seventy artists for up to six weeks in workshops geared at kids ages twelve to eighteen. From barrios and ghettos all over the city, teenagers who'd experienced a lot of gang warfare and crack deals took part in workshops on theater, dance, visual arts, comedy, music, video production, and creative writing.

At an improvisational theater workshop, project participants were asked to act out and later discuss emotionally charged scenarios about family life and street dangers. African drumming, mural painting, choral music — these only begin to reflect the rich variety of classes and workshops that Wilkinson has conceived and made happen.

"The project's goal is really pretty straightforward," she argues. "We want to offer high-risk kids a variety of creative outlets." But Wilkinson resents the suggestion that the program is just entertainment for a bunch of street-smart troublemakers. "This has never been arts and crafts," she maintains. "It's about skill building." So, participating artists are selected not only for the quality of their art but also for their ability to develop concrete lesson plans.

One morning, for example, percussionist Ramon Ramos led a predominantly African-American group of third and fourth graders through a musical performance of *Cocinando.* The youngsters learned the simple Spanish words and were shown how to use various percussion instruments. Then they took a short written test in which they identified those instruments. "So the basic focus is education," Wilkinson stresses, "and the end result is that kids improve their self-image, gain new confidence, develop learning skills, and wind up doing better in school."

"These may sound like small improvements," reflects Wilkinson, "but for many of these kids, this is a

major shift in life. This program is the first time that some of them have seen anything positive about life or themselves. Gang violence and fear have made the world very, very small for these kids. Literally, five blocks — that's the radius of their whole world. By taking them to exhibitions and performances outside their tiny home turf, this program gives them a much broader idea of what the world can be. We hope that by showing them something bigger and better, we can give them the image of a world worth working for and living in."

Creative Exchange for Artists And Participants

From the beginning, Wilkinson also wanted the project to offer a unique opportunity to the participating artists. "I wanted the program to make artists more complete by bringing them into the community and having them deal directly with cultures other than their own," she says. That meant sending them to projects in parts of the city that they didn't know, to work with people they fundamentally didn't understand.

> "All [kids] see is the street life, and that can only teach them to be ashamed of what they are. This program is teaching them about a heritage they can be proud of."

For example, the African-American storyteller Marilyn McConnie and actress Darline Harris taught Latino students in the public schools. Similarly, Latino drummer Ernesto Salcedo taught the universal language of rhythm to African-American teens in the heart of South Central Los Angeles. "What's interesting to me," Salcedo remarks, "is that here I am, a Latino musician, and I'm introducing these kids to an African heritage, their own heritage, that they don't really know." The hope, Salcedo concludes, is that this creative exchange will instill more cultural tolerance and respect in everyone involved.

Based on the Summer Recovery Project's impressive first year in 1992, it received funding for the two subsequent summers, and there's hope that resources will remain available for the ever expanding undertaking. To date, the program has served more than 12,000 L.A. youngsters, employed more than 170 artists, and involved 33 community sites in the workshop project. "Everyone's been impressed with what the artists have done in an intense post-riot environment," says the CAC's Chief of Grant Programs, Juan Carrillo. "For the council, the project shows what artists can do. We know the power of artists in communities because the council has funded artist residencies for over eighteen years."

Nothing Succeeds Like Success

Eager to replicate Wilkinson's success, the CAC (again in partnership with the NEA) has elected to support three other youth programs: Creative After-School Alternative Program, Long Beach Latchkey Project, and Summer Arts Recovery Program. These programs offer after-school and/or summer arts classes as a wholesome alternative to the violent and self-destructive allure of the streets. The Creative After-School Alternative Program (CASA) operates in South Central Los Angeles, the heart of the city's African-American community.

CASA's executive director is Dr. Maisha Hazzard, and she gives credit for her program's very existence to Assemblywoman Gwen Moore who, back in 1991, brought leaders from education and the arts together with the CAC to develop a creative way of keeping good kids out of trouble. "The bottom line is that — months before the riots — she knew these kids needed

help and she believed it was possible to engage them with the arts," explains Hazzard.

Initially, CASA offered its classes at various art centers scattered throughout the general area. But, almost immediately, the issue of transportation surfaced as a major program obstacle. "Remember that 85 percent of these kids are latchkey kids," Hazzard points out. "They don't have a parent available to pick them up at three p.m. and drive them to even the most wonderful after-school program. Their parents are busy trying to hold down a job." So in 1993, CASA moved its seminars and workshops right into the schools. With support from the L.A. Unified School District, 520 youngsters are enrolled in thirty-nine classes offered by twenty-four different community artists.

Dixie Swift, director for another of the CAC-NEA efforts, the Long Beach Latchkey Project, agrees that the programs are there to support kids who don't get all they need at home. "If a kid's family isn't working out," she explains, "then we become a kind of family. If that kid needs someone to go to school with him, I go. If he needs someone to go with him to the doctor, I go."

The latchkey project is an interesting testing ground for the art-as-intervention concept because it serves a community newly in need of such programming. A good-sized beach city just south of Los Angeles, Long Beach has in recent years become a more diverse community. Suddenly confronted with a significant percentage of African-American, Latino, and Asian residents, it must struggle with all the social challenges that can go along with ethnic diversity. Still, the community does not have a long-standing history of gang rivalries or drive-by shootings. If Dixie Swift's program can truly attract kids at a time in their lives when they might otherwise be drawn into serious trouble, then it will say something very promising about the power

Photo by Aurelio José Barrera

Working with artist Ernesto de la Loza, residents of a housing project in East Los Angeles paint a mural they designed during the Summer Arts Recovery Program, created by the California Arts Council.

of art among youngsters not yet cynical about their life options.

Ultimately, the project has to be judged by the effect it has on its target group. One participant, fifteen-year-old Tony Flores, says, "I never learned about my culture until now. Through the program I gained an interest in my culture through art and films about Chicano history. I also learned about the Mexican holiday, *El Dia de los Muertos* (Day of the Dead). That's a tradition I did not know about. I hope that in the future we have more of these activities so more people can learn about their culture."

Eddie Martinez is an artist working in the Long Beach program. He feels that cultural identity must remain a major focus in all these arts projects. "I try to teach them about their culture," he says with a tone of both sadness and hope. "All they see is the street life, and that can only teach them to be ashamed of what they are. This program is teaching them about a heritage they can be proud of."

Taking Art Beyond Social Welfare

Performance artist/writer Ruben Guevara is program director of the Summer Arts Recovery Program, which serves a predominantly Latino population in East Los Angeles, Downtown, and Pico-Union. Enrolling 300 kids its first year (1993), Guevara reports that in its following year 400 youngsters participated in workshops on mural making, creative writing, rap music, video production, and photography. Over the course of eight summer weeks, various guest artists introduced the youngsters to performances, lectures, and demonstrations in Korean, Indian, African, Aztec, flamenco, and *folklórico* dance, as well as in gospel music and *taiko* (Japanese drumming).

Along with nurturing creative self-expression, Guevara's program has taught kids to work through some major community problems. "For instance, the gangs in Aliso Village and Pico Gardens — housing projects in East Los Angeles — had to hammer out a truce in order for the classes to take place," Guevara explains. "And they did it." Even more impressive is that the truce has held since the summer of 1993.

> "The gangs in Aliso Village and Pico Gardens – housing projects in East Los Angeles – had to hammer out a truce in order for the classes to take place. And they did it."

Still, Guevara hesitates to call the program social service. In fact, he argues, it's art in the most classic sense of the word: the means toward self-expression. "My philosophy has been to let the kids interpret their world in words and images," he continues. As a result, Guevara encourages instructors to see themselves more as low-key guides than as strict directors. "I believe that the program has to happen on their terms," he argues. "It's up to them to say to us, 'This is how we see the world.' If you give a kid responsibility for that — for saying what he or she feels — then that kid will have a vested interest in the quality of their work."

In their small collection of poetry and prose entitled *Empowering Raza Youth Through the Arts*, young project participants offer a rendition of a world both terrifying and tender:

> The neighborhood I live in is very hard
> to live in if you haven't been around long
> enough to get the hang of it.

> Once you do, you come to realize that it is not only about hard timing it, but about love floating around as well.
>
> Love from our own mothers who teach us right from wrong. Love from the people who care about what goes on in our neighborhood.
>
> I wouldn't want to live anywhere else but in this run down Ghetto place, but hey, I love this Ghetto, 'cause this is where my Raza Lives.

Dixie Swift agrees with Guevara that the point of an art program should not be social outreach. But she doesn't seem overly concerned with producing aesthetically beautiful artwork either. Instead, she sees her program as primarily a means to teach culture. "Art here is about what you are able to learn about yourself and your heritage. We do that through the art process."

Final Thoughts

Many good programs ultimately do more good than they set out to do, and are a bit different from the way they were originally conceived. That seems true of these four CAC-NEA projects. "I think we're just at the beginning of what this program is going to be," says Hazzard about CASA.

"Obviously, we want to develop emerging artists, but we're also eager to encourage supporters of the arts. Let's face it: there are children who are not performers. So we've built a programming component that allows them to work on the support and promotion of the arts." She pauses to think of an easy explanation, "Art as a business, you might say. We teach the kids how to do that — show how administrators keep art centers going. One of our program centers even has a newsletter, and the kids write movie reviews and book reviews. "

The point, she maintains, is to prepare young people for the challenges of the twenty-first century. "That's what this program really offers: a vision of the future that includes these kids all grown up into creative, productive men and women."

That's a tall order given the complex and competitive future that awaits them. The twenty-first century is not likely to pose easy challenges for anyone. And the inescapable disadvantages that plague poor minority kids make their chances for success that much slimmer. Still, it is worthwhile to remember that the future does not happen in large leaps and bounds. It happens one step at a time, one small decision after another until a life direction begins to emerge for a child as he or she becomes first an adolescent and later an adult. These four arts programs certainly cannot turn life around for a whole community. They have, however, proved to be life-changing for the thousands of youngsters who have been a part of them. In a simple but very real way, that's quite an accomplishment. □

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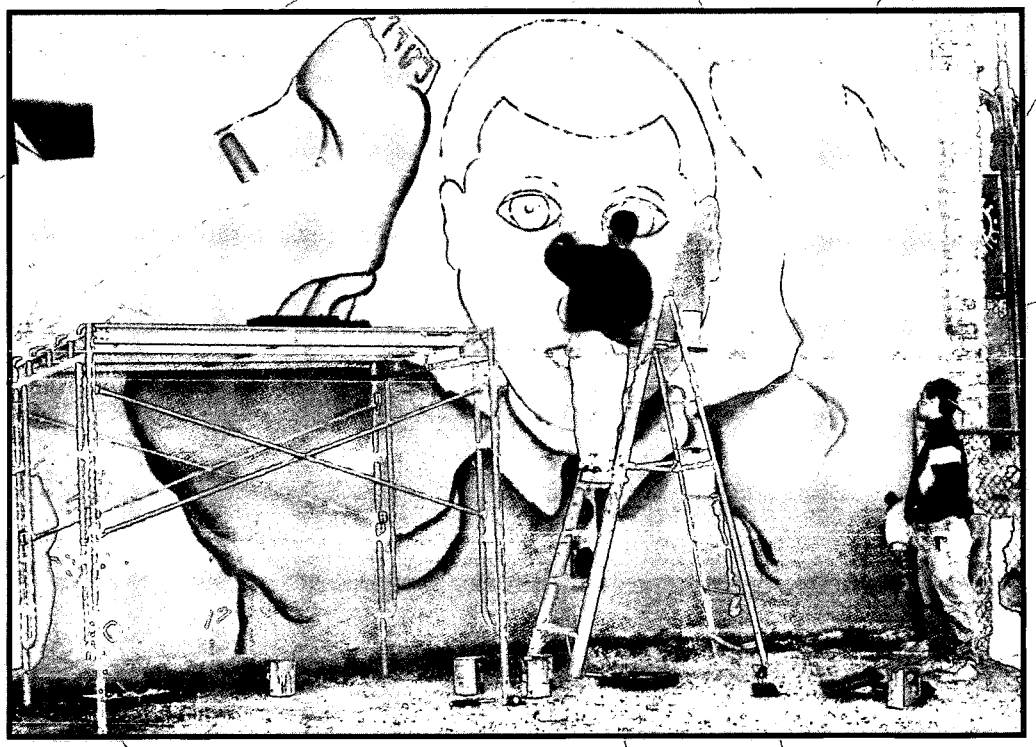
For further information on the California Arts Council's arts programming in South Central Los Angeles, please contact the council at 2411 Alhambra Boulevard, Sacramento, CA 95817; phone 916-227-2550.

Creative Entrepreneurs

The YA/YAs of New Orleans



Ron Ratliff and Chris Paratore, Jr., working on a mural they designed with other YA/YA members for their high school, L.E. Rabouin Career Magnet High School in New Orleans. The YA/YAs chose the theme, "Respect for Teenagers," for the mural, which depicts the face of a teen in multiple colors reflecting the world's many races and cultures.
Photo by Jana Napoli

by Claudia Barker

You are standing on a steamy sidewalk in downtown New Orleans, next to a wildly painted nineteenth-century townhouse building, with your shopping bag in hand and your camera poised to shoot. In the doorway are eight legs in various shades of rich brown, flexing, bending, and struggling under the weight of a large cedar wardrobe. They pause for a second, gasp for breath, and consider their options. The eight corresponding arms and hands grasp the armoire, whimsically painted with black and white jokers and diamonds, red hearts, and blue clubs, balancing it precariously on one end. Heavy breathing, sweat. "I'm telling you, it ain't gonna fit through that door. No way." "Turn it this way, man!"

Peeking in the big plate glass window of the same building, you see three teenage boys and two teenage girls, all wearing aprons spattered with paint, bending over a vast expanse of cloth laid out on a thirty-foot table. They are talking excitedly about the design one of them has made; a long, black, curved ribbon on a white field that undulates like a smooth snake down the length of the table, happily embracing white and grey ribbons on its way back up. A beautiful piece of yardage, you find yourself imagining how it would look on your sofa.

Where are you? You are gallery-hopping in New Orleans and you have just stumbled on YA/YA. Part design studio, part print workshop, part gallery, and part office, Young Aspirations/Young Artists is home to twenty-five student artists who come here every day to learn how to make a living through creativity. So your own kid is sixteen and talented? Wouldn't it be great if there was something like this in your city for him or her! Well, come in and see what YA/YA does right.

Environment

New Orleans, 1987. A sultry, sexy, Southern city with a great deal of charm, a balmy climate, wonderful food, beautiful music, and one of the worst public school systems in the country. The lack of quality education tells on us: every couple of months the *Times-Picayune* informs us that we're "first" again — in the number of murders per capita, in the number of high school dropouts, in the percentage of children living in poverty.

YA/YA, a six-year-old arts and social service organization that trains inner-city youth in the visual arts, was founded by New Orleans painter Jana Napoli. "I never intended to start an organization," she says and admits to knowing nothing about how to run one. But for a long time she had noticed the throng of high-energy kids that emerged every afternoon from L.E. Rabouin Career Magnet High School around the corner from her building, and she wanted to find a way to put them to work. In addition, she wanted to bring the primarily African-American students together with the mostly white property owners in her neighborhood.

These teenagers — like most teenagers — are incredibly energetic, very quick-minded, perceptive, and resourceful. But the fact is that in New Orleans, like in most major American cities, these very talented, capable individuals are almost all unemployed.

Students attending L.E. Rabouin Career Magnet High School, the only school in New Orleans's central business district, were, like most people their age, perceived by adults as having limited skills and little to offer employers — at best. At worst, these teenagers were seen as potential troublemakers by the property owners who flank the school, especially when they emerged en masse at three p.m. and pushed their way like a storm front to Canal Street and the video game room. Their sheer numbers and volume caused most people to cross

the street to avoid them, without even thinking about how doing this made the students feel. And they did feel: YA/YA student Rondell Crier says, "I'd get mad at them and I'd think . . . I'm not going to do them nothing, but they just don't know."

It is three o'clock in the afternoon. School is ending and the students who attend Rabouin, a vocational-technical high school, are like wound-up springs. They blast out of the school building, pent-up energy exploding in all directions. Ready. . . set. . . WAIT A MINUTE! Where to go? What to do? Shopping? No money. Game room? Maybe. Home? Nah. I asked Carlos Neville, one of the original eight YA/YA Guild members, what made him come to YA/YA. "There was nothing else to do," he said. Real simple. Nothing else to do.

And at first there wasn't much at YA/YA. There was no organized program at the time, no paid staff to welcome and shepherd teenagers, no particular bond of trust to count on. There was just this one lady and her building around the corner from school. She simply offered a place to go, where they could do something interesting and maybe make a little money. And they came.

These teenagers – like most teenagers – are incredibly energetic, very quick-minded, perceptive, and resourceful. But the fact is that in New Orleans, like in most major American cities, these very talented, capable individuals are almost all unemployed.

Putting Talent to Work

Jana Napoli found an ally in Madeleine Neske, Rabouin's commercial art instructor, and invited forty students to draw pictures of all the downtown buildings and show them in her gallery. The students came and sketched, they had a show in which most of the drawings sold, and YA/YA was launched. Napoli explained to the National Endowment for the Arts' (NEA) National Council on the Arts in August 1994: "Our first show, we sold $1,800 worth of fifteen- and twenty-dollar drawings in little glass frames, which meant we sold a lot of them three or four times. [The students] learned how hard it is to reproduce a drawing a third or fourth time."

At Napoli's urging, the students began painting images on secondhand furniture. "I wanted something that they couldn't fail with," she says. "It's hard to sell a painting on a canvas." What Napoli envisioned as a small exhibition in the front hallway quickly became a full-scale training operation that occupies about a third of her building. Students began coming to YA/YA every day after school and on weekends to receive one-on-one intensive instruction from Napoli, Neske, and later on, three to four other professional artists who teach woodworking, design, painting, and fabric printing.

All students who attend Rabouin High School's commercial art classes are eligible to participate in YA/YA. Neske recruits students, who initially are given the chance to paint small items, such as YA/YA desk ornaments, until they develop the skills to move onto larger pieces like furniture or fabric. At any one moment in the YA/YA building there are students sitting at a big table working on designs for upcoming commissions, someone cutting sculptural "add-ons" (a distinctive feature of YA/YA furniture) out of wood, several students painting furniture in the studio, and four or five more screen-printing fabric in Print YA/YA, the organization's newest enterprise.

Once a week YA/YA's high school students attend group counseling sessions, and all students receive rigorous training in the entrepreneurial aspects of running an art-related business: sending out press packages, talking to clients, pricing commissions, writing artistic statements about their work. The key element in making YA/YA work is the driving force of its founder, Jana Napoli, and several other adult staff members who push, prod, and cajole the busy students into producing professional quality work on a consistent basis.

A chair turns into a yellow cab. Cutout sculptural flames leap from the seat of another chair that Carlos has made into a burning building. A little girl rides on a magic carpet, touring the universe, full of peace and happiness as guild member Darlene Francis makes her dream world come alive on a chair. Dexter Stewart, the photographer and filmmaker, paints an urban landscape on the round, flat back of a chair, a lone dog in the foreground — his vision of stark solitude in a busy, big world. YA/YA artwork is successful because it mirrors the students' thoughts and feelings. It is full of "hot spots," personal imagery that is often intensely dramatic. Jana Napoli sits on the floor with the students and pulls the images out of them, looking for what is real, what is hot, what will sell. Finding these hot spots and expressing them through art is what it means "to YA/YA."

Making Good

YA/YA is an experiment whose goal is to prove that if given the right tools and a fertile environment, motivated students can do extraordinary things. But the aspect of the program that makes YA/YA different from most programs that benefit youth is that students make money doing something they enjoy — making a product they can sell.

Students, who must be enrolled in high school or college in order to participate in YA/YA, earn money by selling painted furniture, by creating designs for manufacturers and individual clients, by serving as art directors on commission jobs, and by being employed as YA/YA interns. Guild members, the senior students who are most committed to the organization, receive a higher percentage of their sales and higher wages than the younger apprentices. In all cases, however, YA/YA holds on to a percentage of a student's sales until he or she enrolls in college. Most YA/YA high school students graduate and go to college either locally or in some cases to out-of-state schools, such as the School of Visual Arts in New York. This year YA/YA will see its first guild member graduate from college. That student plans to attend graduate school in the field of design.

YA/YA's aim is to prepare the students to make a living on their own. "There are no jobs out there," Jana Napoli says. What she means is that there are very few jobs that allow people to make good money using their creativity. But most people consider such work a luxury. So why does YA/YA insist on training students to be entrepreneurs? Because the skills needed to be in business for yourself are skills that can get you far in life, whether you are working for somebody else or not. Those skills include talking to a customer and finding out what he or she wants, setting a price on your work, making sure you get it done on time, and collecting the money. YA/YA tries to develop those skills in the students with every job that it does. Gerri Hobdy, assistant secretary of the Office of Cultural Development for the State of Louisiana, applauds the organization: "YA/YA is an exemplary program that demonstrates the usefulness of the arts in developing job training programs for youth. It expands our potential work

force for the arts industry while addressing some of the problems that plague our urban areas."

Continuing the Training Cycle

At YA/YA, college students help train high school students, sharing the knowledge they acquire in school and through internships that YA/YA helps them to land at places like Black Entertainment Television in Washington, D.C., Gallery 37 in Chicago, and Swatch, Ltd. in Atlanta. In addition to perpetuating the training cycle within the organization, YA/YA tries to spread its mission outside as well.

Working with people in other communities to help them develop youth-centered arts enterprises is so important that for the past four years Philip Morris Companies Inc. has supported YA/YA's Traveling Exhibition and Outreach Program. Jana Napoli envisions YA/YA students helping to develop arts enterprises based on the YA/YA model in other cities. Napoli told the National Council on the Arts: "So now America calls every day, almost every day. It's wonderful, and it's incredibly sad. All of those kids who see us on television say, 'Can I come? Mama said she'd give me a ticket. Can I come? Can I be a YA/YA?' And of course we can't have them."

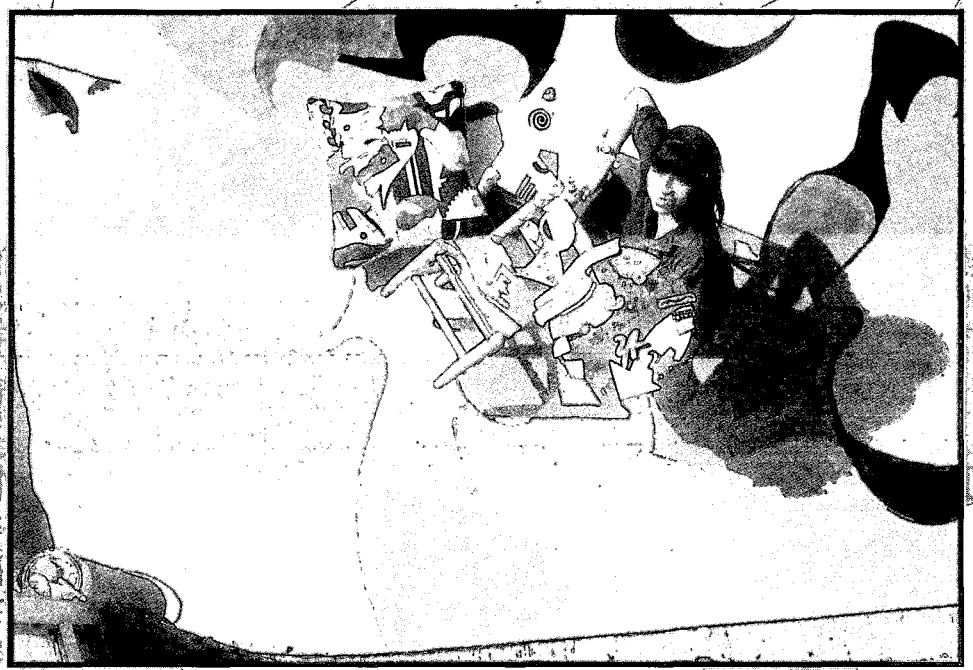
So instead of inviting everyone in America to "become a YA/YA," YA/YA teaches people "how to YA/YA." Most recently YA/YA provided assistance to the Sacramento Metropolitan Arts Commission, one of several entities that are considering trying to replicate the YA/YA model. Napoli tells them selling it to the community will be the hard part.

Community, in this case, includes everyone that the project touches: the youth, their parents, the buying public, and the people who live in the surrounding neighborhoods where the students might be painting a mural or having a show. As difficult as it may be to understand, in some cases the community has to be persuaded to buy into the idea that its youth can be valuable contributors to society. The project's product must also have mass appeal. In YA/YA's case that product was painted furniture, and, most recently, printed fabric.

From Seed Money to Self-Sufficiency

Initially all of YA/YA's expenses were paid out of the pocket of its founder. But within a year and a half of its opening YA/YA began to attract both public and corporate support. Grants from the National Endowment for the Arts have supported YA/YA's training operation, outreach efforts in other communities, the production of a documentary, and, most recently, the creation of a book about YA/YA. In addition to helping YA/YA spread its mission around the nation and the world, the NEA has also teamed up with state and local arts agencies to help YA/YA become more economically self-sufficient. Funds from the NEA, the Louisiana Division of the Arts, and the Arts Council of New Orleans enabled YA/YA to create a business plan and build the small, fabric-printing workshop called Print YA/YA, which opened in September 1993. Its purpose is to generate additional earned revenue for the organization, making it less dependent on grants and contributions.

Other major sponsors of the workshop include the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, the Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation, and the Downtown Development District (DDD), a nonprofit taxing district created to help revitalize downtown New Orleans and to help promote its growth. DDD Executive Director Don Shea says, "The fantastic work of these young people at the YA/YA studio is definitely one of the factors behind the growth and success of downtown's arts district. Therefore a donation towards expansion and new development at the YA/YA studio is not only an investment



YA/YA student Shazell Johnson shown with chairs and pillows she painted with her own designs.
Photo by Jana Napoli

in our downtown, it is an investment in our future." An enterprise that has as its goal to become economically self-supporting is very appealing to both private and public sponsors. The fact that YA/YA has sold more than a quarter of a million dollars in art during its first six years of operation is impressive. And involving youth in an economic development program teaches them how to run a business, how to deal with clients, and how to be professionals. The more contact students have with paying customers, the more savvy they become about satisfying those customers, and the better prepared they are to go out and make their living as commercial and fine artists. "I wouldn't let anybody get their check till they wrote a thank-you note to the person who bought their piece," says Napoli about paying students for artwork sold.

YA/YA's ultimate goal is for the students to become part of the organization's board and staff. To this end YA/YA has created the YA/YA Committee, composed of both high school and college students and staff. Participation on the committee gives students the experience they will need to manage the organization in the future. Napoli believes that YA/YA belongs to the students. "I don't expect to be the head of YA/YA. It's theirs," she says.

YA/YA is an experiment whose goal is to prove that if given the right tools and a fertile environment, motivated students can do extraordinary things.

The Importance of Press

The talent of the YA/YAs has garnered them contracts to produce artwork for such notable clients as the Italian design firm Alessi, the BRAVO Cable Network, MTV Networks, and Swatch Ltd., and earned them the opportunity to exhibit their work in New York, Paris, Tokyo, San Francisco, and many places in between.

How does all this opportunity come YA/YA's way? Early on, Napoli recognized the value of press and pursued it with a vengeance. One news story leads to another, which leads to jobs and contracts to produce artwork.

YA/YA's first show of painted furniture, "Storytelling Chifforobes from New Orleans," attracted the attention of the local and national press and traveled to Lincoln Center in New York, becoming the first of many traveling exhibitions of work by the YA/YAs. The exhibition featured the YA/YA students painting their hopes and dreams on the outside of a wardrobe and their fears on the inside. Napoli describes the first encounter with the press, "The first show in New York, we sent out one thousand press packages. We got three responses. One of them was *Metropolis Magazine*, which gave a fifteen-year-old from the South his first review. The second was *New York Magazine* which gave us a half a page, and the third was the school that would later give two of the YA/YAs scholarships in New York City."

Publicity is also extremely important in establishing credibility. Jana Napoli remembers the reaction of Carlos Neville when he first saw his picture in the newspaper. He said, "Wow, Miss Naps, how many people read the newspaper?" When he heard that over a quarter of a million people get the local paper he thought about it for a minute, then he said, "How can we keep on getting in the newspaper? This is cool!"

"Cool" translates into motivation for the students to work hard and produce great artwork. Positive press attention means more customers, an easier sell to funders, and good will from everyone who walks in the

door. Since 1988 YA/YA has been featured in more than sixty publications and twenty television programs.

Youth Empowered Through Art

YA/YA's success is a powerful example of what can happen when art is used as an instrument of social change. Jane Alexander, chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts, mentioned YA/YA in her speech to congressional freshmen in Washington, D.C., on March 16, 1994: "In New Orleans I visited Young Aspirations/Young Artists, YA/YA — a truly remarkable program that empowers youth to change their lives . . . They don't all become artists . . . But they all learn the skills needed in life through the arts to go out into the world and succeed: discipline, self-esteem, collaboration, and problem solving."

Endorsements like this give all of us working in creative endeavors effective ammunition to combat the notion that the arts are a luxury, a frill to be afforded only if there is money to spare. The nurturing of our young people's creativity is an urgent, vital part of their education. This effort nets the real product that will take America into the twenty-first century: an intelligent and resourceful nation of energetic young people with fresh ideas and the skills to carry them out. □

Claudia Barker is the director of Young Aspirations/Young Artists, Inc. This chapter is excerpted in part from her forthcoming book about the organization.

For further information on YA/YA, please contact YA/YA at 628 Baronne Street, New Orleans, LA 70113; phone 504-529-3306.

South Carolina's ABC Project

Making a Difference in Education

Photo courtesy of Ashley River Creative Arts Elementary School

Artist Catherine Murdaugh works with Allison Brown on a pottery vessel as part of the third-grade unit on Native Americans and South Carolina history.

by Jan Collins Stucker

At Redcliffe Elementary School in Aiken, South Carolina, Melinda Gulick's third graders are building a "plant machine." Through imaginative sounds and movements supervised by drama teacher Katharine Doss, the children act out the functions of a plant's root system, stem, and leaves. Science class has never been so interesting.

Nearby, a troupe of fifth graders does energetic versions of "jumping quickly," "skating slowly," and several other combinations of action verbs and adverbs as dance teacher Beverlee Powell directs. Then the youngsters sprawl on the floor to write about "My Favorite Day" in their language arts journals, using the now-familiar action words.

Down the hall, Jennifer Hamada's bright-eyed students in the gifted and talented class mold clay objects and record musical compositions that they will later bury at a selected site. The art and music artifacts are part of an archaeology class assignment on examining history and culture.

Welcome to South Carolina's Arts in the Basic Curriculum (ABC) Project and Target 2000 Arts in Education Grant Program, an innovative infusion of arts activities in the curriculum. The programs have become national models for demonstrating that strong arts education can spark broader education reform, improve academic achievement, reach at-risk children who are not responding to the old style of education, and generate unprecedented excitement about learning among students, teachers, administrators, and parents.

Funded by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), the South Carolina Arts Commission, and the South Carolina Department of Education, the ABC Project is now in its seventh successful year.

"It's working, and it's working well," says Jane V. Slay, the award-winning principal of Redcliffe Elementary, one of eight model sites funded by the ABC Project. Since the arts infusion program was introduced several years ago, this rural school's standardized test scores have risen dramatically: between 1990 and 1994, the percentage of fourth graders scoring in the highest quartile on the nationally recognized Stanford 8 achievement test zoomed from 19 percent to 33 percent. Conversely, the percentage placing in the lowest quartile plummeted from 33 percent to 9 percent. The most dramatic changes occurred with the African-American males. The fifth grade scores were similar. "This is a significant shift," says Slay. "There must be something in our school curriculum that's causing this difference, and we believe it's our arts program." Students and teachers love going to school at Redcliffe; an extraordinary energy permeates the place.

The Indispensable Arts

The goal of the ABC Project is to provide quality, comprehensive arts education — comparable to instruction offered in other basic subjects — for every child in every school in the state. The plan's premise is simple: the arts are an indispensable part of a complete education.

The centerpiece of the ABC initiative is the use of curriculum frameworks developed by the South Carolina Department of Education. The frameworks — curriculum guidelines in dance, drama, music, and visual arts — are a statewide consensus of what children are expected to know and be able to do in the arts.

"The arts are an important resource that can lead toward greater creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills — all skills our students will need as successful adults in the twenty-first century," says State Senator Nikki G. Setzler. Proponents such as Setzler also point out that the arts can be a valuable tool in keeping disadvantaged and at-risk youth — a growing

cadre in many communities across the country — in school and away from risky pursuits. "The arts offer for disadvantaged children the one area in which they are not disadvantaged," Setzler says. "The arts can provide these children with ways of achieving success, giving them a feeling of pride. The arts are one area in which background is not a large determinant of success."

These considerations led Setzler to spearhead passage of legislation that has provided nearly $6.2 million in state funding for arts in education since 1989. The ABC story, however, really begins back in 1984, when then-Governor (now U.S. Secretary of Education) Richard W. Riley engineered passage of South Carolina's omnibus Education Improvement Act (EIA), now recognized as one of the most far-reaching reform efforts in all the fifty states. The EIA concentrated on the basics of school improvement, and it was enormously successful. But it addressed the arts only in relation to programs for gifted and talented students.

By 1987, the South Carolina Arts Commission realized that the state was ready to advance beyond the basics. Under the direction of Scott Sanders, former executive director of the South Carolina Arts Commission and now deputy chairman for partnership at the NEA, South Carolina became one of the first sixteen states to receive a planning grant from the NEA to develop a "blueprint" to make the arts basic to the curriculum for all students. A statewide steering committee — composed of educators, artists, civic and legislative leaders, cultural and educational institutions, and educational and arts associations — developed the plan.

In 1989 this collaboration resulted in passage of Target 2000, a school reform package that emphasizes, among other things, the role of arts education programs in achieving higher order thinking skills and creativity. Target 2000 provides generous funding for arts in the schools. Indeed, despite frugal state budgets, the legislature has remained steadfast about arts-in-education funding. For the past five years, the South Carolina legislature has allocated more than $1 million annually for this purpose.

Arts Education in Action

To date, sixty-five of the state's ninety-one school districts have received Target 2000 arts funding. Each year, more than 100 sites continue to develop arts education programs and to implement proven processes in arts education. For example:

Ashley River Creative Arts Elementary School in Charleston is a magnet school for students from varied ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds (40 percent are minorities). At-risk children, particularly, have made large academic gains because of the creative, hands-on approach used here, says Jayne Ellicott, assistant principal. "They learn by doing," she says, "by participating. The creative approach is entertaining, and that grabs the attention of at-risk children." It grabs their attention so well that last year, Ashley River had an incredible 99 percent attendance rate. "They want to come to school even when they're sick," Ellicott says. "At-risk kids learn to do things in front of their peers, and they learn that they're OK. They are able to compete with more advantaged kids because, in the arts, they are no longer behind. The creative approach puts them on a par with the others." At Ashley River, this creative approach permeates all courses.

Pine Street Elementary School in Spartanburg has the popular "Artsploration" program, now in its fifth year. Two portable classrooms house the drama and dance programs, and parent and student attendance at arts programs put on by the youngsters is consistently high. "We're making great strides in putting

the arts on a par with other subject areas," says Anne Predmore, visual arts teacher. The arts curriculum is popular with all the children, but especially so with at-risk youngsters and youngsters with disabilities. "They're on equal footing with the other kids in the arts, and that's nice," Predmore says. "There are no auditions. Entrance into the classes in not based on scores. Kids feel at home in the arts where they might not feel at home in other subject areas, and that's wonderful for their self-esteem." Pine Street parents are so supportive of Artsploration that they and the PTA supply 60 percent of the matching grant funds for the artist-in-residency component.

The Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School in West Columbia is a residential school for at-risk youth aged fifteen and older. Using Target 2000 grants specifically designed for at-risk youngsters, teachers at the school created an interdisciplinary arts curriculum called "Arts Afire"; it is credited with helping nearly all the students enrolled in the arts cluster pass the state's exit examination in reading and writing. "Their scores are a big improvement from previous years" says Carole Lucas, arts coordinator. She talks about Todd,* a youth with emotional problems who last year disliked school and particularly hated library research. Arts Afire classes, such as one that used a drama component, seem to have turned Todd around. "He loved researching the life of Sophocles, the Greek dramatist," says Lucas. "He learned that he was very good at memorizing lines, at being dramatic, at interpreting and analyzing. His oral and written communication skills improved a lot." This year, the eleventh grader is doing much better in all his academic classes. "Now when he doesn't get 100 percent on a test, he wants to know why. He always wants to do more, and better," Lucas says.

> "The arts are an important resource that can lead toward greater creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills – all skills our students will need as successful adults in the twenty-first century."

And there is Redcliffe Elementary School in Aiken, where the ABC Program has been integrated fully into the curriculum. Drawing on actual case studies compiled recently as part of a grant application, Principal Jane Slay can give numerous examples of students — especially high-risk students — whose lives have been transformed by the arts. Clayton,* for instance, was a fifth grader who came to Redcliffe three years earlier as a street-wise kid from New York City, brimming with hostility and anger that erupted often and led to repeated suspensions. But at Redcliffe, Clayton discovered that he loved drama and visual arts; what's more, he was extremely good at both. He became an honor roll student who "felt good about himself," says Slay. Adds a fifth-grade teacher: "I think the arts program made a real difference in Clayton's life. I think it saved him."

There was also Russell,* a second grader who had been removed from his abusive parents and put with his five siblings in a foster home. Russell was "filled with rage and anger and hostility," says Slay. But Russell learned that he loved music; he eventually rescheduled his weekly psychiatric appointment so that he wouldn't miss music class. Russell also discovered dance. "He likes dance," said a counselor. "He's a good dancer. That's the way he can shine." Russell continued to have behavioral problems, but teachers said he threw fewer tantrums and began demanding positive attention. His overall school work also improved.

* *These are real students, but their names have been changed to protect their privacy.*

Broad Impacts

The arts curriculum framework, adopted by the South Carolina State Board of Education in December 1993, has served as a catalyst for broader school change. The ABC Project and Target 2000 programs have also helped South Carolinians understand the vital role played by arts education. A 1991 survey conducted by the University of South Carolina Institute of Public Affairs indicated that 94.5 percent of South Carolinians viewed the arts as an important part of basic education, and 76.6 percent favored increased funding to strengthen arts education in the public schools.

An award-winning statewide public relations campaign is helping communities increase support for the promotion of arts education and the arts in South Carolina. Fashioned by Jayne Darke, public information director for the South Carolina Arts Commission, the "In South Carolina, Arts Education Means Business" campaign began in October 1993. It encourages business and corporate support of arts education. The campaign includes video public service announcements for television, brochures for South Carolina's business community, and informational posters and bumper stickers for South Carolina educators and schools.

> "The arts can provide [disadvantaged] children with ways of achieving success, giving them a feeling of pride. The arts are one area in which background is not a large determinant of success."

Future Plans

Over the next two years, educators and administrators will focus on documenting and quantifying the impact of the ABC Project and Target 2000 grants on South Carolina students. "It's difficult to prove to people that the arts work," says Ray Doughty, a professor of music and director of the ABC Project Office. "The American way has always been that the arts are only for the gifted and talented. The arts have always been the 'F' word: it's a frill."

Doughty knows that's not true; he fields two or three inquiries a week from other school districts and states wanting to start their own ABC-type programs. The teachers and principals at the South Carolina schools lucky enough to have received special arts funding since 1987 also know the impact the arts infusion has had on their schools. "I'm here to tell you that we're on the map," says Redcliffe's Jane Slay. "Parents want their kids to come here now."

But to come up with hard data, several special efforts to assess effectiveness of programs are planned for 1995 and 1996. These efforts will include: (1) documenting annually the eight ABC model sites programs, to include qualitative and quantitative information on program developments; (2) reviewing the results of research grants that were awarded in 1993 to study the effects of enhanced arts curriculum on general student performance at two ABC model sites and to conduct a statewide arts education survey for South Carolina; (3) creating an ABC Steering Committee special subcommittee for program evaluation; (4) forming a special Arts Assessment Task Force; (5) hiring an outside evaluator to assess the role of artists in residence and to recommend how to enhance the ways such artists can be used in the schools.

A study currently under way in Beaufort County is looking at test scores and dropout rates, and whether arts education makes a provable difference in

these areas. Teachers and principals are convinced it does; leveling the playing field through the arts increases self-esteem and reduces the stresses and risks for children who might otherwise get discouraged and drop out of school.

"Legislators understand the importance of the arts as a basic part of education," says Len Marini, director of research for South Carolina's Joint Legislative Committee on Cultural Affairs. "They also understand the importance of the arts to their constituents."

But funding is the key. "Everything comes down to money," says Rep. Mike Jaskwhich, a South Carolina legislator who is a staunch supporter of the arts and chairman of the ABC Steering Committee. And arts education is a fragile item, especially when budgets are tight.

Still, South Carolina's arts education programs have demonstrated graphically the value of the arts in helping all children — at-risk, handicapped, average, and gifted — thrive. The power of arts in education is especially notable with at-risk youth: the arts are helping many of these children transcend the limits of their environment, feel good about themselves, and stay in school. South Carolina's success in motivating all types of children through the arts — but especially in reclaiming many of its troubled young people — is an emphatic reason for other states to do likewise. □

Jan Collins Stucker is a free-lance writer and editor based in Columbia, South Carolina. She is a former education reporter and has written extensively about the arts.

For further information on South Carolina's ABC Project, please contact the South Carolina Arts Commission at 1800 Gervais Street, Columbia, SC 29201; phone 803-734-8696.

Denver's Neighborhood Cultures

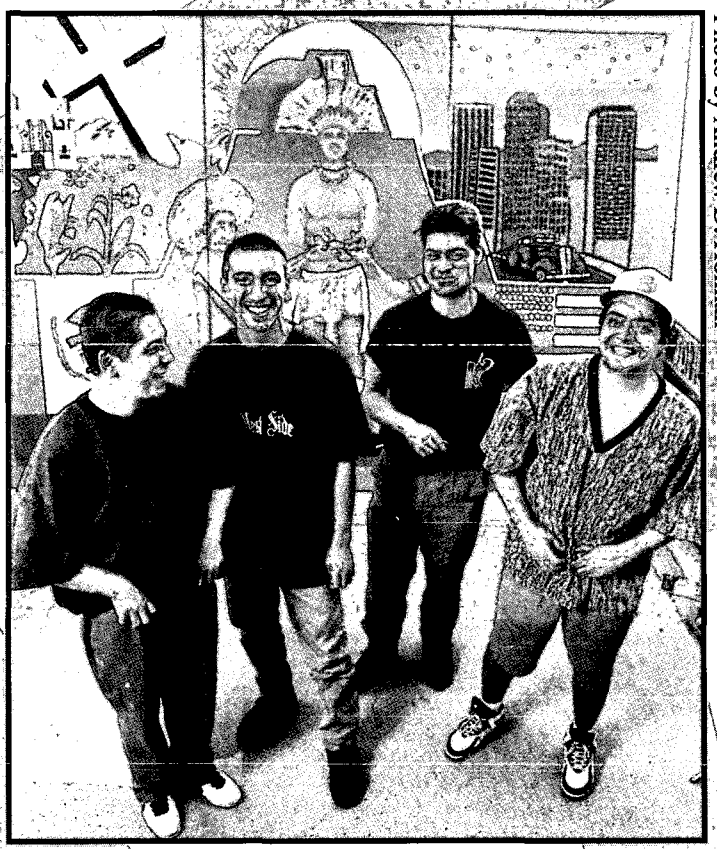


Photo by Andrew D. Holman

Youth Coordinator Ricardo Vega and some members of the Fathers and Sons Group, an ongoing program of the Denver Inner City Parish, stand before a mural painted by the group with the help of artist Carlos Fresquez.

by Tom Auer

Like many large cities, Denver is a mosaic of neighborhoods and cultures. Neighborhood boundaries are not always clear, and some communities seem almost invisible, forgotten by city administrators and adjoining communities. Many of these invisible communities are straining under the pressures of poverty, unemployment, high dropout rates, and a lack of health resources. Crime, drug use, and street gangs operate in these shadows and force children to live in unhealthy and dangerous environments.

New Identity for Denver's Forgotten Neighborhoods

In Denver, a pilot grant program called Neighborhood Cultures of Denver (NCD) is combating some of these ills by using arts projects to promote cultural awareness and improve neighborhood identity. Developed collaboratively by the Colorado Council on the Arts with city and federal support and the advice and guidance of citizens, politicians, artists, and arts organizations, NCD has demonstrated that the arts can strengthen the fabric of a community and make it a better place in which to grow up.

Maryo Ewell, the director of Community Programs for the Colorado Council on the Arts, points out, "sharing a common place bonds people in a special way. Neighborhood Cultures of Denver acknowledges this bond." "Much of Denver's energy comes from the vitality of its neighborhoods," continues Tim Sandos, Denver's city councilman-at-large and the original chairman of Neighborhood Cultures of Denver. "NCD is a unique collaboration that brings arts to neighborhoods as a tool to celebrate strengths and diversity while finding solutions to community issues."

Timing, Planning, Cooperating, And Collaborating

The roots of the Neighborhood Cultures of Denver program go back to a cultural planning document called "Cultural Denver," which was adopted by the Denver Planning Board as a part of Denver's Comprehensive Plan. The Cultural Denver document was adopted just as the National Endowment for the Arts made funds available to state arts agencies for projects in underserved areas. At the same time, the Colorado Council on the Arts (CCA) made a long-term commitment to work more closely with urban neighborhoods. Support from the Colorado Council on the Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Denver Mayor's Office of Art, Culture and Film were combined to make Cultural Denver a reality. A project steering committee, chaired by Tim Sandos, included representatives of the Denver Planning Office, artists, and neighborhood activists.

In 1991, eight Denver neighborhood outreach meetings took place throughout the city — in churches, schools, and community centers. In 1992, the first year of grant making, forty-four applications were received and grants were distributed to thirteen neighborhood groups. Over the next two years, approximately twenty more neighborhood organizations received grants for their communities. Successful proposals were those that made a powerful case for the project's importance to the neighborhood, showed that residents designed the program with artists as facilitators, and projected both artistically exciting and socially important outcomes.

Programs Reflect Neighborhood Cultures

On the west side of Denver, the Mulroy community is considered a high-risk area because of poverty and a high dropout rate among school children. Its

population is primarily Hispanic, with sizeable Native American and African-American groups.

The Mulroy Neighborhood Center, across the street from a large public housing project, provides services for all age groups, with an emphasis on programs for children and youth. With a grant from NCD and assistance from Catholic Community Services, neighbors designed a yearlong folk arts program to promote cultural awareness and education.

Anna Totta, program director of the Mulroy Neighborhood Center, explains that the folk arts program tries to broaden the children's experience, and to build confidence in their ability to function in different surroundings and to relate better to people of all cultures. "There are a couple of premises that the program is built on," she says. "First, children must have a positive self-image about who they are and where they come from. They should also learn to appreciate other cultures. Second, children who are of school age should be able to learn to focus on a skill and master that skill as much as possible. We're trying to both improve their self-esteem and develop their abilities to focus and learn."

"Neighborhood Cultures of Denver is a unique collaboration that brings arts to neighborhoods as a tool to celebrate strengths and diversity while finding solutions to community issues."

The Mulroy folk arts program included three separate sets of activities for children ages five to twelve that took place over the course of a year. The first was a sixteen-week program devoted to Native American culture in which the children created artwork based on Native American designs, including beaded work, drawings, and totem poles. Creative writing exercises helped to expand their knowledge of the culture. And Calvin Standing Bear, a Lakota Rosebud Sioux, taught the kids how to play Native American flute, meeting twice a week with twenty-six students. The program stimulated so much interest that Standing Bear is now offering the children Native American drum lessons.

The next section of the folk arts program was a thirteen-week course on colonial New Mexican folk dancing taught by Marie O. Trujillo, who had learned the dances from her parents and grandparents. The dances are simple ones, Trujillo explains, that depict the everyday lives of the conquistadors and the colonists who lived in northern New Mexico many years ago — the *La Cuna* or cradle dance; the *vaquero*, which means cowboy; and the European "waltz of the scarf," a wedding march. "Music and dancing are good therapy for everyone," says Trujillo. "Dancing is a social activity that can help children get along. The children help each other in class."

The final section of the folk arts program focused on African-American culture. Like the first two segments, it included lessons in history, culture, art, and music (African-American drumming). Each of these three sections culminated in a public presentation for the entire community. The Mulroy Neighborhood Center estimates that more than 1,200 people, including students, teachers, parents, neighbors, and audience members, participated in some way in the neighborhood folk arts program.

A Welcome Arch, Personal Icons, and a Memorial Garden

Elyria, northwest of downtown Denver in a primarily industrial area, is mostly Hispanic with some older

residents of Eastern European ancestry. The Elyria Neighborhood Association decided to create a large work of art honoring the cultures in their neighborhood, which they described as "invisible" to the rest of the city. A major highway — interstate 70 — literally passes over, and thus avoids, the Elyria community. The group designed and constructed a giant, colorful Welcome Arch for visitors to their neighborhood. More than seventy-five Elyria residents, young and old, built the sixteen-foot arch made from eighteen four-by-four-foot panels that depict the history and culture of the area.

"This project profoundly touched my life," said the Reverend Kathy Mitchell, an Elyria neighborhood leader. "To see our older residents working with teenagers and preschoolers was nothing short of a miracle. The focus was no longer age, ethnicity, language, or gender. The focus was neighborhood."

The Barnum/Westwood neighborhood is a low-income neighborhood, primarily Hispanic, but with a relatively new population of Vietnamese and other Asian cultures. This influx of new immigrants has caused some friction. The Ross/Barnum Library, with the help of artist and community organizer Barry Rose, decided to construct a bronze tile mural at the library. The artist sought out people from all of the neighborhood's cultural groups to create it.

The theme of the mural was personal icons. Neighbors designed and constructed thirty-six individual six-inch-square bronze tiles. They chose symbols of some personal significance, drawing on books, education, family, and art. "Individuals were free to express themselves within the whole," said Rose, "and now, each person can come to the library and say, 'That's my tile, that's my symbol, that's important to me.' And yet, it all works together as a piece of art because there was uniformity in the way it was executed." The mural is now a permanent fixture outside the library.

"Community-building is the soul of the NCD program," says Rose. "The heart of it is seen when people in a community work together — choosing a design, picking a theme, and then executing it. NCD has allowed that to occur. But most important, the people who did [this mural] have a permanent tie to their neighborhood library and a sense of ownership."

Gloria Leyba, now the chair of the NCD steering committee, recalls an NCD program designed for teenage fathers. "We know that there's quite a vacuum as far as programs that work with young men. So a program was put together by the Denver Inner-City Parish, and it resulted in several projects. One was a historical mural that allowed the young men, primarily Hispanic boys, to get into their personal histories, their roots, to gain a sense of self. In another project they wrote poetry about parenting. Some wrote about being single fathers.

"And now, each person can come to the library and say, 'That's my tile, that's my symbol, that's important to me.' "

"The significance of the program, as I see it, is the impact it had on their lives and surroundings," Leyba continues. "They had interviews and discussions with senior citizens. They were able to look to the elders of the community to get more of a sense of parenting and family. Sometimes these young people don't have that kind of relationship with their own parents.

"The project is finished now, but it has probably had some impact on how these young people look at families and how they see the role of the father in the

family. They were also able to share that knowledge with their own children, as well as other elementary school kids."

Just getting underway at the end of 1994 is the development of Memorial Garden, which will transform a vacant lot in northwest Denver into a community park. The idea came from Parents for Peace, a neighborhood organization whose primary purpose is to fight gang violence. The Memorial Garden will include a community vegetable garden, seating areas, flower gardens, an Aztec dance and game court, a neighborhood plaza, and a basketball court. Neighborhood artists, local activists, gardeners, mentors, and other leaders will assist in the planning and implementation of the project, a memorial to peace in a neighborhood literally under the gun of gang violence and street crime.

The Power of Art and Communication

Fabby Hillyard, of the Mayor's Office of Arts, Culture and Film, likes the way NCD has developed by learning from the communities. "Neighborhoods have the ability to define and describe themselves artistically from the inside out, not the outside in. We keep learning more about what communities need, and we put it back into the program.

"NCD [gives] neighborhoods and communities . . . the opportunity, using the arts, to celebrate, to address issues, to go for more overt neighborhood identification," Hillyard says. "It's their project. They design it, plan it, implement it, use artists as technical resource people, but they [work as] a team."

Cyndy M-A Medeiros, the NCD program director who works under the auspices of the Colorado Center for Community Development (a program of the University of Colorado at Denver), continues to refine the program and streamline the process, making the process clearer for neighborhoods to access funding. She hopes to expand the program into other parts of the metropolitan area and eventually across the entire state.

"What makes our organization unique," she says, "is that we're not just providing funds for a sculpture or a painting. We're providing funds for a creative neighborhood planning process. It's not only the mural that people will remember. They will remember the bonding that occurred over the three or four months when people came together with their special talents to make a project happen." As a result of that bonding, the NCD steering committee hopes that the neighborhoods' residents can continue to move forward in a spirit of unity, self-confidence, and creativity to address community problems.

In addition, the NCD program now allows individual artists to apply for funding, provided they have a community partner. "Traditionally," Medeiros says, "the neighborhood organization would come up with the idea and then would have to find an artist. Now artists can say, 'I have something I can give to the community,' and find a neighborhood organization to work with them."

The greatest benefits of the program, she says, are "the relationships that are built as a result of the projects. Residents get more involved with their own neighborhood organizations, they learn more about their communities and meet neighbors they've never met before. They become empowered by the process. Because this funding process is similar to many others, they also learn what it takes to obtain financial support to improve their neighborhood."

Medeiros also notes that, "it's great to see people discover the artist within themselves. In some programs we have parents doing projects with their children. To see that growth in imagination and to observe the reinforcement of family ties is a great benefit."

The Future of NCD

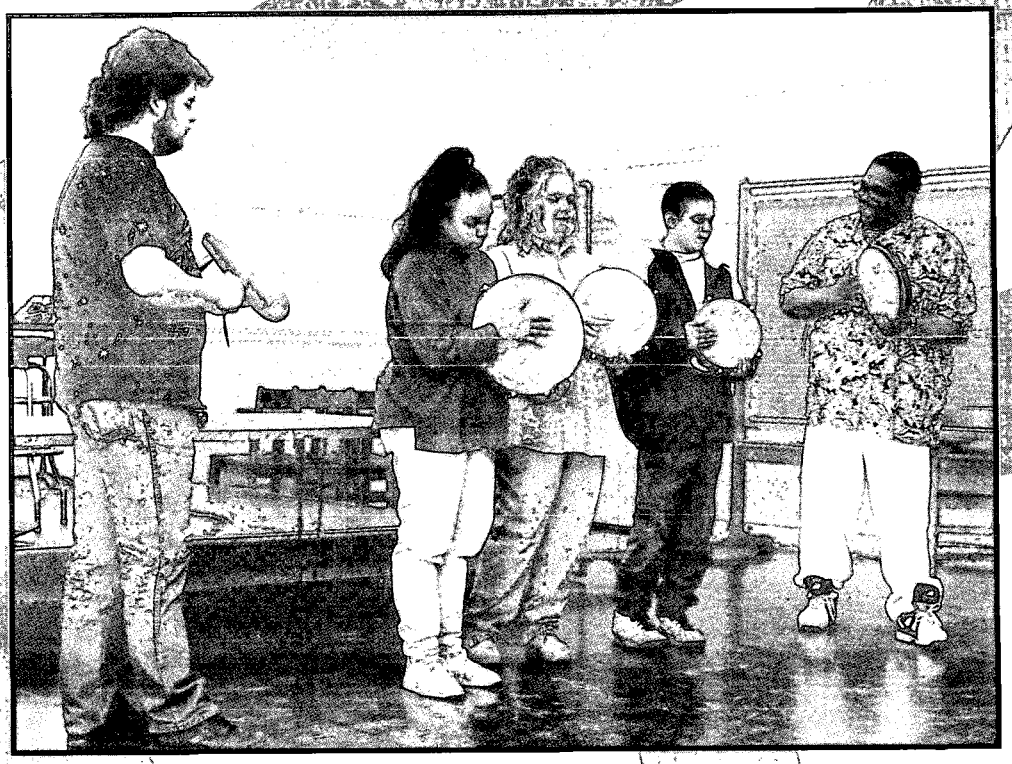
The initial funding for this program ended in December of 1994, but it is expected to continue. The Colorado Council on the Arts and the Denver Mayor's Office of Art, Culture and Film are working together and with other neighborhood groups to ensure that NCD can carry on. They have seen how underserved communities have enriched themselves with the help of artists and neighborhood organizations. The Mayor's Office of Arts, Culture and Film plans to maintain its commitment to NCD. "We would love to find a partner who would raise the pool," says Hillyard, "but even if we don't, we'll do it anyway."

What strikes CCA Executive Director Barbara Neal most about the program is how different funding partners pulled together to make it happen. "The cooperation between the NEA, the state arts council, and the Mayor's Office on Art, Culture and Film," she notes, "is a unique partnership. And it is something that we need to look at more closely in the future. Each one of these entities has the same degree of commitment to arts development on one of the smallest local levels, which is the neighborhood." □

Tom Auer is the publisher of The Bloomsbury Review, *a "book magazine" distributed nationally from Denver. He was also the Colorado coordinator for the Tumblewords: Writers Rolling the West program, which sponsored literary presentations in underserved areas of eight western states.*

For further information on Neighborhood Cultures of Denver, please contact the Colorado Council on the Arts at 750 Pennsylvania Street, Denver, CO 80203-3699; phone 303-894-2617.

Working Their Way Into the Arts



Miguel Alméstica demonstrating the Puerto Rican *pandereta* to students at William Davies Career and Technical High School for the folk arts component of Arts Talk.
Photo by Winnie Lambrecht

by John Pantalone

Think back to your high school encounter with Shakespeare. Sitting in a classroom reading from a book wasn't what the Bard had in mind. If you were lucky you had a chance to see a live production, but even then you couldn't understand the language or summon enough excitement to see more on your own, could you?

Now consider the experience of the students from Rhode Island's William Davies Career and Technical High School who, through the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts' Arts Talk Program, had the good fortune of getting under Macbeth's skin at Providence's Trinity Repertory Company, a Tony Award-winning regional theatre. Before they were done with Shakespeare's classic tragedy about ambition, intrigue, and murder, students in the program had visited backstage with set designers, carpenters, costume makers, and lighting experts. They met the actors and the director, and their special visit with Macbeth inspired them to design and silkscreen T-shirts for the play.

The chance to see the language of Shakespeare come alive made all the difference for the Davies students, and the opportunity to spend time with technical staff at the theatre opened their eyes to the possibility of careers in live theatre, something none of them had considered before.

Reaching a New Group of Students

Arts Talk, developed under the auspices of the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts (RISCA), is now in its fifth year at Davies High School. The basic concept, says RISCA's Arts in Education Coordinator Sherilyn Brown, is to give technical students a broader learning base and, more fundamentally, to help them improve their communication skills. "In the late 1980s we were looking at ways to reach school populations — underserved populations — with our programming," Brown explains. "All our education efforts were being tied to the state's literacy initiative. We began to conceive of the arts as languages and communication, and we thought it made sense to do this with vocational/technical students."

Davies is a state-run school in the Blackstone Valley region of Rhode Island, considered the birthplace of the Industrial Revolution in America. Once a leader in manufacturing, the area has struggled since the 1950s to recover from a dwindling economic base. Of Davies's 700 students, 88 percent have been identified as academically disadvantaged. In addition, 35 percent are considered economically disadvantaged, and 53 percent have special needs of some kind. A growing number of students from immigrant families — Hispanic, Asian, and Portuguese — enter the school with limited proficiency in English, and demographic data suggests the number will continue to rise.

Arts Talk gives technical and career students, who rarely interact with the arts in school, opportunities to interact with professional actors, musicians, dancers, designers, curators, and others from some of their state's most prestigious cultural institutions. William Foley and Beverly Lembo, the Davies teachers who have guided the program since its inception, work in close consultation with Rhode Island's regionally and nationally recognized cultural institutions — the centerpiece of Arts Talk. They integrate the arts with the subject matter being studied at the time in the English and social studies classes.

For instance, in their sophomore year, the Arts Talk students studied the period of American history from 1865 to 1900, and in their English class read *Dances With Wolves.* During the same period they visited the Museum of Art at the Rhode Island School of Design (RISD) to view Native American artifacts. A

medicine woman from the Narragansett Indian tribe visited them at the school and a Native American dance troupe performed for them, so they learned about another culture in several different ways.

When the class was studying immigration in social studies class and reading British literature in English class, Trinity Rep was staging a production of *Twelfth Night* with the story set in the early twentieth century. The students read the play and did background research on it before visiting the theatre, and the technical students each hooked up with specialists in their areas of vocational study, from electronics to costuming to graphic arts.

The coordinators at the various cultural institutions make every effort to develop interesting experiences for the students that relate to the subjects they're studying. According to David Stark, the education coordinator at the RISD Museum of Art, "We have tried hard to connect our exhibits and items from our collection to the general subjects the students are studying. For instance, we related a Picasso exhibit and cubism to African art when they were studying Africa. They toured our African Gallery and were able to study the masks, objects, and artifacts first-hand." Following their visit, a RISD arts instructor taught them how to create collages.

Stark introduced a graphic arts and design component into Arts Talk in the fourth year of the program, and this year the students are going to embark on a major project that will incorporate graphic arts with many other elements. As Foley explains it, the students will be working on a science fiction theme by reading *Fahrenheit 451* for English class, creating their own illustrations for the story, and producing a half-hour radio program. Electronics students will develop devices that will be used in the radio show. The students will also attend a play with a science fiction theme, study mummies in the RISD Museum of Art, work on sound effects with folk musicians, and hear the Rhode Island Philharmonic perform a program called "Salute to Flying Objects."

Opening Up New Worlds

"Without question the biggest impact of this program has been in the self-esteem of these students," says Foley. "They have responded because the program has introduced them to a whole new world . . . and the program has related that new world to the technical fields they are studying . . . The kids studying graphic arts have worked with designers at Trinity Rep and graphics experts at RISD. Kids who are interested in electrical work have seen what it takes to set up lighting and special effects on a stage."

> "The dropout rate at our school was about 12 percent overall when we started this program. After two years the dropout rate among the Arts Talk students was zero."

"Most of these kids had never attended a play or visited a museum [before this program]," says RISCA's Brown. "The program has taught them how to be an audience, how to behave at the theatre or in a museum. And in the process they've discovered that art forms they might have thought were elitist or difficult are quite accessible."

"I'm not surprised at the positive effect this has had on the students," says David Gasper, education director at the Rhode Island Philharmonic. "They are like any other potential audience. If they are given the

Narragansett artist Ella Sekatau demonstrating regalia making to Arts Talk students.
Photo by Winnie Lambrecht

attention they need and the material is presented in a way that involves them . . . they'll respond."

Gasper continues, "For them to appreciate classical music, they have to understand some of its language just like anyone else. We gave them the opportunity and the environment to appreciate it, and they responded. It's an accomplishment to get any high school student to appreciate an abstract art like music, especially when you consider that they are weaned on popular culture and the superficial, short-term rewards it provides."

Peg Melozzi, Trinity Rep's education director, spoke of a telling moment that occurred during a performance of *Twelfth Night*, where there were 500 high school students in the audience. "I noticed this pocket of beautifully behaved, in-tune, perceptive kids. They were the kids from Davies. They were focused. They knew the play. They behaved the way you hope an audience will behave."

Melozzi continues, "The difference with the Davies kids, I'm sure, was that they knew the actors, and they knew how the set was built and how the lighting was done. They were in tune with the whole production, and they were intensely interested in it."

Positive Effects

"After the first year of the program you couldn't tell the difference between the special needs students and the regular classroom students by behavior or by test scores," according to Lembo. "The dropout rate at our school was about 12 percent overall when we started this program. After two years the dropout rate among the Arts Talk students was zero."

Lembo tells of a student who graduated last spring and joined the Marine Corps, barely a year after she had been having terrible trouble in school. The teacher believes that Arts Talk prevented her from leaving school. "She was living in a group home and she didn't care about school or anything, really," says Lembo. "Then at one of the Arts Talk programs on Native American culture she seemed to perk up. Her father had a Native American background, and she seemed very interested in learning more. Pretty soon she was studying it on her own and doing a lot of related artwork. She began to write poetry, her whole attitude improved and her attentiveness in school got so much better."

The folk arts elements of the program had a special influence on many of the students, says Winnie Lambrecht, folk arts coordinator for RISCA. "Many of them are from immigrant backgrounds or are immigrants themselves, so it touches them personally to know that their cultural background is valued in an educational setting, because they seldom see it valued in the mainstream."

Another special attraction of Arts Talk is the opportunity for students to meet and get to know professionals in the arts. Last spring, for instance, students sat on the 1940s nightclub set of Trinity Rep's production of *Lady Day at the Emerson Bar and Grille* listening to Rose Weaver, the show's star and a veteran of over two decades of stage, film, and television acting and singing. The students sat rapt as Weaver talked to them not just about Billie Holiday and her tragic life and artistic genius, but also shared with them her own life as an actor and mother of two children. Just as Billie Holiday came alive for them on stage, Rose Weaver became a real person for them too.

From Arts Talk to Arts Workers

Through Arts Talk students became interested in careers in the arts that fit the technical fields they were studying. Recognizing the students' new career interests, RISCA's Brown and the Davies teachers realized that no

follow-up opportunities for apprenticeships or internships were available. So they created a companion program called Arts Workers, which was implemented in the 1993-94 school year with the help of a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). Arts Workers places high school seniors in internships with arts organizations, where they gain a unique inside perspective on the arts while practicing their vocational skills. The NEA grant helps provide salaries for the students, and fees to arts organizations for training and supervision.

For one student, Jesse Mercer, it has already paid off. After he and another electronics student, Chris Lebrecque, did a summer apprenticeship with the Everett Dance Theatre, Jesse was offered a part-time job operating the dance company's lights at its new theatre. "I really wasn't interested in [working in] theatre or dance before I did the internship," Jesse said. "[But] working there got my attention. I realize it's a serious responsibility, and I look forward to going there to work."

Jesse and Chris provided considerable help in converting a 1910 carriage house into an intimate dance theatre for Everett, says one of the dance company's principals, Aaron Jungels. "They helped pull all the electrical service, bent electrical pipe, and ran and hooked up conduits throughout the building. . . They came prepared to work and they knew what they were doing. They have good attitudes and sufficient skills, so we could leave them on their own to complete the job."

Jesse says he'd like to work as a lighting designer and operator full-time someday, and that's exactly what Foley, Lembo, and Brown were hoping would happen when they started Arts Workers. "It's been a terrific outgrowth," says Foley. "All of it helps the kids with creative thinking, analysis, problem-solving, and communication, which are stressed in Arts Talk as well. These are the major goals being identified in education reform nationwide. As someone who knew nothing about arts education before these programs began, I can tell you I am convinced this is the way to go in the future."

Future Plans for Arts Talk

Foley and Lembo have written an arts education curriculum for high school sophomores, which they hope will be adopted at the school. Their goal is to integrate Arts Talk with the English classes in grades ten and eleven, and to coordinate the Arts Talk experiences with English and social studies in the senior year.

RISCA's Brown, who plans to do more evaluation of Arts Talk to see how it can be improved and expanded, says she also wants to track graduates who have gone through the program to see what impact it has had on them and their careers. She's hopeful that Goals 2000 educational reform initiatives will encourage more funding for arts education, and she thinks that Arts Talk "can be a model for other schools. We'd love to see it in every high school in Rhode Island." □

John Pantalone is the editor-in-chief of Newport This Week, *a community news and arts weekly in Newport, Rhode Island. He has written extensively on the arts in Rhode Island.*

For further information on Arts Talk and Arts Workers, please contact the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts at 95 Cedar Street, Suite 103, Providence, RI 02903-1034; phone 401-277-3880.

The Family Arts Agenda

A Lighthouse for Rough Waters

Lynna Muschlitz works with Alex Lawson at Family Arts Festival, building a human size "nest" of willow.
Photo by Nancy Jane Reid

by Romalyn Tilghman

As you drive up to the Performing Arts Center in Newport, Oregon, the home of the Family Arts Agenda, you know you're in an idyllic place. The crashing Pacific Ocean waves fill your ears, and, if you look past the building, you can see forever. There may be a whale spouting or a fishing boat on the water, but chances are you are looking at as much horizon as you'll ever see. The Oregon Coast is the kind of place that attracts artists, writers, naturalists, and tourists. It's the kind of place where you want to stay because you feel as if there could be no troubles here.

What is less apparent at first glance is that the Performing Arts Center sits in a county that is distressed in a number of different ways. Newport is a town of 9,000 people, and is in Lincoln County, population 36,000. Newport has counted on tourism, fishing, and timber for its economic survival. Tourism is still thriving but its jobs don't pay very well. Fishing and timber are threatened by environmental concerns and diminishing resources. These economic challenges have contributed to the highest per capita rate of teenage pregnancy, single-parent families, suicide, divorce, drug and alcohol abuse, and adolescent AIDS in the state of Oregon. The situation is such that social workers alone can't solve the multitude of problems; there is a real need for the Family Arts Agenda.

Strengthening Families and Community Through the Arts

The Family Arts Agenda was conceived by Sharon Morgan, executive director of the Oregon Coast Council for the Arts (OCCA), as a way to bring the healing power of the arts to a number of people whose lives have been diminished by abuse or neglect. As the program has developed, it has become evident that stress and dysfunction invade almost every life at some time or another. Sometimes it's a bit difficult to pin down exactly what the Family Arts Agenda is because it's a whole collection of arts activities that aim to strengthen families in Lincoln County through the arts.

The programs of the Family Arts Agenda are truly collaborative, teaming the Oregon Coast Council for the Arts with community members and a variety of social service agencies. The council learned early on not to create programs to take out into the community, but rather to meet with constituents to identify their problems and priorities and then to provide a set of options for them. In the process of working with constituents to design programs for the community, OCCA provides first-rate, talented, compassionate, and creative artists, and enlists people in social service and education fields for their special skills and insight. Other agencies help provide sophisticated methods of program planning, skills assessment, and evaluation.

"The Oregon Coast Council for the Arts' Family Arts Agenda is a prime example of the way the arts councils integrate the arts within a community," says Christine D'Arcy, the executive director of the Oregon Arts Commission. OCCA is one of nine regional arts councils in the state, developed largely through the efforts of the Oregon Arts Commission. D'Arcy continues, "The Family Arts Agenda builds programs around agencies and issues important to positive change in the area. The programs involve the young and the old, workers and the unemployed, residents and visitors, the well and the stressed."

In undertaking programs, the Oregon Coast Council for the Arts takes into account that family dysfunction is identified as one of Oregon's five most pressing problems. While almost any state would identify family dysfunction as a critical social problem, Oregon has adopted a system of progress measurements called

Benchmarks, which are standards for measuring statewide progress and government performance. All state agencies must reflect the Benchmarks in their budgets to justify investments of public monies. By using the language and measures of Benchmarks in its program planning, the Oregon Coast Council for the Arts has enabled agencies to incorporate the Family Arts Agenda into their agency plans and grant applications. Benchmarks was recently awarded an Innovations in State and Local Governments award from the Kennedy School of Government and the Ford Foundation.

Families Discover the Arts Together

The Oregon Coast Council for the Arts does more than respond to a community's articulated needs. Sharon Morgan has an impressive ability to "hear" between the lines. Some have even accused her of mind-reading. Her special intelligence is evident as she tells of a major moment of enlightenment in her own thinking.

A dance workshop for elementary school students had just broken up and parents were picking up their offspring. The kids' faces were smiling, happy, and eager, in contrast to the parents' faces, many of which were tired from putting in long hours at minimum wage. Sharon explains: "One little girl ran up to her mother, threw her arms around her, and exclaimed 'Oh Mom, it was so neat! I saw a ballerina. Can I take dance lessons?' In one instant, the mother's face turned from exhaustion, to love, to exhaustion again. And then I came back to my office and cried, because I realized what we had done. We had created an additional stress for the parent, a negative message about the arts for the child, and a missed opportunity for them to share the arts. Not only had the mother never seen a ballerina, we had set her up with one more thing she could not provide for her child."

As a result of that moment of insight, the Family Arts Agenda's arts latchkey program was changed. Now, parents don't just pick up their kids after the program; instead, the program schedule accommodates the real needs of the whole family. On event nights, an early supper is served to families who then see a performance together. This "one-stop arts" meets many needs, including bringing families together within a positive community setting. The family is given a tremendous treat in the form of a meal they don't have to cook, a shared experience, and an evening of the arts. The kids are home before bedtime, fed and full in their stomachs, hearts, and minds. The parents are satisfied by the wonderful, communal time, and are invigorated and nourished as well.

> "For some kids who have been beaten and the many others used to receiving only criticism, the clown developing sessions are a miracle in human resilience, trust, and hope."

The Family Arts Agenda attempts to include the parents — or foster parents, or both sets of parents, or any other person identified as a family member — in every project it does that involves children. Sometimes, it is as simple as sending home a glossary of new words that a youngster learned from an artist or a suggestion of books and videos available from the public library that will continue the arts experience. Other times, it may include sending the kids home with popping corn (after teaching them a safe way to pop it) and a poster they created inviting the family to gather in the living room, kitchen, or yard for a snack and a show. The kids

then demonstrate a new skill, which might be juggling, singing, or putting on a puppet play.

Making Circus Skills Life Skills

The Kid Konnection Circus Project is another example of the kind of integrated and collaborative program that is part of the Family Arts Agenda. It was designed by social workers and arts council staff to provide learning experiences for youth, in the often overlooked seven- to eleven-year-old group, and their families by teaching them clowning, juggling, and balancing skills. The kids are selected because they have been clients of protective services, they are being served by at-risk services in the schools, their parents are being served by a substance abuse program, or their families have elected to work with social service agencies and this program. Kid Konnection includes an after-school program of instruction; a monthly performance and celebration called Super Saturday, which includes the families; and a community-based summer program, which includes a week of overnight camp at the state's 4-H site. Every year, 120 to 140 kids take part.

Kid Konnection came about largely through the efforts of Evelyn Brookhyser, the Lincoln County Extension 4-H agent. The 4-H has long been recognized as offering exemplary training programs for rural young people and is reorganizing to offer programs beyond agriculture and homemaking that will be relevant to today's youth. Brookhyser explains "We already had theater programs for kids and felt that one thing that many at-risk kids need is something special and uniquely their own. It was just one of those crazy brainstorms that led to identifying a circus theme with all its elements that helped us hit upon Kid Konnection. Juggling improves hand-eye coordination, tumbling aids physical coordination, and clowning allows for all sorts of personalities and peculiarities to be shown in a positive way."

Lead artist Don Fogle, a movement artist, says, "Our clowning is built from the inside out. You just wouldn't believe the earnest, concentrated analysis that these kids lend each other as they analyze one another's walks, their signature gestures, a special facial expression. For some kids who have been beaten and the many others used to receiving only criticism, the clown developing sessions are a miracle in human resilience, trust, and hope." By the time the kids graduate from this program, they have had lessons from mimes, dancers, and children's theater experts.

A family contract is required for a child to participate in Kid Konnection. Training, equipment, clothing, and transportation from school sites are provided by the program. Parents agree to provide transportation home and to notify the staff if they cannot. They also agree to attend the Super Saturday Family Programs where children perform and teach their parents. Parents and children work together on developing a portfolio that documents skills, events, and personal reflections. The portfolio is both a Kid Konnection memento and an evaluation tool. To understand further what the participant is learning, each child has a mentor, either a family member or an older student, who also takes classes.

Evaluating Impact

Kid Konnection is evaluated not on vague hopes, dreams, and promises but rather on goals that are measured at the end of each year. Project evaluation examines both process and outcome. A trained evaluator gathers information on the program's process by observing and interviewing the project coordinator and lead artists, meeting with coalition team members, and interacting with parents. Information regarding the degree to

which objectives are met in terms of outcome is gathered from evaluation forms completed by the parents; initial and year-end assessments made by teachers of participating youth; and observations of skill development as documented by the project coordinator, the lead artists, and the evaluator.

Revealing the Potential of Troubled Teen Girls

Improving self-esteem and encouraging consideration of options — as to careers, health issues, choice of partners — are threads that run through most of the programs of the Family Arts Agenda. Those threads are particularly strong in programs relating to high school students who are unable to visualize many options for their futures. Sharon Morgan points out, "In one of our county high schools, the mark of achievement for the girls is who can get pregnant first by the boy with the highest truck and most gun racks. Much of our work is directed to 125 high school girls who need to see their potential — as hairdressers and homemakers as well as lawyers and teachers." These high school girls are identified by their schools and social service agencies as young women whose lives can be changed by positive influences.

In one of the programs a poet taught creative writing as a new form of expression to a group of girls and women, ages fifteen through twenty-six, who have a high potential for dropping out of school, becoming teenage mothers, or committing suicide. By the fourth of six sessions, the girls were very interested in writing and in working with the artist. In a therapy group for victims of sexual abuse, the writer introduced a letter-writing exercise, asking the girls to write letters that could be sent, kept private, or destroyed. To the amazement of the artist, many of the girls wrote letters to their former abusers. Another program, a mentoring program for high school girls, involves journal writing. Each girl is assigned an artist/mentor who reads her journal and discusses it with her. Each month the group also attends a special program designed especially for them in which a speaker talks on careers or a number of other topics.

> "But under the guidance of the artist he began to explore his creativity. I think we were both surprised to find he had real talent. It was wonderful to see the pride he felt in his work."

In addition, the Family Arts Agenda responds to very specific problems that are often overlooked. For example, many of the teenage mothers did not know any lullabies or counting rhymes, because they had never been sung to as children themselves. After learning action songs such as the hokey pokey and folksongs like "Hear the Wind Blow," the young women learned with Carol Groobman, a singer/songwriter, to write songs about themselves or to highlight a happy event or a favorite food. Not only did the mothers learn the joys of singing to their children, they also learned to communicate and treat very young children with dignity, respect, and kindness.

Money Comes from a Variety of Sources

Funding for the Family Arts Agenda comes from a number of public and private sources. Ongoing support comes from the Oregon Arts Commission, which initiated the development of regional arts councils throughout the state. The City of Newport maintains the Per-

forming Arts Center, home of the Oregon Coast Council for the Arts, and provides programming support annually. The National Endowment for the Arts provided a three-year grant that supported the basic operations of the Performing Arts Center in its first years and the development of the Family Arts Agenda. The Kid Konnection Circus Project has been funded in part by the U.S. Department of Agriculture Extension Service. The Meyer Memorial Trust has led the way in funding new programs.

In addition, "other agencies [in the state] are writing grant applications that include the Family Arts Agenda, and agencies are contracting directly for our services," Sharon Morgan says. "We're also finding that as the Oregon Coast Council for the Arts is strengthened by its involvement in these programs and collaborations, it is easier for us to raise money when we do ask."

Success Measured Person by Person

The success of the Family Arts Agenda is possibly best measured person by person. One newly single mother of five wrote about her experiences: "We were fortunate enough to have an artist come to our weekly meetings. After a couple of weeks, I noticed my eight-year-old son had a particular interest in the art segment of the program. He was a troubled boy, having taken the separation hard. He had low self-esteem and was prone to aggressive behavior. But under the guidance of the artist he began to explore his creativity. I think we were both surprised to find he had real talent. It was wonderful to see the pride he felt in his work. I also noticed what a calming effect the art had on him. . . You could almost see his self-esteem grow."

That same mother took her first airplane trip when the Family Arts Agenda was honored as a finalist in Harvard's Innovation Program. Now, three years later, she has graduated from college and plans to attend graduate school. All her kids are doing fine — and making art. □

Romalyn Tilghman is a free-lance writer, a consultant, and the publisher of Arts Rag. *Her book,* Audience Development: A Planning Toolbox for Partners, *was recently published by the Association of Performing Arts Presenters.*

For further information on the Family Arts Agenda, please contact the Oregon Coast Council for the Arts at P.O. Box 1315, Newport, OR 97365; phone 503-265-9231.

Project BRIDGE

An Artist in Their Midst

Houston teens practice posing for the camera and shooting pictures. They are learning photography with Project BRIDGE artist Karen Sanders at their housing development, Irvinton Village.
Photo by Karen Sanders

by Saundra Goldman

In the heat of a Texas summer afternoon, a group of children escape to the air-conditioned shelter provided by the recreation center in their housing complex. They trickle in one at a time as the word spreads that BRIDGE artist Raul Valdez has arrived. Valdez greets his young friends and inquires about their brothers, sisters, and other companions who live at the Thurmond Heights housing development. When the entire group is finally assembled, they go to work preparing for the upcoming dedication of their latest project, a permanent outdoor sculpture that will be installed on the grounds of their North Austin housing development.

On this particular afternoon the children are rehearsing the song they will perform at the opening ceremony. As Valdez accompanies them on the guitar, they belt out the words to the popular song *Tick Tock*, written by the late Stevie Ray Vaughan — a legendary musician in the town of Austin where the children reside. Their faces beam, demonstrating their delight with the melody they are creating with their voices. The lyrics are like a prophecy and a prayer:

> One night while I was sleeping in my bed, I
> had a beautiful dream
> That all the people of the world got together
> on the same wavelength.
> Now in the street, universal love was the
> theme of the day.
> Peace and understanding, and it happened
> this way:
> The sick, the hungry had smiles on their faces.
> The tired and the homeless had family all around.
> People of the world, all had it together.
> Had it together for the boys and the girls.
> And the children of the world look forward to
> the future.

(*Tick Tock*, by Stevie Ray Vaughan, 1990.)

When asked what they like best about Project BRIDGE, the kids at Thurmond Heights respond enthusiastically. "Everything!" says Ronald Boston. "I want it to go on forever." Veronica Serrato agrees, "Raul spends time with us and he sings good!" A few of the children respond more selectively, mentioning specific classes or projects. Princess Green says, "I enjoy Raul coming here and helping us. He's teaching us the steps of painting and now I paint whenever I can."

New Connections and Transitions

Bridges are built to make connections and transitions. Through Project BRIDGE, connections are made between the Texas Commission on the Arts (TCA) and public housing authorities, between artists and children, and between children and their parents. Transitions are achieved by the individuals who gain in self-confidence as they develop their artistic skills and who gain in pride and self-respect as they broaden their appreciation of their own and others' cultural heritages. Transitions are also made by the BRIDGE communities as they become active producers of arts programming by nurturing artistic talent and developing local audiences. Substantial support to the TCA from the National Endowment for the Arts is helping to make these connections and transitions possible.

In identifying public housing developments for the program, the TCA works cooperatively with city housing authorities and/or community-based arts organizations. Sites are chosen largely on the basis of need, indicated by the number of families with children under eighteen and with an annual income below the poverty line. BRIDGE neighborhoods are typically characterized by high crime rates and children with low school performance. A variety of factors that may contribute to the program's success, such as resident

interest and the availability of facilities, are also considered in selecting a site.

At Rhodes Terrace, for example, the Dallas Parks and Recreation Department manages a facility located adjacent to the housing development, providing a gathering place for events and classes, as well as the assistance of parks and recreation staff. In San Antonio, the housing authority dedicated a five-bedroom apartment at the Cassiano housing complex for exclusive use as an arts center for the young residents of housing developments throughout the city. Currently there are six BRIDGE locations throughout Texas: Austin, Dallas, El Paso, Houston, Laredo, and San Antonio.

Art Forms Reflect Needs of Community

Mary Jesse Garza, BRIDGE artist in San Antonio, is a trailblazer in cooperative ventures between the San Antonio Housing Authority and local arts programs. Her relationship with the Carver Community Cultural Center, which presents multidisciplinary, international arts programming, has led to a very special opportunity for kids all over San Antonio to learn and perform with the world-renowned DanceBrazil.

DanceBrazil brings *capoeira*, an Afro-Brazilian movement form combining martial arts, dance, and music, to the stage. The children learn discipline as they practice the *capoeira* movements and study the combat metaphors, which also provide exercises in nonviolent approaches to resolving disputes. These are powerful tools for kids who are challenged daily by strife and violence. Responding to the company's desire to work with community groups, the Carver Center and Project BRIDGE arranged a series of workshops and performances throughout San Antonio at the Point East Apartments, Alazan-Apache Courts, Urban-15 studio, the DanS.A. studio, and the Carver. Due to the tremendous success of the residency, the Carver now employs three instructors in Afro-Brazilian dance and music. Plus, San Antonio is now the new U.S. site for DanceBrazil.

For another project, developed in cooperation with the Hertzberg Museum, Garza brought in fellow artists to work with young people in creating altars. "I try to do art that deals with something they're familiar with or that relates to their own cultural background," Garza says. Altars are an ancient part of Latin American culture, and are a natural part of this community's physical environment — in homes, yards, and churches. While a child may recognize an altar, he or she may not understand its purpose. For these reasons, the altar seemed like an ideal subject for an arts project.

As the children became caught up in the different ideas introduced by the artists, they created three altars with the help of the artists: a main altar, a children's altar, and an altar for people with AIDS. For the second year the finished altars were presented in an exhibit at the museum. Both years the exhibits opened with public receptions where visiting theatre groups, Cultural Warriors and Grupo Animo, provided music and poetry, and teenagers of the community recited poetry that included references to the traditions of the altar.

Building Community

When a BRIDGE site is established, great care is taken to insure that the program meets the needs and desires of the residents. During its pilot period, Project BRIDGE developed an effective model that is still being used for building rapport and establishing trust with communities. Artists undertake door-to-door surveys with the assistance of VISTA volunteers, organize "Meet and Greet" performances, engage in casual conversations in public spaces, and, perhaps most significantly, begin

to develop a Community Arts Advisory Committee (CAAC). Through the CAAC, tenants, parents, and representatives from community arts organizations, public housing administrations, and human service programs work together to develop and schedule appropriate projects.

When Raul Valdez began his work at Thurmond Heights in Austin, the neighborhood was suffering from escalating drug crimes and violence, and the residents expressed a strong desire for peace. In response, Valdez organized the production of a mural entitled, "Peace and Harmony in the Neighborhood." After photographing residents waving the peace sign, he projected their images onto a freestanding mural board, and the children traced and painted them. On the back side they scribbled positive "graffiti," slogans like peace, harmony, and unity. Now when the children pass by the mural they see images of friends and family and know that they have made a positive contribution to their community. They are also proud of the Public Housing Performance Award they received for the mural.

George Lee, an active participant in the CAAC at Thurmond Heights, expresses his satisfaction with the project and the accomplishments of his community: "It's really made a difference. The kids are busy daily and their attitudes have really changed. I've been in on this from the beginning and I'm so proud."

In Laredo, Project BRIDGE is not only helping rebuild a sense of community, but also has begun to heal the wounds created by conflict between rival neighborhoods. Rio Bravo and El Cenizo are both impoverished *colonias* outside Laredo, lacking water and electricity. With the assistance of a BRIDGE artist and an active CAAC, the two *colonias* are working together to become a single, more productive community.

The first cooperative project of Rio Bravo and El Cenizo was a night of song and serenade. BRIDGE artist Jesus "Toro" Martinez describes the process as one of healing: "During the rehearsals, old feuds would surface in the form of bickering or snide comments. But gradually the group came together and the entire community was rewarded by the tremendous gift [of song that] they gave."

Sponsored by the community development agency Corporate Fund for Children in partnership with the Laredo Center for the Arts, Project BRIDGE has also been providing music, dance, and visual arts workshops for the children and parents of several of Laredo's other low-income neighborhoods. A local accordionist, Flavio Torres, has given lessons on the basics of accordion playing and *conjunto* music. Ana Laura Bozell, a modern dance instructor, has taught modern dance to young and old alike. And in the visual arts, Jesus "Toro" Martinez, Gerald Salazar, Luis Guerra, Zelma Zapico, and others have taught a number of hands-on classes that include the fundamentals of painting, drawing, and art history. Along with the traditional visual arts instruction, the program also provides such activities as puppet and hat making.

Rebuilding Family

In the Texas-Mexico border town of El Paso, BRIDGE artist Victoria Salazar is busy offering bilingual workshops in dance and the visual arts to the residents of the Truman Complex. But her creativity in meeting the needs of the single parent families is especially noteworthy. When Salazar began working at the public housing development, she discovered that 90 percent of the adult residents were single mothers who are busy and often have little time and energy to spare at home.

Recognizing the limited budget of her students and the pressures of holidays, Salazar created an "edible" arts project where the common contents of the

grocery bag become the artist's palette and the artistic product is always something good to eat. Together, the mothers and children make festive food creations for the home and to share at community pageants. For Valentine's Day the mothers and their children attended "Chopin and Chocolate" with concert pianist Dr. Lucy Scarborough performing Chopin's work and discussing his fame and life as a composer. Accompanying the performance was a display of one of the student's elaborate, sculptural chocolates, which were presented to the mothers with poems and cards created by the children. "What is great about this kind of art," Salazar explains, "is that the family can do it together at home, and these kids need to be with their parents." By bringing parent and child together, Project BRIDGE helps rebuild family ties.

In addition, Salazar has helped one resident pursue an interest in cake decorating, which has become a source of financial support. Salazar enthusiastically explains that the principles of art — proportion, design, and color — can be applied to any creative pursuit. "You can compare her first cakes with her later ones. When she began, the shapes were bulky and had little sense of proportion. Now she has a better sense of line and composition. The cakes are more elegant, more pleasing to the eye." Her student has become a virtual sculptor of baked goods. She has also made the transition to a wage-earning citizen.

Salazar's arts projects reflect her belief that the arts can contribute to all areas of life. With the support of the El Paso Community College's Institute of Workforce and Economic Development, she has expanded the program at the Truman Complex to explore and develop the Mexican festival traditions in El Paso. Salazar and the college believe that rekindling the community's interest in producing the *posadas*, tradition-based festivals, will both generate community pride and offer economic development opportunities, with the festivals becoming tourist attractions and providing employment for artists.

Teens Behind the Camera

Project BRIDGE builds self-confidence in countless ways, the most obvious being the confidence one gains in acquiring new skills. Karen Sanders, BRIDGE artist at Irvinton Village in Houston, does even more to try to build self-confidence by helping African-American teenagers reclaim responsibility for the way they are perceived.

Sanders teaches video and photography, and runs her program with two goals in mind: the development of professional skills and media literacy. For Sanders, media literacy begins with understanding the process of creating the image, including the subject choices made by the photographer and the technical manipulation in the dark room. For the teens of Irvinton Village, access to this process provides a better understanding of the way images are presented in mainstream media. By producing positive images of themselves through videos and photographs, the students are examining and articulating their views of their cultural identity.

Sanders has concentrated on the most vulnerable age groups at Irvinton Village — the teens and preteens who are at the highest risk for drug problems and AIDS. The prevalence of the photographic media in contemporary society makes this program especially attractive to them. Among their accomplishments are a photo exhibition that took place at Irvinton Village; the production of their first video; and participation in a group exhibition at Diverse Works, a nationally recognized art space in Houston. Most recently, the group participated in a city-wide photography event, Fotofest,

with an exhibition in a Houston gallery. Sanders has been successful in acquiring a video camera and tripod for Irvinton Village. It is the first step in her plan to install a permanent video production studio at the housing development. She is also trying to obtain a computer for Irvinton, which will not only aid in video production, but will help the children write their own scripts. Sanders explains, "I want to encourage the children to sit and think and express themselves in writing as well as through images. These kids have stories to tell."

Artists Nurture Artists

"Project BRIDGE is primarily fueled by the energy and commitment of the artists who run the individual programs," says Rita Starpattern, Project BRIDGE coordinator at the Texas Commission on the Arts. Each site is directed by a lead artist who establishes goals for the particular site. Like candidates for any other job, lead artists are selected according to their skills and experience. What distinguishes this program in terms of its hiring practices is that the general goals of Project BRIDGE are personal goals of the artists. They are already committed to serving economically depressed populations. Selected artists are also members of the predominant cultural group of the participating housing developments and express a personal stake in seeing their program succeed.

In addition to a background in community-based work, the artists' professional achievements are an important consideration. The artists not only provide the necessary expertise for teaching, they act as models of commitment and professional excellence. According to Pamela Johnson, who is a dancer with the Junior Players and a Project BRIDGE artist in Dallas, "When the kids come and see me perform, they see what it is that I'm so excited about." Project BRIDGE also organizes field trips to arts events and arts institutions, providing inspiration for the work the children do in their classes and models for those children interested in careers in the arts.

Field trips have the added benefit of teaching children the appropriate behavior in public settings. Victoria Salazar describes the transitions she has witnessed: "When we first started going out, these kids could not sit still for more than a few minutes, much less for a one-hour performance. Now they're courteous and well-behaved. And because they're performing themselves, they show appreciation and respect for the accomplishments of others."

Because of its many successes, the Texas Commission on the Arts has now made Project BRIDGE part of its long-range plan. In 1992, its first year, BRIDGE artists provided over 4,400 hours in direct service to over 350 students, and over 4,600 residents participated in community events. The following year, BRIDGE tripled the number of youth and adults it reached through classes, workshops, and field trips to 15,407. But the numbers hardly tell the story. In the words of Ruden Rodriguez, resident services officer at the San Antonio Housing Authority, "The process of a youngster getting involved, [attending] classes, setting some goals, feeling good about himself or herself, [experiencing] discipline, developing learning skills — those are the benefits." □

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For further information on Project BRIDGE, please contact the Texas Commission on the Arts at P.O. Box 13406, Capitol Station, Austin, TX 78711; phone 512-463-5535.

Hugs and Kisses

A Big Kid's Play

In 1985 Theatre IV produced *Runners*, a play based on interviews with forty-three Virginia runaways in emergency shelters throughout the state. *Runners* was written to dissuade teenagers from running away from problems at home and into the vastly more dangerous life in the streets.
Photo by Eric Dobbs

by Rebecca Neale

Theatre IV, a Richmond-based, nonprofit theatre company for children, makes it their business to present serious subjects to kids in captivating formats. Since 1980, when the company launched a ground-breaking production of *The Shoemaker and the Elves* using specially designed technology for hearing-impaired children, Theatre IV has built a reputation as a world-class theatre group with a social conscience. They now have a repertoire of seven community outreach plays in which they use theatrical techniques to teach children concepts important to their safety. The company, which also produces plays and musicals based on children's literary classics and history, is the nation's second largest children's theatre (based on audience size). Theatre IV was awarded the Sara Spencer Award for "the most outstanding contribution to children's theatre in the Southeastern United States."

On a warm afternoon in early October, Theatre IV is presenting *Hugs and Kisses*, a sexual abuse prevention play for children, at St. Christopher's Lower School. In the quiet suburbs of Richmond, Virginia, the private Episcopal school for boys sits nestled protectively among trees glowing like warm embers.

Inside, the setting is a bright school auditorium, decorated with children's paintings of sports figures and lined with a battalion of chairs. Columns of mostly towheaded boys dressed in the uniform of the day — baggy khaki shorts, T-shirts, and sneakers trailing shoelaces — are led by their teachers to their seats. The boys are orderly, but irrepressibly exuberant as they skip and jive to their seats.

On stage is a simple blue backdrop, with "Hugs and Kisses" painted in huge orange letters. Five actors, all young adults dressed in pastel-colored overalls to suggest children, enter from the audience and begin singing a song: "Hug, a verb, to comfort, console, to put the arms around and hold closely; An act of love for the young and old."

But the action soon hones in on the point of the play — that sometimes hugging and kissing and affectionate touching are used in the wrong way. The actors explain the difference between good touch, bad touch (such as hitting), and secret touch, "when an adult or teenager touches you in an area normally covered by a two-piece swimsuit if you are a girl, and a one-piece swimsuit if you are a boy." With the music lowered to a whisper, the actors solemnly face the children to tell them, "We want you to be big kids today, because this is a serious play, and what you will learn is very important."

The Arts Can Change the World

Hugs and Kisses was written in 1983 by Bruce Miller, Theatre IV's cofounder and artistic director, and Terry Bliss, with music by Richard Giersch. It is in its twelfth season and has been presented over 1,500 times to 500,000 children in elementary schools across the state — public, private, urban, suburban, and rural. As Theatre IV points out in literature it sends to schools before the play is presented, child sexual abuse cuts across cultural, racial, and economic bounds, and occurs at all levels of society. Nationwide, somewhere between one in four and one in ten children have been sexually abused before their eighteenth birthday. Of those children, more than three-fourths were closely acquainted with the perpetrator before the abuse began, with the abuse occurring, on the average, for three years before it was detected.

That is why Miller and Phil Whiteway, cofounder and managing director, believe so fervently in their play and its power of prevention. The play sends a strong message to children that "it's all right to say no" to someone who is "secretly touching" them.

Says Whiteway, "I attended a performance of *Hugs and Kisses* this morning, and it never ceases to impress me how a quality performance can affect a young person. In *Hugs and Kisses*, I see the ability of a theatrical program to deliver a message of social concern, in a way that lectures and books and talks are not able to do. If we can give these young people information that will protect them, or even one of them, then we've done a good thing."

Miller and Whiteway are proud that the play has resulted in 3,000 disclosures of abuse from children and that it has received awards for its role in the prevention of childhood sexual abuse from the state of Virginia and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Beyond awards, the Virginia General Assembly recently cut to the bottom line by allocating funds to underwrite the play's fall 1994 tour, as the first step towards presenting the play in every elementary school in Virginia.

"The main thing that makes Theatre IV tick," says Miller, a friendly bear of a man with an embracing smile and commanding speech, "is that we try to find ways to serve our community through the art form of theatre." Theatre IV has pursued that mission by directing a third of the company's resources and productions to its community outreach series.

In 1985 Theatre IV produced *Runners*, a play based on interviews with forty-three Virginia runaways in emergency shelters throughout the state. *Runners* was written to dissuade teenagers from running away from problems at home and into the vastly more dangerous life in the streets. The company developed the show by working closely with the National Network for Runaway and Youth Services, and between 1990 and 1992 was the core of a comprehensive delinquency prevention program funded by the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services.

The spring of 1988 saw the first production of *Walking the Line*, a play discouraging teenage use of alcohol and other drugs. *Walking the Line*, written by Miller, is based on a true account that was reported in a Virginia newspaper of a teenage girl who was forbidden by her father to attend a party where there would be drinking. Worried about her friends driving home drunk from the party, the girl convinced her father to allow her to pick them up. On the way, she was killed in a head-on collision with a car carrying drunken teenagers — the very friends she was trying to protect.

Says Miller, "Currently, 86 percent of all Virginia high school students claim they drink to the point of drunkenness prior to graduation. Our play deals with the issue of irresponsible drinking. Not to imply there is responsible drinking, but to say, 'If you drink and drive, if you use alcohol as the gateway to other drugs, or if you become a teenage alcoholic, that is irresponsible and unacceptable behavior that will have terrible consequences in your life and the lives of others.' "

Walking the Line was followed in 1991 by *Wonderful World*, an awareness program introducing children to basic environmental issues. In the fall of 1992, *Dancing in the Dark* toured for the first time. The play encourages teenage sexual responsibility and was developed in partnership with the Junior League of Richmond. The Virginia Department for Children invited Theatre IV to present *Dancing in the Dark* at its 1989 annual conference, and later the play was warmly received at the annual meeting of the National Organization for Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention in Rockville, Maryland. Since 1992 more than 30,000 young people have seen this program.

In 1990 the Richmond Department of Social Services proposed to Theatre IV that they produce a play about issues families face in the foster care system. As a result, *Me and My Families* was introduced during the

1992-93 season. *Better Safe than Sally*, a childhood injury prevention program and the latest in the community outreach series, will enter its third season in the spring.

The theme that weaves together all the plays in the series is the conviction of Miller and Whiteway that even very young children can be trusted to learn important lessons about emotionally charged and controversial social issues, if presented to them in an entertaining and responsible form. The two, both fathers themselves, view protecting children from harm as their greatest reward — and their greatest responsibility.

Miller says, "What interests me in the arts in general, and in theatre specifically, is there's this tremendous opportunity to do something important to change the world." He pauses, and leans forward for emphasis, "I really believe that the arts can change the world."

"I see the ability of a theatrical program to deliver a message of social concern, in a way that lectures and books and talks are not able to do."

Enter Theatre IV

Twenty years ago Theatre IV was the fledgling product of two performing artists who had been roommates at the University of Richmond. Fresh from graduation in 1974 and a season of summer stock, Miller took a federally funded position with the Southampton County Public School system as a cultural enrichment director.

"It was during that year, when I was booking cultural programs into Southampton," says Miller, "I found that the only programs I could book came from New York and Washington, and cost, even then, $2000 a day. I thought, I can get together a group of actors, I can get a van, we can make costumes, and we can do these shows for $300 a day and be thrilled for the work. So I wrote to Phil, who had been the business manager for the University Players, and I said, 'How would you like to start a theatre company that works with kids and serves the schools?' And he said, 'Sure.' "

Armed with creative energy, youthful enthusiasm, and knowledge of what schools demand in cultural programs, Theatre IV ran its first production in 1975 — an adaptation of Brer Rabbit stories presented as authentic African-American folk tales. After receiving publicity in 1981 for becoming the first theatre company in the country to use special broadcasting technology for hearing-impaired children, Theatre IV attracted the attention of Ann Childress, an employee of the Virginia Department of Social Services and a woman with a mission.

As a professional working to protect children from abuse and neglect, Childress was alarmed about the growing number of reported sexual abuse cases across the country. Already familiar with Theatre IV's productions of fairy tales, and having read a newspaper account of the company's interest in using theatre arts to serve the community, it occurred to her that Theatre IV would be the perfect medium for teaching children about sexual abuse without frightening them. At the time, Childress knew of three other theatre groups in the country that were presenting plays on child sexual abuse.

Recalls Miller, "One of those plays dealt with a space character, a child from outer space who came to earth and was experiencing touch for the first time. The other one involved a baby bear who was being sexually abused by another bear. And the third one was a series of sketches in Minneapolis that talked about the issue, but mainly from an objective perspective and mainly for older children."

What Childress wanted was a play where the central character was a real little girl being sexually abused by a real person. She envisioned a play that treats children with respect by giving them truthful information, which they need to remain safe, but in a format that is easy to talk about with parents and teachers.

"Ann had a tremendous commitment to seeing this project happen," says Miller. "She met with us and came right out and said, 'Have you ever considered doing a play about child sexual abuse?' Now, in today's climate, that seems like a perfectly normal question. But in 1981, before the McMartin case broke in California (a much-publicized case involving employees of a daycare center who were accused of sexually abusing children at the center), before the movie, *Something About Amelia* [which dramatized abuse of a young girl by her father], it took us by surprise. We had never considered doing a play about an issue that controversial, that taboo."

However, after preliminary research and speaking with adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse who urged the project on, Miller and Whiteway decided to ignore the alarmed predictions of the company's ruin and launch the show. What ensued were eighteen months of feverish research as Miller and his assistant, Terry Bliss, spoke with childhood sexual abuse experts across the country, always digging for the one fact, the one phrase that would make a difference in the lives of children.

Miller says, "In writing the play, the biggest challenge for us was to deal with the issues honestly, at the same time using language and concepts that would be acceptable in Virginia's school system. I remember sitting around the kitchen table trying to figure out how we could talk about the private parts of a child's body so they could understand without explicitly naming them. We came up with the idea of talking about the swimsuit areas of the body."

In the fall of 1983, Theatre IV joined forces with Virginians for Child Abuse Prevention to administer a grant from the Virginia Family Violence Prevention Fund allocated for thirty free performances of *Hugs and Kisses* to schools across the state. That's when Miller and Whiteway learned that, although they were committed to getting the message of prevention into the schools, there were some messages that parents did not want their children to hear. Initially, no school would agree to accept a free performance of *Hugs and Kisses*. Eventually, after the show was performed for school officials and parents across the state, the public came to realize its value.

> "What interests me in the arts in general, and in theatre specifically, is there's this tremendous opportunity to do something important to change the world. I really believe that the arts can change the world."

Megan Maroney, chaplain and counselor at St. Christopher's School, says the prospect of showing a play to students on sexual abuse alarmed some of their parents, who said they wanted to preserve their children's innocence. But, after the script was shown to those voicing concern, only three of 400 children were prohibited by their parents from attending the play. Maroney's review: "I loved it. I thought the play was colorful, interesting, and funny. It gives the language to children and adults to talk about sexual abuse, and clearly gives the message to children, without scaring them."

A Role Model for Arts Organizations

"I think Theatre IV is a model in terms of their commitment to social service issues," says Peggy Baggett, executive director of the Virginia Commission for the Arts. "They're way ahead of other arts groups that are just now beginning to move in these areas. Their careful attention to the research and documentation is important. Theatre IV has carefully researched each of their community outreach shows to make sure that they not only have a good product artistically, but that it fits in with the current thoughts of the social service professionals."

One method Theatre IV uses to research an issue and accurately represent the problem and recommended solutions to the public is to align itself with a social service agency for each of its community outreach productions. As in the case of *Hugs and Kisses*, each production is carefully researched with nationally known experts in education and child health and welfare before it is written. A draft of the play is later scrutinized by an advisory board of educators, social service workers, physicians, and other interested professionals. Once the play has begun touring, Theatre IV maintains a close relationship with its advisors who keep the play's content and statistics current.

Prevent Child Abuse, Virginia (PCAV), the state chapter of the National Committee to Prevent Child Abuse, and Parents Anonymous National owns half the rights to *Hugs and Kisses* and participated in the original research. PCAV continues to work with the company by serving as a parent and teacher resource to schools that host the play, and by training the actors each season on how to answer children's questions and to "listen, believe, and refer" children with disclosures of abuse to the Child Protective Service (CPS) workers. PCAV also works with the Virginia Department of Social Services to ensure the presence of the CPS workers at each performance of *Hugs and Kisses.*

Barbara Rawn, executive director of PCAV, says, "I am in awe of Theatre IV. They take risks, they take on tough topics with imagination and incredible integrity. And the actors are wonderful. They're excited about what they're doing and they feel very special being able to do this show to help children. But doing the play, and talking to children who are being abused can be very overwhelming. We tell them to call us whenever they need to talk over their experiences. It's hard for anyone, even child abuse professionals, to hear a tiny child say her daddy is secretly touching her. For young adults who are actors, it's hell."

"It can be really difficult to deal with these issues," agrees Steve Perigard, Theatre IV's community outreach coordinator and a former actor with the company. Perigard toured with *Hugs and Kisses* for two seasons. "The children identify with the characters in the play who are kids, so they feel comfortable talking with us. Which is why we stick around after the question-and-answer period, to let the kids come to us, and we take them to the social workers."

The Child Protective Service workers are an important link in the prevention, and in some cases, intervention, loop. After the children have seen the play, and realize this is a topic that can indeed be talked about, children who are being molested will often disclose this fact to the actors. Having CPS workers on-site reassures Theatre IV that the children who have been brave enough to speak of their ordeal, often for the first time, will receive immediate help and not be lost in administrative cracks or a jurisdictional shuffle.

Public Funding

Because of such heart-wrenching responses from children, Theatre IV is committed to offering the community outreach series for a low fee, or free, to keep the series available to a wide audience. As a nonprofit company, Theatre IV looks to contributed sources of income to offset their production costs.

Phil Whiteway, an openly friendly man like Miller, but more quiet and serious, says, "We were incorporated as a nonprofit organization, but my partner's and my attitude was then, and still is, you earn the right to ask for money. There were many years in the beginning when we asked for no funding, because we felt we needed to provide some sort of track record before we would solicit support from a government agency, corporation, or individual.

"We still take a careful look at the ratio of contributed to earned revenue. Right now the ratio is about 25 percent to 75 percent, and it feels like that's the most responsible approach. I'm aware that many arts organizations have a 50/50 ratio, but to me that places a huge burden on the community and on the organization to raise that kind of money every year. Still, with 25 percent contributed revenue, it's an awesome thought to know you must raise half a million dollars each year."

Theatre IV began receiving support from the Virginia Commission for the Arts in 1978, three years after its inception. Says Peggy Baggett, "Theatre IV receives a larger amount of touring support from the commission than any other group in the state, because of the quality of what they do. And over the years they have documented the demand for their programming. They receive our largest touring allocation, but they are still able to reach only a third of the schools and community groups who ask for them. If they had more money, they could reach more children."

Among its supporters, Theatre IV counts the National Endowment of the Arts (NEA). "We've been receiving NEA funding for eleven years," says Whiteway. "We certainly need and welcome their cash support, but we also look at it as a terrific honor that this federal entity, which uses professionals in our field to evaluate our work and our management, has given us their stamp of approval."

> "Theatre IV has carefully researched each of their community outreach shows, to make sure that they not only have a good product artistically, but that it fits in with the current thoughts of the social service professionals."

Miller agrees with his partner on the value of NEA funding. He says, "The amount of money we receive from the NEA is not that significant as far as the overall percentage of our budget. But it is tremendously significant in that it provides crucial dollars we're unable to get anywhere else. And we're able to go to other funding sources and say, 'We have the support of the NEA, they view us as a nationally significant organization.' Those corporations and foundations that are enlightened on this issue, think, 'That's a distinction that only the best can claim,' and take our organization more seriously."

Theatre IV Has Massive Impact

Barbara Rawn says, "In the years that I have worked with Theatre IV, I have personally seen that *Hugs and Kisses* has had massive impact as a primary prevention tool." William Lukhard, former

commissioner of the Virginia Department of Social Services, says it changed the face of the way childhood sexual abuse prevention is handled in Virginia.

"Childhood sexual abuse thrives in an atmosphere of ignorance and secrecy. The play has made it OK for not only children but the gatekeepers to children — teachers, parents, daycare providers — to talk about the issue and bring it out into the open. If you walk into a daycare center and you see posters about reporting child sexual abuse, and the staff have been trained to know what to look for, and the children have been educated about secret touching, then it is an unsafe place for perpetrators. *Hugs and Kisses* was the catalyst for that to happen in Virginia." □

Rebecca Neale is a free-lance writer based in Richmond, Virginia. She has a Master's in Social Work and was formerly a clinical social worker at the Memorial Child Guidance Clinic in Richmond.

For further information on Theatre IV, please contact the theatre at 114 West Broad Street, Richmond, Virginia 23220; phone 804-783-1688.

12 Additional State and Regional Arts Agency Projects

All state arts agencies support arts projects that offer creative alternatives for youth. Like the compelling stories featured in the previous chapters, the following examples from the rest of the nation's fifty-six state arts agencies and seven regional arts organizations illustrate the positive impact the arts can have on youth, their families, and their communities.

The State Arts Agencies

Alabama State Council on the Arts

City Center Arts is a multi-agency, community-based effort to build resilient children, strengthen Birmingham families, increase community involvement, create job opportunities, and promote racial harmony through arts-related activities. It is an arts education and jobs program that brings the visual arts to children in grades one through ten from three public housing communities. The program uses the arts to build self-esteem and redirect youth in positive directions. The program was initiated by Space One Eleven, a grass-roots artists' organization, as a way for local artists to contribute to their community. In 1993, Space One Eleven was joined by the Birmingham Museum of Arts to expand the program and facilitate the museum's outreach to underserved and economically disadvantaged citizens. Students who participate in the program attend studio classes, and they exhibit both at Space One Eleven and the museum.

Selma Youth Development Center provides an after-school, year-round program that targets at-risk youth. The program is a collaboration between the Selma City Schools, the Selma Civic Club, and the Selma Youth Development Center. Approximately 200 kids receive classroom instruction in dance, music, drama, visual arts, and boxing, and take field trips to local museums and performances. According to the program director, "the arts are used as a tool to uplift and build the self-esteem of kids who live in a depressed community."

Space One Eleven and Selma Youth Development Center receive support from the Alabama State Council on the Arts. Space One Eleven also receives support from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Alaska State Council on the Arts

Out North Theatre Company, located in Anchorage, established a partnership with McLaughlin Youth Corrections Center called the "Locked Up" Teen Program. Out North conducts on-site writing and action workshops with local and guest artists, hosts teens at off-site workshops, and provides free tickets to see performances (the first time for many of the teens). Out North also employs selected teen inmates as backstage assistants to give them work experience. This is the third year of the program, and some positive results are increased self-confidence and the development of social skills.

In addition, Out North has joined with the Anchorage School Districts and the Partnership for a Healthy Community to initiate in 1994 a program that allows junior high school kids who have been suspended to spend a portion of that time working with a nonprofit organization. At Out North Theatre Company, a pilot site, suspended youths have been working behind the scenes assisting with props and costumes.

The Alaska State Council on the Arts provides general operating support to Out North Theatre Company.

American Samoa Council on Art, Culture and Humanities

One of the arts council's mandates is to assist the young people of the territory in crossing the difficult bridge between their native Samoan culture and continental United States culture. However, Samoa's problems with its youth are not the same as in the states. Young Samoans who have joined gangs or been involved in crimes while living in the states are being sent back to grandparents to "straighten out." These returnees are negatively influencing their peers in school and the community. The arts council is countering the problem with its Cultural Maintenance Workshops, Summer Art Academy, and its Arts in Education and Folk Art programs. These programs give participants a creative outlet for expression, and are also helpful in identifying troubled individuals who can then be referred to counseling programs.

Arkansas Arts Council

The Arkansas Arts Council funds a nine-month residency program in the Watson Education Center (WEC), an alternative high school in the El Dorado District. El Dorado is a cultural and economic center within an otherwise remote and poor area of Arkansas.

The purpose of WEC's arts in education program is to turn students' destructive energies toward creative activities. Working four to five hours each day with small groups of students, an artist facilitates work in the media of the students' choosing. The most visible of the program's accomplishments is a major mural on the exterior of a downtown office building in El Dorado. The program has drawn positive attention to the needs of at-risk students while giving the students a source of pride in their contribution to the community.

Through its use and interpretation of the arts, WEC has become a national model. It allows about fifty students who have not succeeded in traditional school settings an opportunity to succeed in its environment of intensive individual support and creativity.

Connecticut Commission on the Arts

During the summer of 1994, the Sankofa-Kuumba Cultural Arts Consortium targeted at-risk youth in a program that taught traditional West African dance, music, and history, while also promoting self-confidence and respect for others. Over 200 children in Hartford learned valuable lessons in critical thinking, conflict resolution, and presentation skills. The program culminated in an afternoon of performances. Participants from six city neighborhoods crossed territorial boundaries and put aside their differences to celebrate their common heritage with several thousand community members.

Sankofa-Kuumba and four Hartford agencies were partners in the effort. Christine Dixon-Smith, Sankofa-Kuumba's director, credits their success to the training they received through the Connecticut Commission on the Arts' Inner City Cultural Development program (funded by the National Endowment for the Arts), which provided the fund-raising and management skills necessary for a successful program.

Delaware Division of the Arts

With support from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Delaware Division of the Arts supported the Ko-Thi Dance Company of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, in a monthlong residency. The company uses traditional instruments and authentic costumes, songs, and dance

to present traditional African dance and music forms to Western audiences. Performances and more than fifty educational exchanges, classes, workshops, and demonstrations took place at schools, community centers, and alternative spaces throughout the state.

In many schools, preparation for the Ko-Thi performances was a yearlong process, during which students created African dresses, masks, stenciled headbands, and dance belts. In one unique residency activity, Ko-Thi's musicians taught community members how to make African drums, which then became the property of the local community center where the residency occurred. During a two-day, overnight workshop for young men, participants soaked goat skins, stretched them over oil drums, tuned and decorated the resulting instruments, and received instruction from Ko-Thi's master drummers. The activities culminated in a student performance at the Grand Opera House in Wilmington to great community acclaim.

District of Columbia Commission on the Arts and Humanities

A major priority of the commission is reaching the young people of the District of Columbia, particularly those considered to be at risk. In fiscal year 1994, through its Arts Education Program, the commission made an impact on approximately 55,918 district youths. This grant program focuses on providing youth with training in and exposure to arts activities. It includes artist residencies in public schools and nontraditional settings, such as community centers and churches. A major milestone of the Arts Education Program has been achieving the highest quality arts-related Summer Youth Employment Program to date. These training activities culminated in acclaimed performances at Ira Aldridge Theater, Fort Dupont Park, Lisner Auditorium, and other venues. Packed audiences consisting of the general public, family, and friends attended the performances to watch and support the youth.

Florida Division of Cultural Affairs

The Florida Division of Cultural Affairs awarded a grant to Fourth Avenue Cultural Enrichment (F.A.C.E.) to support programs offering culturally enriching experiences to at-risk youth ages five through eighteen. F.A.C.E. provides professionally directed classes and projects in dance, music, theater, and art without fees or restrictions. Programs target underserved, inner-city populations. Performances are regularly scheduled at local schools and a neighboring nursing home. Participants have painted two local murals, one at the Tallahassee Homeless Shelter.

Another organization, OneArt, received a grant from the division to support its KidsArts project. The project, in conjunction with Dade County Public Schools, the Metro-Dade Police Department, and the City of Miami Police Department, will provide a series of sixty-eight workshops in dance and drama specifically designed for inner-city children from Shadowlawn Elementary. An estimated sixty children will be served on an ongoing basis for thirty-four weeks. The division also awarded a grant through its Cultural Facilities Program for construction of the new OneArt Center.

Georgia Council for the Arts

The Arts in the Atlanta Project (ATAP) is the arts component of former President Jimmy Carter's Atlanta Project, created to address problems in twenty cluster communities that face high crime, teen pregnancy, and unemployment. ATAP is a collaboration, supported by the National Endowment for the Arts, the Georgia Council for the Arts, the City of Atlanta Bureau of

Cultural Affairs, Fulton County Arts Council, the DeKalb Council for the Arts, Arts Clayton, and a consortium of other arts organizations.

Many of the programs ATAP funds teach the arts, both contemporary and traditional, to children from local housing projects who have had little or no previous exposure to the arts. Students in these programs have done a variety of arts activities including learning traditional African drumming and dance and performing contemporary plays that they helped write.

Guam Council on the Arts and Humanities Agency

Frank Rabon, head of the Taotao Tano Chamoru cultural dance group, portrays his traditional dance class at Inarajan High School as the "macho, cool" thing to do. The dance class is a cooperative effort between the high school, the Guam Council on the Arts and Humanities Agency, and a developing cultural village in the area. Gef Pa'go, the Chamoru cultural village, was started three years ago with a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. Rabon teaches traditional dances of the Chamoru heritage. Those students who perfect their skills are allowed to join the professional dance group that performs at Gef Pa'go.

The strong bond forged by the dance group has satisfied the teens' need for group acceptance, which is often sought through gang membership.

State Foundation on Culture and the Arts (Hawaii)

In July 1992, the State Foundation on Culture and the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts funded the Statewide Cultural Extension Program, currently funded and administered by the University of Hawaii. Its purpose is to bring arts and cultural activities to rural areas and underserved communities. A significant aspect of the program was the Cultural Transition Project, which provided more than thirty-two presentations to at-risk youth in intermediate schools throughout the state. Presentations included a Hawaiian heritage guitar and song performance by National Heritage Fellowship Award recipient Raymond Kane and a storytelling session of Filipino folktales with Felisa Lindsey. Approximately 1,850 youths were reached through the Cultural Transition Project.

At least seven other arts projects targeting at-risk youth are currently funded through the State Foundation. These projects extend to four islands and address critical social issues such as homelessness, gang violence, low income, delinquency, and drug abuse.

Idaho Commission on the Arts

The Idaho Commission on the Arts received National Endowment for the Arts funding in 1993 for the Family Center Arts Project, a two-year project that provides artist residencies for first-time juvenile offenders and other at-risk youth in the community. Arts classes were integrated into education, therapy, and recreation programs at various locations, such as a home for teenage mothers, a shelter for troubled teenage girls, and the Idaho State Correctional Institution.

Using media ranging from clay to poetry to interactive electronic technology, artists worked for concentrated periods with small groups of students, encouraging positive self-expression. Youth workers say some of the students gained tremendous confidence and communication skills through the residencies. Artist Kathy Byron observes, "I often wavered between hopelessness for these students' futures and inspiration at working with such exceptional children."

Illinois Arts Council

Support from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Illinois Arts Council has helped the Peoples's Music School, located in Uptown Chicago, provide this community's youth with an opportunity to receive free, private instrument instruction and performance opportunities in neighborhood venues. According to Director Rita Simo, the school offers young people a supportive, constructive environment — a place to experience a sense of belonging and to be around others their age — that the larger community often doesn't provide. When she asks a young person why he is still at the school at six or seven in the evening, the response is typically, "I like it here." Says Simo, "My biggest concern is to instill in the students a sense of discipline." A measure of the school's impact is found in the words of a young man who had studied there eight years before. He writes, "I saw you were tough. Without that, I would have ended up in jail."

Indiana Arts Commission

Begun in 1988 in Evansville, Indiana, the Evansville Housing Authority's Dance Awareness Program was created as a means of teaching personal discipline and building self-esteem in youth in public housing. As a positive outlet for the young people's energy and creativity, it has evolved from its early roots in popular Top 40 music and dance into a program that offers classes to forty-five students on three levels in classical and contemporary ballet, jazz, and ethnic dance. Supported through a HUD Drug Elimination grant, grants from the Indiana Arts Commission, and various corporate sponsors, the program boasts a donated downtown studio space and holds professional recitals at the University of Evansville Theatre. Wherever the troupe performs — in a concert hall, at a festival, or in a classroom — these young people demonstrate pride in themselves and dedication to their work.

Iowa Arts Council

The Iowa Arts Council's Youth Arts Opportunities program began in fiscal year 1993 as a two-year pilot project to work with youth who have not had encouraging experiences, according to Dr. Willis J. Knight, the consultant for the project. Knight and five artists pursue the goal of building on the teens' strengths to increase confidence. "We want them to learn to take risks to create a more positive self-concept," Knight says. Concetta Morales, a visual artist, worked with fifty teenagers from five shelter facilities designing mosaic panels for the Des Moines International Airport. One of the students said the project made them feel successful for the first time.

Kansas Arts Commission

One of the most significant trends in the Kansas Arts Commission's Arts in Education Program is the increasing number of programs serving identified groups of at-risk children. Some projects being supported in this category are: a Lawrence dance company that works with children of substance-abusing mothers in a halfway house; classes given at the Wichita Center for the Arts for kids who have gotten in trouble for bringing weapons to school; a dance residency sponsored by the Salina Salvation Army for at-risk children who live in the economically disadvantaged area of town; and a partnership with Social and Rehabilitation Services to support artists in residence at four Youth Centers, which are state juvenile detention facilities. A follow-up study of youth after their release from the detention facilities is being developed.

Kentucky Arts Council

Three rural, underserved counties in eastern Kentucky present arts programs funded in part by the Kentucky Arts Council through local school district Family Resource Centers and county government Adult Literacy Centers. Family Resource Centers are a major component of the Kentucky Education Reform Act and provide health and social services to families. They have become the link between parents and schools and have increased parent participation in school governance.

Judy Sizemore, Kentucky Arts Council community artist in residence, has coordinated short-term residencies in visual arts, drama, music, dance, and creative writing in twelve Family Resource Centers serving 2,000 elementary school children and their families. Judy also conducts arts programs in the county Adult Literacy centers, and works with some of the same adults whose children attend the Family Resource Centers.

These community arts programs were initiated by the Appalachian Communities for Children, a Save the Children self-help organization.

Maine Arts Commission

In 1993 the Maine Arts Commission adopted a new long-range plan that focused the commission's resources on integrating the arts into all areas of community life. Consistent with this mission, funding in all granting categories is predicated on the inclusion of underserved populations, including children of disadvantaged families. Grants have been made to organizations throughout the state that have had a direct impact on these populations. In Portland, grants to The Children's Museum of Maine, The Preble Street Resource Center (a provider of services to the homeless, including teens and single mothers), the Portland West Neighborhood Council, and the Portland School District (for The Art of Black Dance, an Ethnic Arts Initiative grant) have provided disadvantaged youth with community-centered arts experiences. Professional artists skilled at working with disenfranchised youth have been central to the success of these projects.

Massachusetts Cultural Council

In 1993 the Massachusetts Cultural Council established an initiative called YouthReach, which supports partnerships among arts organizations, artists, and community agencies to provide arts programs for at-risk youth in underserved communities. The primary goals of the initiative are to employ the power of the arts to address the social challenges facing youth; to promote the integration of cultural programming into a community's response to the needs of its youth; to develop lasting linkages between cultural organizations, artists, and community agencies to provide the highest quality arts experiences for at-risk youth; and to stimulate other funding sources to recognize the links between community-based cultural programs and community development.

YouthReach has assisted activities such as the Drop a Dime/Voices project, which promotes the use of video and theatre to educate urban teens about substance abuse, violence, and AIDS. YouthReach is supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health.

Michigan Council for the Arts and Cultural Affairs

The Michigan Council for the Arts and Cultural Affairs, in partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts, provides funding and technical assistance to Detroit Area Film and Television (DAFT). DAFT is a

not-for-profit educational organization that has promoted and supported the creative use of the electronic media by young people for the last twenty-five years. Based in the Detroit area, it has had profound benefits for students, parents, and communities located throughout Michigan.

DAFT takes a hands-on approach, and its services consist of workshops and activities geared to providing at-risk young people with tangible projects. Three major activities are the Animation Workshop, the Michigan Student Film and Video Festival, and a television show featuring the winners of the juried festival. DAFT has provided thousands of students with successful learning experiences, concrete evidence of the students' successes in the form of their own films and videos, and valuable skills and work habits.

Minnesota State Arts Board

Intermedia Arts Minnesota, The City, Inc., and media artist Daniel Bergin worked together on a project involving fifteen African-American, at-risk teens. The residency was funded in part by the Minnesota State Arts Board's Organizational Support program, with support from the National Endowment for the Arts, the MacArthur Foundation, and Intermedia Arts' general fund.

The project entailed adapting August Wilson's play *The Piano Lesson* to video. By working closely with this historically rich play, the students were inspired to examine contemporary and historical representations of African Americans in the mainstream media, from the nightly news to MTV. During a post-screening discussion of their finished product, the teens shared their own views on cultural identity. This project enabled students to begin developing a cultural and historical context, and to develop ways of expressing what is uniquely meaningful.

Mississippi Arts Commission

Working with Mississippi Valley State University, the City of Itta Bena developed the Arts Enrichment Program targeting 150 disadvantaged and at-risk students in grades K–12. The highlight of the project was a summer program in 1993 featuring arts classes in painting, photography, music, and drama at four locations. A special exhibit at the end of the summer showcased students' work. Being recognized for their creative efforts and talents boosted the children's self-confidence. Using their creativity opened new avenues to learning. Local and regional artists who worked with the program were so convinced of its value that several have continued to volunteer their services to work with students during the school year. An exhibit of student work was held in April 1994, and the city's May Festival also featured student artwork and performances.

Itta Bena is now on the move. The city has acquired a building for use as an arts facility and is forming a local arts council as part of city government. This project was supported by the Mississippi Arts Commission and a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Missouri Arts Council

Parishes Associated with Kinloch Team (PAKT) is an outreach program serving a community ranked by the 1990 Census as the thirteenth poorest in the nation. This community includes numerous single-parent households and is characterized by high rates of drug and alcohol abuse and teen pregnancy.

The Missouri Arts Council, in conjunction with the St. Louis County Preventative Partnership (a program of the Department of Health and Human Services), supports PAKT's Youth Resources and Recre-

ation Department, which provides an eight-week summer day camp for youth between the ages of seven and fifteen. The camp exposes participants to multicultural activities and hosts visiting artists twice a week. For example, members of the Katherine Dunham Dance Company taught classes in dance and percussion that introduced students to African arts and culture. Classes have been helpful in deterring crime, substance abuse, and teen pregnancy, while improving self-esteem, self-discipline, and artistic and cultural appreciation.

Montana Arts Council

Since 1990 the Fort Peck Fine Arts Council of Glasgow, Montana, the HiLine Advisory Council for the Montana Department of Family Services, and the Illusion Theatre of Minneapolis have collaborated on a project to address the issue of child sexual abuse in the rural communities of northeastern Montana. The joint venture has received funding from the Montana Arts Council and the Montana Department of Family Services.

Using Illusion Theatre's critically acclaimed play *Touch*, the project employs local high school youth to reach children through live performances, and serves as a catalyst for the prevention of sexual abuse. It provides children with the images, vocabulary, and confidence to say "no," and furthers communication between children and the adults in whom they confide. The project has reached 7,000 students through performances in elementary schools, and also offers community performances and adult workshops.

Nebraska Arts Council

The Nebraska Arts Council recently expanded support for projects in underserved, culturally diverse neighborhoods with the help of a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. Project Impact, a successful collaboration between the Omaha Housing Authority and the Nebraska Arts Council, targeted at-risk, African-American youth from Omaha's public housing projects. These youth assisted in the production, writing, editing, acting, filming and development of a film featuring the biographies of lesser-known African Americans who have made significant contributions to American history. The young people learned valuable skills and received training in television and film production, and they were mentored by prominent African Americans in the field. The project also served as a catalyst for changing the youths' perceptions of African-American history, as well as altering their view of their own lives and helping them to recognize their worth and potential.

The Omaha Housing Authority is currently marketing the film to be used in schools and communities throughout the country.

Nevada State Council on the Arts

With support from the Nevada State Council on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts, the Lied Discovery Children's Museum in Las Vegas implemented a new initiative designed to nurture local young people's interest in art, science, and humanities. The initiative focuses particularly on youth with little or no access to cultural institutions. The targeted group, youth ages ten through eighteen, lives within the museum's immediate service area, which contains southern Nevada's highest concentration of low-income families and four of the highest-ranking, at-risk secondary schools in the state.

The ArtSmarts component of the program provides its young participants with the opportunity to work alongside professional artists for an extended period of time on a group art project. The artist and par-

ticipants work together developing an idea, investigating different ways of carrying it out, and creating a finished piece or performance that is then presented to the public. ArtSmarts was designed to give young people both artistic training and experience in using the artistic process as a method of problem-solving and developing self-awareness.

New Hampshire State Council on the Arts

Using a mix of federal and state dollars, the New Hampshire State Council on the Arts funds many projects for at-risk youth, including artist-in-residency programs for Headstart and community-based projects for teenagers involved in alternative education programs. One highlight, Alpha Teen Theater, is an ongoing after-school project that helps Hispanic youth with educational and social issues. For several months, a theater artist worked with fourteen young people to create skits based on difficult issues, including AIDS, drugs, and abuse, that had touched their lives. The project began with a matching grant to a community organization and expanded, without council funds, to tour these skits to various schools and communities. Each new performance helps to open dialogue between parents, teachers, and teens.

New Jersey State Council on the Arts

Each year the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, with support from the National Endowment for the Arts, is able to provide support to arts organizations across the state that are working to enhance communities, revitalize cities, provide creative alternatives for troubled youth, and teach tolerance. One example includes the work of Young Audiences in Princeton. Through a series of improvisation programs, Young Audiences' Theater Sports Residence builds leadership, teaches social skills, and increases confidence in inner-city kids who are identified as at-risk. The residencies are structured like sporting events, complete with competitions, judges, and fans. This connection to athletes has proven effective in securing participation of young males.

Another program, called Share the World, helps curb gang violence by using the arts to teach students tolerance of different cultures. Arts assembly programs and workshops are integrated with the school curriculum and culminate in a school multicultural festival.

New Mexico Arts Division

Working Classroom, in Albuquerque, is a non-profit, multidisciplinary youth arts organization that works with at-risk youth and receives funding from the New Mexico Arts Division. During the past three years, seven young actors and playwrights have put on plays dealing with current issues. *Juan's Choice* is about youth involvement in gangs. It was written for the eighth Annual Multicultural Mental Health Conference on Children and Families. Several hundred people attended the performance, and more than a dozen took the stage to try and change the outcome of the play. Another play, *The Rubber Band,* is a tragi-comedy about sex in the age of AIDS. It is a bilingual play inspired by *Lysistrata.* The play opened at the South Broadway Cultural Center, and later toured to Las Vegas, Taos, Tierra Amarilla, Las Cruces, and the Boys School in Springer.

New York State Council on the Arts

The International Center of Photography has a Community Record (CR) program serving three inner-city public schools in some of New York's most densely populated minority neighborhoods: East Harlem, Chinatown, and the Lower East Side. The purpose of the program is to teach students to use the camera as a

powerful means of community exploration and creative self-expression.

One of the schools is CLC, a junior high school in East Harlem that serves economically disadvantaged students of African-American and Hispanic heritage who have limited skills in math and English. During the 1994-95 school year at CLC, the Community Record Program will be integrated with social studies, teaching students to look at history through the photographic record and to understand the impact and influence of photography as a tool for social change.

New York State Council on the Arts has provided grants for the CR program since it was inaugurated in 1986. The National Endowment for the Arts awarded its first grant in 1992 and renewed it in both 1993 and 1994. The program now also receives support from corporations and foundations.

North Carolina Arts Council

With state and federal funding, the North Carolina Arts Council is supporting projects that enhance the lives of youth and their families through its Organization of Color Development Program and Arts in Education Program.

These programs reach children from the early cognitive years through the teen years. An example of the former is a program at the Plaza Road Preschool in Charlotte where at-risk, inner-city four-year-olds now have arts as part of their regular curriculum. These enriching arts experiences are intended to stimulate cognitive and motor development. The Seeds of Sheba program in Chapel Hill helps disadvantaged youth see their own worth, potential, and heroes through a new framework of respect and support. They become creators of art through classes in theater, music, and dance, and they also regularly share their experiences with and learn from regional arts professionals. Through instruction and examination they discover African-American heroes in their history, on their streets, and in themselves. This kind of support fortifies children, strengthens families, and builds communities.

North Dakota Council on the Arts

Through its ACCESS Grant Program, the North Dakota Council on the Arts funds projects to serve special constituencies or minorities. Funded projects include the Family Support Network in Jamestown, which provides art experiences/education for teens and young adults with special needs. In fiscal year 1994, the students were introduced to drama in the form of short stories and role-playing by a local artist. In fiscal year 1995, the students will experience art activities from different cultures. ACCESS has also supported workshops in Native American storytelling and writing at the North Dakota Industrial School in Mandan, a state facility for the incarceration and rehabilitation of young offenders. One of the students wrote that the experience gave them "courage and hope, plus the encouragement to write and put their feelings on paper."

Commonwealth Council for Arts and Culture (Northern Marianas)

Summer Arts Exploration was a successful, four-week workshop for elementary and high school youth. The project involved two weeks of intensive instruction in mask making, basic drawing, print making, and calligraphy; and a two-week exhibition of the finished products. Additionally, an intensive dance workshop was conducted on the island of Tinian, which involved learning dance steps from American Samoa, Fiji, Tahiti, and other Pacific islands. Workshop participants formed a dance group that will practice and perform on a regular

basis. Demonstrations of traditional canoe building and thatch house building were conducted on the island of Rota.

During the school year, the arts council sponsored after-school workshops throughout the islands of the Northern Marianas to encourage positive environments in the arts and to provide alternative activities for students.

Ohio Arts Council

Urban communities must find positive ways for neighborhood members to express themselves, develop leadership skills, and be involved in solving problems that affect them. The Coordinated Arts Program is a partnership among Greater Cleveland Neighborhood Centers Association, the City of Cleveland, and the Ohio Arts Council. It seeks to give children, teens, and elders opportunities to receive special instruction in visual and performing arts in their neighborhoods, to strengthen community pride and individual self-esteem, to sustain long-term relationships between artists and communities, and to develop a prototype that can be shared.

With funding from the Ohio Arts Council and the National Endowment for the Arts, this project creatively involved more than 2,200 people in eighteen neighborhoods in its first year. Arts programs were designed to be flexible, cost-efficient, progressive, and culturally specific. Activities include crafts, African drum making and drumming, oral history projects, an elder musicians program, African dance, young audience grooming, wood carving, and puppetry.

State Arts Council of Oklahoma

African-American youth of Comanche Park Public Housing Project in North Tulsa are now looking at the world from a different angle—from behind the lenses of their 35mm cameras. The World of Photography Project, sponsored by North Tulsa Heritage Foundation, the State Arts Council of Oklahoma, and the National Endowment for the Arts, was conducted by an African-American professional photographer with the goal of capturing the interest of low-income youth while providing useful skills. The youth were taught basic camera operation, darkroom procedures, portfolio development, and career opportunities in the photographic and media arts. They visited photo and television studios, newspapers, graphic design companies, and the University of Tulsa art department. The students exhibited their work at the community center where they received certificates denoting their accomplishments. Working with mentors from Tulsa University's School of Art, they also took photographs exploring the North Tulsa environment. These works were part of a popular exhibit at the Gilcrease Museum of Art.

Pennsylvania Council on the Arts

Many of Pennsylvania's nonprofit organizations use the arts as a way to make a positive difference in the lives of young people, their families, and communities. A number of these organizations serve specific culturally diverse communities throughout the state. Among the examples, supported with funds from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts, are the youth-directed projects of the Asian American Youth Workshop of Asian Americans United (AAU) in Philadelphia. AAU projects, like their youth literary magazine *Unbound*, video production and documentation projects, and hands-on mural and craft projects, are designed to help inner-city, Asian-American youth express their feelings and share their experiences.

Institute of Puerto Rican Culture

The Institute of Puerto Rican Culture's mission is to preserve, promote, disseminate, and enrich the Puerto Rican culture through the development of all cultural manifestations including the arts, folklore, and the humanities. A goal established in 1993 is for all agency programs to have an impact on youth. Efforts are geared toward providing youth with an education about their heritage, the skills needed to develop their own generation's perspective, and the opportunity to participate in cultural activities in order to prevent social problems such as crime, drug abuse, and school dropout.

Several after-school programs are taking place in low-income areas in coordination with the education department. A Puerto Rican folk dance group, Itanaman, originated six years ago with thirty students under the direction of a teacher. The dance group meets three times a week in the Fernando Callejo High School. The group, which received funding from the Institute and from the National Endowment for the Arts, performs on weekends in different rural communities on the island.

South Dakota Arts Council

South Dakota Arts Council's Artists in Schools/Youth at Risk (AIS/YAR) program provides students with opportunities for social and creative skill development. A pilot project was initiated in 1990 with Mobridge Public Schools to offer arts education opportunities in alternative education environments to youth identified as at-risk. The pilot project was funded by the arts council, with matching funds from the Mobridge Public Schools and the South Dakota Dropout Prevention Program.

The goals of AIS/YAR are to focus on problems of low self-esteem, identify constructive means for self-expression, and promote creative thinking. South Dakota has fifteen alternative education sites statewide. School districts can elect to send students in grades nine through twelve who are in danger of dropping out or not graduating to an alternative education site. During the past two years, AIS/YAR has provided more than 850 class sessions on the arts, reaching over 3,100 students. The arts council has received a grant from the Dayton-Hudson Foundation to assist with this project.

Tennessee Arts Commission

The Tennessee Arts Commission recognizes the positive role the arts can play in the lives of youth, and has established the Arts: Advancement and Expansion (AAE) grant category with support from the National Endowment for the Arts. AAE supports not-for-profit arts organizations of color and organizations that serve inner-city youth (among others). One project currently funded under the AAE grant program is Blues City Cultural Center's "Peace in the House," a three-day conference targeting youth who are at risk for participating in or becoming victims of violent behavior. In 1994, faced with an alarming murder rate, the city of Memphis joined with artists, social services facilitators, and youth to develop artistic and constructive alternatives to violence.

Another program funded under AAE is Edgehill Center's PAVE WAY program, which incorporates visual art and video with antidrug messages into an organized cultural environment. Youth considered to be at risk for negative behavior (teen pregnancy, drug and alcohol abuse, crime, and school drop-out) are the target audience for this program. Some participants have enrolled in college and are pursuing careers in the arts. Edgehill is now developing additional arts programs (dance and theater) and has a vision of becoming a cultural center.

Utah Arts Council

The Central City Arts Studio, a grantee of the Utah Arts Council, is a unique collaboration of state, county, and city governments working with numerous private sector companies to provide alternative programs for inner-city, at-risk youth. Through a combined effort by businesses and government, a storage space for vending machines at the Central City Community Center was converted into a fully functioning arts studio. The arts studio provides many of Salt Lake City's inner-city youth with arts classes that give them a positive outlet for expression. Now, rather than engaging in destructive and violent means of expression, these youth are learning how to express themselves through the visual and performing arts. They are taught by local, professional artists who offer their services free of charge.

Encouraged by the results being achieved at the Central City Arts Studio, the Utah Arts Council is collaborating with many different organizations on projects that affect at-risk youth. With a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, the council is working with the local Boys/Girls Clubs, numerous inner-city elementary schools, the Salt Lake City Police Department, local shelters, and detention centers.

Virgin Islands Council on the Arts

The Virgin Islands Council on the Arts initiated a pilot summer camp program in fiscal year 1993 called Project Aim, that received funding from the National Endowment for the Arts. The program's goal was to enhance academic knowledge and skills, and encourage the artistic development of youth in the Bordeaux community. This underserved, rural area of St. Thomas has no recreational or community facilities and few activities for young people to engage in after school or during the summer.

Project Aim was designed to provide a full array of academic and artistic opportunities. There were daily classes in fabric painting, ceramics, batiking, culinary arts, and mask making, as well as in English, math, and writing. Students also had the opportunity to exhibit and sell their artwork.

For ten years the School of Visual Arts and Careers has served the Virgin Islands' culturally diverse community, providing training in fine arts and exposure to careers in the creative arts. The school, which receives funding from the arts council and the National Endowment for the Arts, has had a very positive influence on young adults.

Washington State Arts Commission

Two years ago, the State Capital Museum and the Department of Juvenile Rehabilitation in Washington state began a collaborative project using the visual arts to help incarcerated youth build academic and social skills. Art produced through the project resulted in the 1993 exhibit, "Insight Out: A Different Perspective," which was organized by the youth. Eighty-three residents, some of whom were hard-core offenders, participated in the project, which developed job skills in museum preparation and graphic design. Now back in their communities, transitioning youth who participated in the project are doing well, and some are pursuing art careers.

The number of participants has increased for 1994, and the addition of a writer in residence has expanded the exhibit to include autobiographical stories that are powerful accounts of young lives filled with abuse and neglect. This year's exhibit is traveling to schools, galleries, and museums in the communities to which the youth will be returning, creating a bridge to those communities and giving other youth the opportunity to learn from it. This project is supported with

funds from both the Washington State Arts Commission and the National Endowment for the Arts.

West Virginia Division of Culture and History

The West Virginia Commission on the Arts supports collaborative projects among mental health service centers, schools, and nonprofit arts groups that assist at-risk youth in the community. Primary emphasis has been on high poverty areas in rural counties. This work is done through the Artist-in-Residence Program and the pilot Arts in Basic Education Program.

One such collaboration began last year in Lincoln County between Appalachian Arts Sanctuary, a rural community arts collaborative, and Lincoln County Schools. The Harts area of Lincoln County is a community plagued by isolation and poverty but rich in initiative and human resources. The Harts Arts Education Project established Harts High School as a training center for three elementary schools in the following pilot projects: Appalachian Dulcimer Building and Performance, theater arts, and monthly visual and performing arts workshops. Artists trained teachers, parents, and student leaders to carry out programs in their schools. Cooperation was good, response was excellent, and the project served as a self-esteem builder for at-risk youth, parents, and community members.

Wisconsin Arts Board

The Wisconsin Arts Board serves the state's at-risk youth through its Arts in Underserved Communities Initiative. This initiative is a partnership with The Milwaukee Foundation and receives National Endowment for the Arts funding. It aims to strengthen and significantly enhance the artistic and managerial capabilities of a few of the state's most promising organizations that are providing culturally relevant artistic experiences to diverse communities. Examples of outreach work done by award recipients are Latino Arts, which teaches Hispanic youth about various Latino cultures through such activities as theater, visual arts, and *folklórico* dance classes; and Hansberry-Sands Theatre Company's Poetry in Motion program, which visits schools to present performances that pay tribute to positive African-American experience.

The Wustum Museum in Racine, which receives funds from the arts board's Challenge Initiative program, participates in gang intervention programs held at inner-city neighborhood centers and at the museum. One of the programs organized by the museum's education department staff was a ceramics class for teenagers in a gang program at Taylor Children's Home.

Wyoming Arts Council

Several Wyoming arts and community organizations, with support from the Wyoming Arts Council, have specialized programming that responds to challenges faced by youth and their families.

The Sheridan Young Writers Group has not only cultivated the talent of many young writers, but has also provided a means of expression that has helped them develop self-confidence, work through life issues, and stay out of trouble. Dancers' Workshop in Jackson has programming for special needs teenagers at C-V Ranches, which are residence facilities. The overall goal is to develop self-confidence, creativity, and self-expression through movement exploration. This program has had much success in reaching teens who have emotional and physical difficulties and who often have trouble communicating.

The Wind River Health Promotion Program has received funding from the Wyoming Arts Council, HUD, Fremont Counseling, and the state Division of

Behavioral Health for a multifaceted prevention program targeting young people under the age of twenty-one and their families. This program will provide cultural activities using tribal elders as teachers, role models, and mentors. Six student artists will develop artwork for billboards, posters, and pamphlets promoting health and cultural programs.

The Regional Arts Organizations

Arts Midwest

Hmong youth in La Crosse, Wisconsin, are beginning to recapture and preserve their unique musical heritage through Arts Midwest's Cultural Development Fund, a granting program supported by the National Endowment for the Arts. La Crosse is home to Wisconsin's largest population of Hmong refugees from Laos. Physically and culturally separated from their homeland, Midwestern Hmong people struggle to maintain their heritage. Youth often assimilate faster than elders, making the passing of artistic traditions from generation to generation increasingly difficult. Arts Midwest funding, through the La Crosse Area Hmong Mutual Assistance Association, will enable students to work with elder composers, musicians, and translators to make instruments, write, record, and perform Hmong traditional music. This project allows the old and young to work together to preserve their culture.

Arts Midwest is a regional organization that provides funding, training, and publications to Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin. This project is part of an ongoing partnership with state arts agencies to promote social change through art.

Consortium for Pacific Arts and Cultures

Over the past several years, the Consortium for Pacific Arts and Cultures (CPAC) has assisted the Guam Council on the Arts & Humanities Agency in sponsoring activities of the SKIP dance school. The dancers, who are elementary, middle, and high school students, perform ballet and jazz, as well as traditional dances from Guam. A balance between home, school, and dance, and the ability to get along with others are essential to being part of the group. Because of this, families are engaged in the dancers' activities. SKIP has repeatedly won Governor's Art Awards for contemporary dance. In January 1995, older SKIP dancers will be placed in two schools on Guam to provide free dance instruction to students and to help the dancers develop teaching skills.

SKIP's founder, Teri Knapp, says of SKIP graduates, "They return to train so they can compete at national finals in which they are top winners. I'm so proud of their accomplishments — almost all of the older students are using their dance background to help them in college and careers . . . Sometimes I wonder what direction they'd have taken if not for dance. You can't find any group of kids like these."

CPAC works directly with the arts agencies of American Samoa, Guam, and the Northern Mariana Islands. It endeavors to provide quality programs, including arts in education and traditional and contemporary arts.

Mid-America Arts Alliance

Mid-America Arts Alliance (M-AAA) is committed to bringing high quality arts experiences to communities across its region through regional, national, and international artist rosters and special projects. With the assistance of its partners (the state arts agencies of

Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, Oklahoma, and Texas) and a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, M-AAA embarked in 1992 on a two-year initiative.

The Underserved Youth/Artist Residency Initiative provided financial support to seven project sites. Each project engaged an artist to facilitate a three- to six-week residency that immersed young people in culturally relevant performing and/or visual arts activities. The goal of these activities was to stimulate creative expression in the young people, and have them create an arts product to be publicly performed or exhibited.

The New Presenting Opportunities Program, with NEA support, has also enabled M-AAA to fund many projects targeting youth and their communities. Since 1991 this program has funded a wide range of projects including the creation of a new dance/music work in Houston's Sixth Ward that involved the collection of oral histories from community elders by young people who developed, interpreted, and performed them in a multimedia context.

Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation

Rites of Passage is a collaborative residency project combining video, dance, and creative writing. Videographer Michelle Parkerson, screenwriter David Bradley, and theater specialist German Wilson will work with groups of teenagers ages sixteen through nineteen, from Philadelphia city schools to write, create, perform, film, and edit a docudrama. The interactive video will address such issues as dating, peer pressure, sexual responsibility, teenage parenthood, and AIDS education.

Rites of Passage is coordinated by the Painted Bride Art Center, Philadelphia, and is funded in part by the Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, Meridian Bank, Inc., and Hunt Manufacturing Inc. Participating organizations include Hahnemann University (a health education center) and the Samuel Fleischer Art Memorial center.

The Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation works in partnership with the artists, arts organizations, and communities of a nine-state region to support arts programs and services and to insure the availability of the arts to all of the region's residents. The region includes Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and West Virginia.

New England Foundation for the Arts

The New England Foundation for the Arts connects the people of New England with the power of art to shape lives and improve communities. Although the foundation's constituents are primarily the six New England states, it also administers a national pioneering jazz effort, the Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest National Jazz Network. The network is composed of twenty outstanding organizations that emphasize jazz presenting and offer expanded and enhanced performance and residency opportunities for jazz artists and communities. Each of the sites offers activities involving youth and jazz artists on a consistent basis.

The Artists Collective, based in Hartford, Connecticut, is a network site whose mission is to train and develop the talents and social awareness of youth residing in the greater Hartford area, with particular attention to inner-city children. The programming at the collective demonstrates the rich contributions of African-American, West Indian, and Latino cultures. Through network funding, the collective has been able to develop two youth performing jazz ensembles under the direction of legendary saxophonist Jackie McLean. The ensembles are comprised of a cross-section of youth

from diverse cultural, racial, and economic backgrounds. This effort strives to foster understanding, respect, and good working relationships.

Southern Arts Federation

The Southern Arts Federation (SAF) is a nonprofit, regional arts agency dedicated to providing leadership and support to effect positive change in the arts throughout the South. The organization works in partnership with the state arts agencies of Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee.

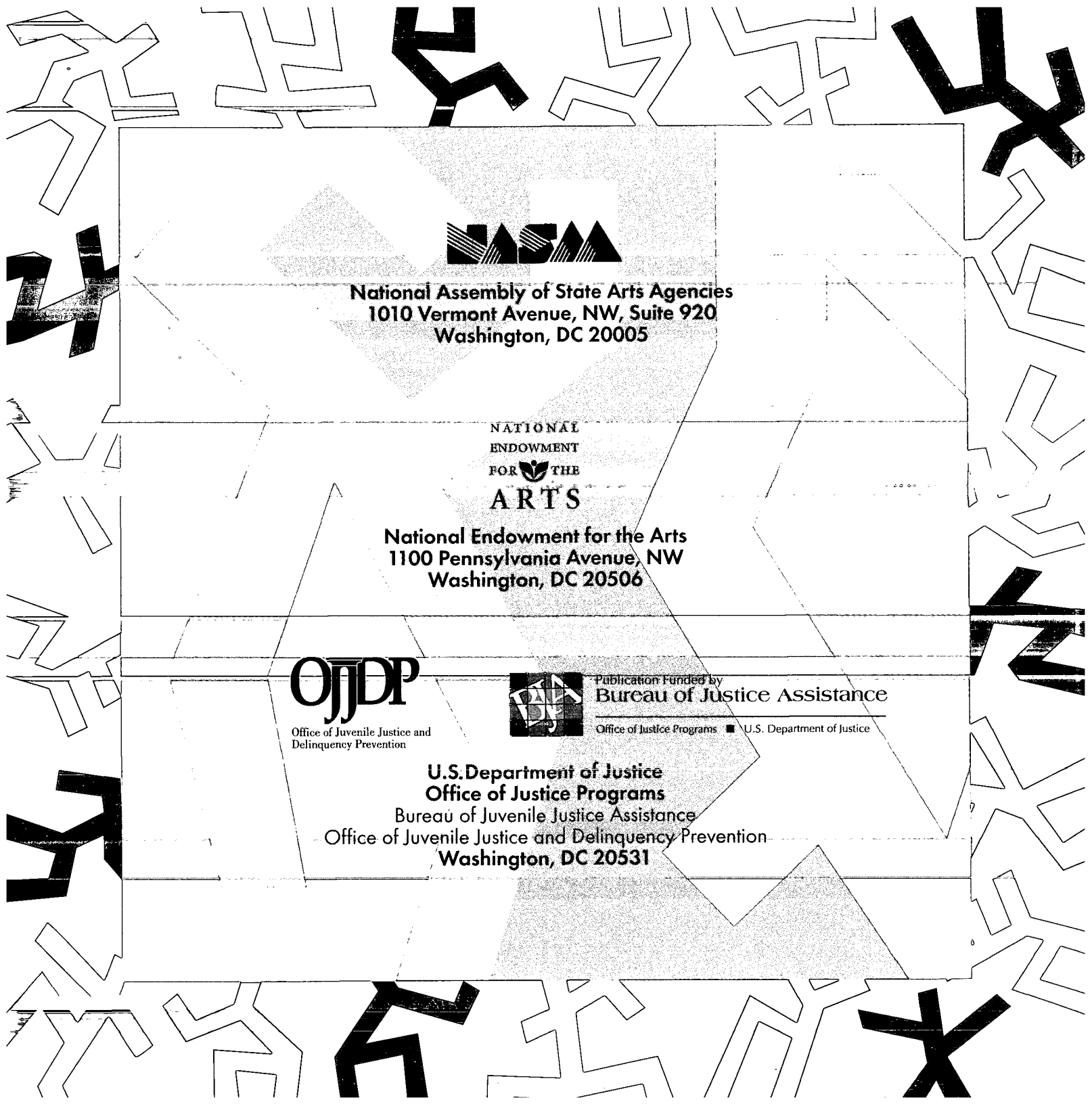
Southern Arts Education Partnerships in Action involved a planning session for seventeen communities in nine states, and each state department of education, state arts agency, and state alliance for arts education. Teams included school board members, superintendents, teachers, principals, parents, arts administrators, artists, and community volunteers who created strategic plans for arts education in their communities.

The Leflore County Schools Planning Project in Greenwood, Mississippi, focused on at-risk students. To integrate the arts in classroom and after-school programs, school administrators worked with Arts for Success, a vocational and cultural alliance; Greenwood Leflore Cities in Schools; Greenwood Foundation for the Arts; Cottonlandia Museum; Mississippi Valley State University; and local businesses. These programs supported job training and school-to-work transitions. The community emphasized arts education's ability to offer different approaches to learning, critical thinking, and teamwork, and to provide a positive outlet for creative energy.

Western States Arts Federation

Tumblewords is a multistate readings and residencies project funded through a collaboration between the National Endowment for the Arts, the Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund, Western States Arts Federation (WESTAF), eight western state arts agencies, and dozens of local organizations in over fifty underserved communities in the West. Among the many benefits of this project is its impact on at-risk youth. The experience of writer Jean Blackmon during a residency at a home for troubled teens best illustrates this.

At first, Blackmon wondered what she, a fiction writer, could offer these teenagers, some of whom were runaways, orphans, and victims of abuse and abandonment. Says Blackmon, "Reading and writing fiction seemed like such a luxury when taken in the context of these troubled young lives." When the kids were asked what they liked to read, one young girl provided a response and a reminder to Blackmon of the value of fiction, regardless of one's life circumstances: "I like fiction because it teaches me about life . . . When I read a story, I get inside the character and see how she solves her problems. Sometimes it helps me with my own problems."



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