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ABSTRACT

This book presents model programs that use art in prevention programs for youth. When faced with the serious threats that drugs, violence, and alienation pose for children, communities creatively respond by combining resources and talents. Their lessons are highlighted in this book, and these programs should encourage new collaborations for the sake of young people that extend beyond traditional boundaries. The book begins with two introductions, one by N. R. Chavez and the other by Jane Alexander. Articles included are: (1) "What Is, and What Can Be: Artists Helping Young People" (W. Cleveland); (2) "Tapping Resilience through the Arts" (B. Benard); (3) "The Arts as a Tool for Prevention: The Evaluation Process" (J. D. Betts and J. Paz); and (4) "Resources and Additional Programs for Arts-Based Prevention Programs for Youth" (D. Magie). The rest of the packet offers articles describing eleven successful programs. These programs are: Project Choki & Old Pascua Youth Artists; Vietnamese Youth Development Center Peer Resource Program; Bronx Council on the Arts, WritersCorp; CHIL'ART Playwrights Program; CornerStone Project NETworks Center; Music Theatre Workshop Under Pressure Series; West Dallas Community Centers, Inc., Rites of Passage; South Dakota Improvisational Theatre; United Action for Youth Synthesis Arts Workshop; Teen Resource Project/New Visions/Nueva Visiones Theater; and Charles A. Wustum Museum of Fine Arts, Victory in Peace. (MKA)

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Art Works!

Prevention Programs for Youth & Communities

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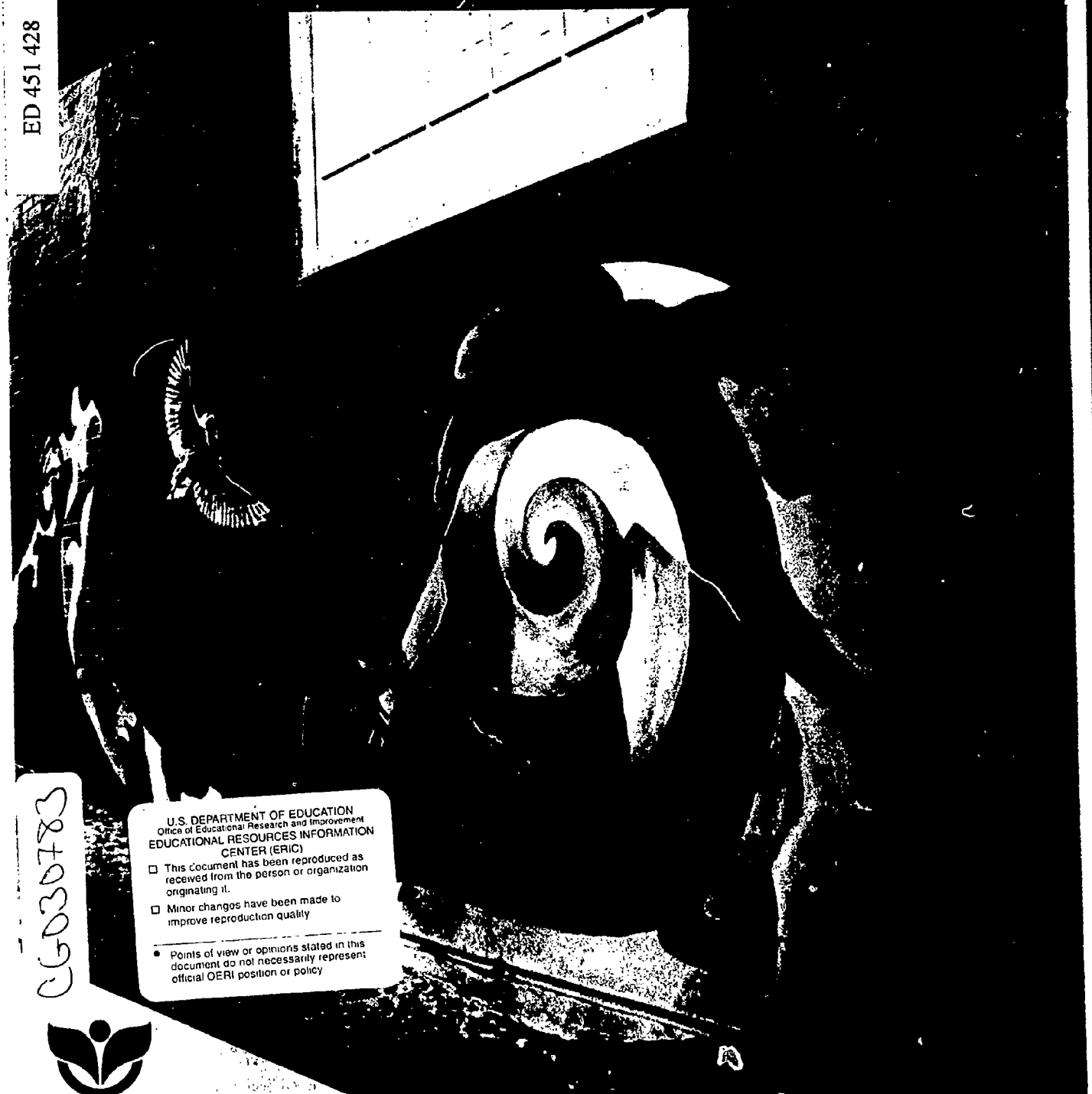

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Center for Substance Abuse Prevention

Prevention WORKS!

Cover Art:

Escape into Grace
Vietnamese Youth Development Center (VYDC), San Francisco, California

Front and back cover art, *Escape into Grace*, is a mural created by staff and youth of the Vietnamese Youth Development Center (VYDC) in San Francisco's Tenderloin District. The mural was created for the Arlington Hotel by public artist Johanna Poethig, VYDC staff member Glades Perreras and youth Gia Hy Chung, Sokly Ny and Puthara Chuop. Run by the St. Vincent de Paul Society, the Arlington is a residential hotel for people in recovery. The mural team used a series of images that represent the process of recovery, the idea of freeing oneself from addiction to substances and also from other negative influences and behaviors. Youth researched and used figures that symbolize spirits, health, change and movement in Native American, Buddhist and other traditions. A snake represents the process of recovery, starting out poisonous, shedding its skin and transforming into a spiral that represents the cyclical nature of life. The overall message is change requires movement. The mural is a tribute to all neighborhood residents struggling to build positive lives for themselves, one that speaks to young and old.The Tenderloin's 509 Cultural Center sponsored the mural, and the San Francisco Mayor's Neighborhood Beautification and Graffiti Clean-Up Project funded it.

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Art Works!

Prevention Programs for Youth & Communities

Edited by Dian Magie and Christine E. Miller, Ph.D.
Written by Paula Randall

This publication was supported by the National Endowment for the Arts and the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, in cooperation with the Tucson-Pima Arts Council and La Frontera Center, Inc.

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Acknowledgments

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS

The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), an independent agency of the federal government, was created in 1965 to encourage artistic excellence and public participation in the arts. Through grantmaking, leadership initiatives, partnerships, research and advocacy, the NEA fulfills its mission to serve the people of the United States through the arts. For more information on the agency, visit its site (http://arts.endow.gov) on the World Wide Web.

SAMHSA
Center for Substance Abuse Prevention
PreventionWORKS!

The Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP) in the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) is the nation's lead agency for improving the quality and availability of substance abuse prevention services. In addition to the many programs sponsored by the agency, SAMHSA/CSAP serves as facilitator of information dissemination, training and technical assistance. In doing so, SAMHSA/CSAP seeks to connect people and resources with effective and innovative ideas, strategies and programs aimed at reducing and eliminating alcohol, tobacco and drug problems in our society.

The Tucson-Pima Arts Council (TPAC) is a nonprofit local arts agency that encourages and supports a thriving, diverse, multicultural, artistic environment in Tucson and Pima County, Arizona. Through grants and commissions, TPAC directly assists the arts community in developing and producing art. Programs in cultural heritage, media arts, rural arts, arts education and public art and community design contribute to the community's cultural breadth and brilliance. ArtWORKS, a summer and afterschool prevention program in the arts for youth, has reached over 500 youth since 1993.

LA FRONTERA CENTER, INC.

La Frontera Center, Inc., a nonprofit community-based behavioral health center, has been serving residents of Pima County, Arizona, since 1968. The agency currently provides a continuum of mental health, substance abuse and psychosocial rehabilitation services, assisting approximately 6,000 people each year. A particularly important component of the service menu is La Frontera's prevention program, which reaches [illegible] to at-risk children in their homes, at school and in neighborhood centers. Prevention services also focus on community development models in both rural and urban settings.

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Do you see we are all equal and we are all human?

— Dewayne Washington

Do you see that I want to play in a world without violence and racism?

— Vanessa Samuels

Do you see that there are more bullets than people?

— Dewayne Washington

Do you see that we got to help each other?

— Heigy Perguero

Do you see me walking and walking into the middle of nowhere?

— Lourdes Delgado

Do you see what happens on the street when young kids do not go home?

— Irving Hamilton

Do you see that there is a whole lot of violence in the whole city, not just the Bronx?

— Jirlis Duran

Do you see the world changing and people laughing, not crying?

— Thurraya Amadu

When I'm quiet I see there is plenty of hope for you and me.

— Shantel Wilson

When I'm quiet I can hear the music from an unseen source.

— Jeff Taylor

Excerpt from
New Settlement Apartments Community-Poem
Bronx Council on the Arts, WritersCorps

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The Three Brothers

by William Diaz, 12 years old

(Murphy, a police officer, has stopped the car of a man he has just seen buy drugs from a dealer. It turns out the driver is Ben, his best friend in high school. This interaction comes at the end of the play.)

Murphy. Do you want to go to counseling for your problems?

Ben. I don't know, I just told you.

Murphy. What are you afraid of?

Ben. I can't say that, I can't say that.

Murphy. Just tell me what you're afraid of. Calm down. I won't tell anybody. Remember, we're friends.

Ben. Remember when I won first place for long distance running and you won second place?

Murphy. Yeah. I remember the time. We were practicing, you fell, you broke your leg in two places. You couldn't make it. Is that when you started doing drugs?

Ben. Yes . . . that's when it started. I had nothing good in my life.

Murphy. How did it happen? You could have played baseball.

Ben. School year was over.

Murphy. You were real good at chess.

Ben. I forgot how to play chess.

Murphy. You were real good at that. You had another chance to be real good and win. You let yourself down.

Ben. Yeah, you're right. *(A pause)*

Murphy. *(Quietly)* What are you afraid of?

Ben. The day I broke my leg . . . after that I don't remember anything much.

Murphy. Why don't you say it?

Ben. If I ever try anything again I think I will never come back.

Murphy. You should never be afraid of what you think you can't do. You weren't scared of doing drugs, so you should not be scared of doing something better than that. You will not die running. Drugs? . . . you'll never be able to do anything more.

Ben. I might start running again.

Murphy. Do you want counseling?

Ben. I guess so. If I'm going to run, I better clean up.

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Introduction

by Nelba R. Chavez, Ph.D.

The Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP) in the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) is the nation's lead agency for improving the quality and availability of substance abuse prevention services. In addition to the many programs sponsored by the agency, SAMHSA/CSAP serves as facilitator of information dissemination, training and technical assistance. In doing so, SAMHSA/CSAP seeks to connect people and resources with effective and innovative ideas, strategies and programs aimed at reducing and eliminating alcohol, tobacco and drug problems in our society.

CSAP is proud to be a partner with the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) in the creation of this noteworthy publication. It has been the goal of both organizations to continue to expand the involvement of arts organizations in substance abuse prevention programs. We know that the arts give young people better things to do than drugs, and we must all help them learn skills that will last a lifetime. Prevention programs have long used the arts in their activities to reach at-risk youth and promote prevention messages, but these prevention and arts programs also offer opportunities for children and youth to learn new talents and develop a sense of self, well-being and belonging. More importantly, these programs provide stepping stones for a child's healthy development. Whether it be a poster contest organized by a local community center, a Red Ribbon Week dance concert, or a touring professional theater group, the arts have played an important prevention role not only by communicating positive messages but also by involving young people in positive activities that build life-enhancing skills. These activities, or alternative programs, are some of the most widely employed prevention strategies in the nation. CSAP's programs, in collaboration with the arts, will continue to strive, and support others, in making a difference in developing resilient, well-rounded and socially adapted teenagers.

Nelba R. Chavez, Ph.D., is the administrator of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

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Introduction

by Jane Alexander

Photo by G. Jill Evans

Jane Alexander (right) visits children at Celebrations, a multicultural preschool in Oklahoma City.

Art can save lives. It can turn around a troubled teenager, help a child kick drugs, get young men and women off the streets and into creative and constructive pursuits. Art can change attitudes, build self-esteem and redirect the path of the wayward. Art can prevent despair.

Extravagant claims? I have witnessed the power of the arts to effect these changes in children at programs such as the ones described in this publication. By giving young people alternatives to destructive behavior, the arts channel energy into positive quests for better education, stronger family life and rich community. This book lays out the successful stories and strategies of arts programs across the country that are changing lives.

Every child needs to believe in himself. Picasso said, "Every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain an artist once he grows up." His notion, I think, is based on observations of children as natural creators and discoverers. Curious from birth, we freely explore the world and seek to express what we see, hear, feel and think. Too often that curiosity is squelched, and despair sets in. The child becomes unmoored, and turns to drugs or violence or promiscuity as ways to escape or feel curious again.

We at the National Endowment for the Arts are proud to team up with CSAP to produce this collection of inspirational and informative model programs. Our partnership at the national level mirrors partnerships at the local level by community organizations that often have not had traditional relationships due to seemingly disparate roles. When faced with the serious threats that drugs, violence, and alienation pose for our children, communities creatively respond by combining resources and talents. Their lessons are highlighted in this book, and these programs should encourage all of us to envision new collaborations for the sake of our youth that extend beyond traditional boundaries.

As I have said before, give a child a paintbrush or a pen, and he's less likely to pick up a needle or a gun. Give a child hope through the arts, and you just may save his life.

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Jane Alexander is the chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts.

What Is, and What Can Be: Artists Helping Young People

by William Cleveland

"Acting to me is a better escape and gives you a better high than any drug I know. It makes me feel secure, loved, unconfused about my purpose in life and most of all it makes me somebody."

Theater student
age 16

Over the past two decades some of this country's finest artists and arts organizations have quietly established a remarkable record of innovation and success in institutional and community settings. These unlikely arts partnerships have been established in factories, jails, condominiums, probation departments, senior centers, special schools and many other nontraditional sites. This work has not only challenged traditional ideas about the arts in America, it has also created successful models from which those providing services to young people can learn a great deal.

My intention in this essay is to share some basic insights and strategies that have contributed to successful arts programming for young people in institutional and community settings. This brief overview should not be taken as a formula for success in this work. It might be more useful to regard it as a description of how artists and their creative processes can make a difference with young people who are abusing drugs.

A Whole Community Perspective

I will begin by saying that I do not see drug abuse as separate from other manifestations of the social neglect of young people, such as violence, teen pregnancy and academic failure. Nor do I see the sometimes destructive actions of young people as unconnected from the actions of the adults they depend on and the environment they are born into and live in. Given this, my comments related to the issues of drug abuse prevention should be seen in the larger context of how the arts can contribute to the healthy growth of the whole child living in the whole community.

Unfortunately, in more and more communities young people, particularly teens, are treated not as a critical part of the whole but as another marginal population segment. This categorization means that some youth, like the elderly or the physically challenged, are considered more as a function of their symptoms and pathologies than by their abilities and potentials. For young drug abusers, who need the support of the larger community to get clean and stay clean, this problemizing often exacerbates their sense of separation and mistrust. Artists, by training and practice, bring a very different and powerful perspective to their work with young people and other marginalized groups. Their focus, as creators, is on what is, and what can be, not on what is missing. This critical distinction sets the stage for young people to discover new ways of learning, communicating, working and behaving.

William Cleveland became the director of the Center for the Study of Art and Community in 1991 after a 22-year history producing arts programs in educational, community and social institutions.

The Field

Despite shrinking resources, artists in communities all over the country are teaching young people new ways to acquire personal power and self-discipline and how to engage their communities constructively through the study and practice of the creative process. This work is demanding for all involved. It requires discipline, long-term commitment, respect for tradition, a willingness to take risks, and the courage to accept responsibility

for success or failure. It provides young people with a powerful personal voice that allows them to both assert their uniqueness and link to others. Young people also learn that the more you know, the more self-sufficient and powerful you can become. When artists teach these things to people who feel their only option has been to break the rules, hurt others or themselves, the result is often less hurting and less damage.

The Arts and Critical Issues in Drug Abuse Prevention

The dramatic impact of these programs has valuable implications for social service providers, educators and community leaders working to address the drug abuse problems faced by young people. Artists working and succeeding with these constituencies have generated a new technology for problem solving, communicating, building self-esteem and much more. The following is a brief overview of various ways the arts can and do address critical issues faced by young people trying to make their way in modern society.

Education

The arts offer an alternative for success and respectability for students who struggle academically. In schools where such programs are available, many students experience their first true academic successes through the arts. The discipline these students learn through the arts often carries over to their study of other academic subjects.

Getting Through—Youth to Youth

Movement, rhythm, image, sound, color, spoken word—these are all components of the dynamic vocabulary of the contemporary voice of youth. The performing, visual, literary and media arts are the primary mediums of communication for the transcommunity, transglobal youth culture. Arts-based educational messages about critical thinking and making healthy choices created by and delivered by peers have a significantly greater chance of being heard and making an impact on young audiences.

Ownership & Self-Empowerment

The arts provide an expanded view of what is possible. Working in the arts provides opportunities for self-directed expression that is not wholly dependent on adults and their institutions. The arts help develop self-sufficiency and increase self-esteem in small, sometimes imperceptible steps. In the words of one young student, "I am building my own way of seeing and talking about the work, and I own the patent."

Improved Communication & Socialization

Artistic expression helps young people learn and improve communication skills. Artistic collaboration in both the visual and performing arts provides a safe medium for practicing and rediscovering social interaction skills. It also allows participants to be members of a successful collective experience.

Making Sense/Coping Tools

The arts supply a constructive outlet for dealing with confusion, frustration and anger in a chaotic and unpredictable environment. Making structured contact with the imagination through "artwork" can also provide a

A Coyote in the Outer World

by R. Carlos Nakai

R. Carlos Nakai, Native American flutist and educator

Walking my own life-road entails knowing where I have come from culturally and genetically. I do this by listening to my elders speak about their own and our ancestors' struggles to successfully survive. This history and wisdom offer encouragement to go beyond where my elders have gone while still using the skills and strategies of their life experiences as a guide for becoming a self-respecting and self-reliant human being.

As a Dine' (southern Athapascan) I am part of the leading edge of a long genetic shadow that recedes into a mythic ancestral past. Within my traditional community, by word of mouth, through songs, stories and material culture, I continue to be taught the dreams, hopes and wisdom of my people, as well as the expectations that I be of service to others in my lifetime. I learn through my own life experiences to become my own final authority. I learn self-reliance and personal responsibility for my livelihood and welfare. If I apply that which I learn in my life journey, I may choose to serve others, to contribute and interact positively with the world-at-large. In attempting to further the well-being of others, I am choosing to be a functional component of the world rather than allowing myself to become a fearful, self-limiting person.

The world we live in today is very different in many ways from that of our predecessors and it will continue to evolve in the future. The priorities of life, culture and self-definition vary accordingly. My peers of my own cultural community often remark that "We, the Dine', are still here because we know where and what we have evolved out of and where each of us is headed. Our traditional histories have given us the minds for that which we seek."

Now, the new native American children of the post-industrial era seek to fill an angry void within themselves that was unmindfully instilled in them by their European émigré ancestors. In their zeal to obliterate their former existence abroad they failed to replace the old with a newer philosophic sense of purpose in their "new world" of experience. This void discourages self-respect, self-identity and the complete self-confidence one needs to negotiate the world without fear.

The knowledge and wisdom of my tribal elders as well as that of

nonthreatening way out of painful isolation. For mental health and drug prevention professionals the arts can provide a unifying element for disparate or isolated modes of treatment.

New Eyes/New Images

Artistic accomplishment can redefine a person's self-image and build new bridges to families and loved ones. Public performances and exhibitions help to humanize young people in the eyes of the general public. This reduces isolation and confounds and dispels stereotypes.

Improved Social Problem-Solving Skills

Involvement in the arts improves participants' ability to generate multiple and effective solutions, understand and accommodate the perspective of others and control impulses. The skills and work practices modeled by mentor-artists demand hard work, self-discipline and a commitment to excellence. Successful creation also requires taking responsibility for failures as well as triumphs. Art making offers marginalized and damaged individuals a safe place to practice these things en route to taking control of their own lives.

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Nakai and students

R. Carlos Nakai is an artisan, lecturer and performing artist in the ongoing Indigenous North American culture and music traditions. He is a composer and instrumentalist of new music for Plains and Woodlands Native American flute and is a life member of the National Flute Association and the International Native American Flute Association. His education includes traditional studies and apprenticeships in the customs, lifestyles and philosophies of "the people," a B.S. in education, an M.A. in American Indian studies and an Honorary Doctor of Letters from Northern Arizona University. He received the Indie Award in 1992 and was a nominee for the Grammy in 1994. He is also a 1994 recipient of the Arizona Governor's Arts Award and the Lifetime Musical Achievement Award from the First Americans in the Arts.

my peers, colleagues and associates all influence me to be myself within my traditional and professional communities. I use my gift of self-expression in music to share with others how I feel about being here in the world without the politics of spoken language. How my art form influences others is beyond my comprehension, but I know that I must use it with respect for myself and for those who came here before me.

Access to Success

Art making allows success for people who have been defined as failures. Artists show that struggle is a necessary part of succeeding and that strugglers have what it takes to succeed. The creative process allows an individual to achieve success in just the doing. At the same time, the product of the struggle, the art, is a self-expression that "society" views as valuable.

Cost/Benefits

The arts are a low-cost, high-touch, nonthreatening intervention that has produced measurable results, including accelerated reduction of psychopathology, reduced violence and drug use rates among the institutionalized, reduced recidivism, improved educational performance and increased self-esteem. In arts training, each succeeding level of expertise demands an increasing intensity of self-study and practice. As expertise is gained, the student becomes less dependent on frequent teacher input as he/she becomes a more self-sufficient learner.

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Jobs & Increased Employability

Arts training offers new, nontraditional career options in a wide range of arts and arts allied fields. Artwork is a tangible and often marketable product that rewards individuality both economically and aesthetically. In addition to technical proficiency, the arts teach valuable work-related skills such as logic, organization, flexibility, insight, creative teamwork, patience and ability to discipline the imagination to solve difficult problems, as well as the knowledge that "failure" is a critical element of discovery and learning.

Mentorship

The arts embody a teaching practice that has been handed down for millennia. This practice personifies the idea that the best learning is a collaboration between the disciplined passion of the master and the unbridled curiosity and adventurous spirit of the novice. In many cases, student artists will be engaging the most obviously accomplished adult they have ever encountered in the person of their artist-teacher. The attention and high expectations of the mentor-artist have the capacity to move young people out of the cycle of self-defeat.

What Works

As I have said, there is no formula. But, I know from my work with young people in education, human services and the criminal justice systems, that to be effective the arts must be more than a curricular enrichment or recreational event. The arts are powerful and can produce amazing transformations if artists and their work are treated with respect and the partnership between human service agencies and the artist(s) and/or arts organization is built on trust.

Experience has also taught me that the power of the creative process can be misused or squandered. There are responsibilities that go along with the work, responsibilities that may not be readily apparent because we live in a culture that trivializes and, in some cases, demonizes the efforts of the creative community. Some are taken by surprise by the impact of the arts in difficult and desperate environments. If you are thinking of bringing artists into your work with young people don't take it lightly. Just as there are standards for what you know and do, there are standards of excellence and exemplary practice in this area, as well. Here are a few for you to consider.

First, use the best artists. This means artists who exhibit artistic excellence as well as the ability to teach, collaborate with and motivate young people. If you don't know how to find quality artists, seek the advice of the folks who do. Local or state arts councils or associations serving the needs of artists in individual disciplines (dance, theater, etc.) are a good place to start. In many communities there are established arts-in-education or arts-in-community programs developed by local arts councils or community-based arts organizations that place and sometimes train artists for this kind of work. This is a good source for artist referrals and/or for programmatic partnerships.

The veteran artists who do this good work are professionals with Ph.D.-equivalent training and experience. They are not amateurs, or part-timers. Their arts support structure includes arts education in the local schools, the nonprofit arts community, local arts councils, arts

patrons, arts consumers, the university system, private arts training schools, public and private funders, state arts councils and the National Endowment for the Arts. It is important for you to be aware, however, that at present the health of this highly interdependent arts ecology is suffering. Without this vital infrastructure, the high-quality work and results I have been describing would not be possible.

Next, don't do it on the cheap. It is critical that you pay artists a living wage and try your best to build long-term programs rather than short. Success in this work depends upon the establishment of trustful, productive relationships between the artist and students and between the student and the creative process. As with all effective preventative and intervening strategies, this takes time and commitment. Effective arts programs for young people require consistent, regular, ongoing interaction between artist-mentors and their mentees.

Finally, please understand that if you succeed, you may succeed in ways that are more complex and challenging than you may have anticipated. Trustful relationships between actors or writers or sculptors and young people offer opportunities for new ways of seeing and communicating about a complex and challenging world. They also can open new lines of communication. In the mix, young people not only communicate about their hopes and dreams through art—they also communicate about and investigate their fears, problems and frustrations. In these situations, a trustful, cooperative partnership between the human service professionals and artists working in the same program is absolutely critical. If roles and responsibilities and definitions of success are not clear, good intentions will not be enough to see you through. For this relationship to have the combination of trust and resilience that is needed to succeed in this work, it will require a very high level of attention and commitment from all involved.

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Tapping Resilience Through the Arts

by Bonnie Benard, M.S.W.

The increasing emphasis on incorporating the arts into substance abuse prevention is not just the offering of another "positive alternative"—among many—to health-compromising behaviors in young people. Rather, it offers the opportunity to meld the uncannily similar paradigms emerging in each of these fields.

It has been 60 years since John Dewey wrote the treatise *Art as Experience*, in which he advocated the radical idea that artistic creation is not just the special talent of special people but a universal "life factor" all humans share. In a later book, he wrote, "Creativity . . . is manifested not just in what are regarded as the fine arts, but in all forms of life that are not tied down to what is established by custom and convention. In recreating them in its own way, it brings refreshment, growth, and satisfying joy to one who participates" (Dewey, 1970, p. ix).

"We have to realize that a creative being lives within ourselves, whether we like it or not, and that we must get out of its way, for it will give us no peace until we do."

M.C. Richards
Centering: In Pottery, Poetry and the Person

While even today this view of innate creativity—and its transformational power—is still the nondominant paradigm in psychology and education (Sarason, 1990), a growing number of researchers—especially in the neurosciences and brain-based learning (Pearce, 1992)—and practitioners (Cameron, 1992) are providing powerful evidence that yes, indeed, everyone not only can learn but can create as well. Furthermore, studies sponsored by the National Arts Education Research Center are also showing us that integrating the creative arts into all learning experiences enhances both academic and social and personal developmental outcomes (Ross, 1991). In other words, the arts are good prevention!

"Art on all levels is an expression of the human spirit."

Viktor Lowenfeld
Creative and Mental Growth

Turning to the field of prevention, a parallel emergent paradigm to that of universal creativity has been that of human resilience. Growing out of long-term developmental studies of young people who succeeded despite the odds, coming from high-risk environments characterized by parental alcoholism, abuse, mental illness, community violence and poverty, this body of research establishes "the self-righting tendencies that move children toward normal adult development under all but the most persistent adverse circumstances" (Werner and Smith, 1992, p. 202). This research, supported by other studies of psychological, social, moral, spiritual and cognitive development, validates the biological imperative for growth and development that exists in all human beings, including our human capacity to transform and change our experiences and our lives. This body of research concludes that art not only heals deep wounds but also prevents negative outcomes, including substance abuse, that often result when we don't find a positive channel for expressing this drive (Garbarino, 1991).

Bonnie Benard, M.S.W., has worked in the prevention field since 1982 and is currently a consultant with Resiliency Associates in Berkeley, California.

What is converging, then, from not only research and practice in the creative arts but from the prevention field as well is the powerful conclusion that not only does every person—no matter their "risk" factors—possess this inborn capacity to transform his/her experiences through both creative reframing of one's personal narrative and artistic expression, but that we have an inborn need, a "life factor" or "human spirit" that compels us to do just this. Essentially, both fields have arrived at the same essence, no matter what language we use to describe it.

It will come as no surprise, then, that, first of all, the positive developmental outcomes identified in resilience research are the same characteristics that the creative arts enhance in youth (Benard, 1991; *Phi Delta Kappan,* 1994). These characteristics include all aspects of *social competence:* responsiveness to others, empathy and caring, good communication skills and a sense of joy and humor. *Problem-solving* skills include planning ability, seeing alternatives, critical thinking and resourcefulness. *Autonomy* refers to one's sense of identity, self-worth, internal locus of control, self-agency and -efficacy, self-awareness and sense of imagination. A last category of positive developmental outcomes associated with both resilience and the creative arts is that of *sense of purpose and future.* This includes not only goal-directedness and achievement motivation but also persistence, optimism, hope, spiritual connectedness and, ultimately, a sense of meaning in one's life. The only logical conclusion one can make is that, clearly, the arts foster the unfolding of our human resilience by meeting our developmental needs and drives for love and belonging, respect, mastery, power and meaning.

Furthermore, it is no surprise that the environmental conditions and strategies that research has found to tap this innate resilience are the very principles that art educators and psychologists have found to support creative expression: caring relationships, high expectations and opportunities for participation and contribution.

Tapping Resilience: Principles of Effective Arts Practice

Caring Relationships

The most powerful "protective" factor emerging from resilience studies is that of the presence of a caring, supportive relationship with someone, somewhere in the child's life (Werner and Smith, 1992). For children growing up in families with alcoholism and abuse, this person often was a teacher, a neighbor, an extended family member or a friend. No matter the role, the characteristics of this caring relationship are consistently described as the message of loving support: of being there for a youth, of trust, of unconditional love. In a study of adults who were sexually abused as children, they tell of the "quiet availability," the "fundamental positive regard" and "simple, sustained kindness" that described their "surrogate" parents (Higgins, 1995). Similarly, *Coming Up Taller,* a recent report of arts and humanities projects that are effectively reaching young people from high-risk environments (Weitz,1996), concluded that "Positive adult relationships are crucial to success" (Burke, 1996, p. 15).

Caring also means *being interested in, actively listening to and getting to know the gifts* of each youth. One evaluation of the role of arts in dropout prevention identified as critical the teachers' genuine and personal interest in the students (Center for Music Research, 1990). Alice Miller's account of successful artists who had been victims of childhood abuse and trauma testifies to the healing power of youth being able to express their story to someone who believes them: "The absence or presence of a [sympathetic] witness determines whether a mistreated child will become a despot who turns his repressed feelings of helplessness against others or an artist who can tell about his or her suffering" (1990, p. 60). According to James Garbarino, this acceptance of a child's reality by listening to their stories or reflecting on their drawings is the "starting point for the healing process" (1992, p. 202).

An Artistic Partnership with Law Enforcement

by Richard M. Romley, Maricopa County Attorney, Phoenix, Arizona

Every day we are confronted by reports of young people involved in incidents of drive-by shootings, drug and gang violence, rape, robbery and murder. The number of violent crimes committed by juveniles has jumped dramatically in recent years. What are we going to do to turn the tide against this trend?

A.P.P.L.E. Corps students design and paint puppet show sets.

As the chief prosecutor in Maricopa County, Arizona, whose jurisdiction includes Phoenix and 23 other municipalities, my main responsibility is the prosecution of criminals. The attorneys in this office have a very high conviction rate that leads to an ever-increasing number of criminals being sent to prison. I'm talking about the back end of the criminal justice system. It's expensive and necessary. The front end of the system starts at home, in school and in your neighborhoods. It is the front end we are going to have to improve if we are ever going to reduce the number of people we prosecute and incarcerate.

A few years ago I decided to take a look outside the traditional role of law enforcement at some alternative approaches to the so-called front end. With help from some friends we put together the "ANTI-DRUG A.P.P.L.E. CORPS." The A.P.P.L.E. Corps represents a partnership of artists, prosecutors, private enterprise, law enforcement, and educators who came together because we had a common belief that participating in the arts provides an opportunity for our children to build self-confidence and self-

Consequently, *Coming Up Taller* recommends keeping art classes small so that a youth worker can (1) get to know what's going on in a youth's life and connect him/her to other needed services; (2) reach and make a personal connection to each youth in art programs; and (3) encourage, through small group process, building youth-to-youth caring connections. According to the arts/drop-out prevention study, the "social interaction and camaraderie" that develops in an arts group or activity was the most frequently mentioned benefit (Center for Music Research, 1990).

Another characteristic of caring is *compassion*, nonjudgmental love that looks beyond the words and actions of a troubled youth and sees the underlying pain and suffering. Educator Herb Kohl talks about "reaching beyond the resistance" and connecting with the inner core of motivation, creativity and health in every youth (1994). Compassion also implies having patience and being committed for the long haul. *Coming Up Taller* identifies that "Effective arts programs are committed for the long term: Changing lives takes time and children come to count on these projects. It can be cruel to bring them into a positive environment that cannot be sustained" (Burke, 1996, p. 15).

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selected by the Commission. These groups had to work up proposals that would present arts programs with an anti-drug and/or an anti-gang theme to at-risk children in afterschool programs.

The initial success of the program encouraged us to embark on a three-year partnership project that provided funding for afterschool arts programs statewide. In its first five years of existence the A.P.P.L.E. Corps reached well over 30,000 educators, students and parents across the state. Over 70 afterschool program sites are currently participating in programs that include dance, mime, mural, theater, poetry, watercolor, storytelling, puppetry, mask making, ethnic music, kachina doll carving, and fiber art.

I hope you can see there is much that can be done when we spend time on the front end diverting our youth from criminal activity to meaningful endeavors they can individually take pride in. We must all search for and participate in innovative crime prevention programs that will have a positive impact on our communities. I embrace this concept. I hope others will explore a partnership with the arts in their communities. I know it has been successful beyond any expectation I had.

Puppeteer Katie Catheart teaches students to make puppets out of recycled materials in an after-school program.

High Expectations

At the core of caring relationships is the adult's, in this case, artist-youth worker's *belief in the innate creativity and resilience* of each youth, followed up by the challenge message: "You can make it; you have everything it takes to achieve your dream/goal; and I'll be there to support you." A high-expectation approach also conveys firm guidance: clear boundaries and structure that create safety and predictability but not rigidity. According to *Coming Up Taller*, successful arts programs maintain "a delicate balance between flexibility and structure"(Burke, 1996, p. 15).

Respect, the conveying of common courtesy and kindness, is named repeatedly by youth as a reason they either stay in or leave a school or program. To acknowledge and affirm a youth as worthy of respect is clearly a prerequisite to successfully engaging him/her in *any* activity (Meier, 1994).

Seeing possibilities and recognizing, mirroring back and building on strengths is critical to working from this high-expectation mode. This

means starting with a youth's strengths and gifts and using them to work on new learnings or concerns. Successful arts programs "build on what young people already value" and the strengths they already possess (Burke, 1996, p. 15). Furthermore, as one study of effective neighborhood-based youth-serving organizations found, "Our wizards [the term used for youth workers who successfully engaged troubled youth] avoid negative labels, especially those that mark youngsters as deficient or deviant and concentrate instead on raising expectations and providing settings where youth can gain the attitudes, confidence, and measure of expertise necessary to remove themselves from the inner city's despair" (1994). Helping youth who have been labeled or oppressed to reframe their personal narratives—the stories they tell themselves about who they are—to develop the insight and critical consciousness that move them from seeing themselves as "damaged victim to resilient survivor" is a key strategy of this approach (Wolin and Wolin, 1993).

Opportunities for Participation and Contribution

Resilience research documents the power of *"interests and hobbies"*—like art—to bring youth "solace when things fell apart in their home lives" and, as mentioned earlier, to "connect them to a group that became a *surrogate family*" (Werner and Smith, 1992, p. 205). Therefore, first and foremost, youth must have access to people and places that encourage the development of these interests. Effective arts programs offer young people a place, a "safe haven" where they can experience caring, high-expectation relationships as well as the opportunities to be successful. Like affluent children, poor children should have access to "the best society has to offer" (Burke, 1996, p. 15).

Effective arts programs provide the opportunities for active learning and direct participation. According to *Coming Up Taller*, they "use dynamic teaching tactics such as hands-on learning, apprenticeship relationships and modern technology " (Burke, 1996, p. 15). They also incorporate reflection and dialogue around both their work and personal and social issues. Thus, these programs are addressing not only different learning styles and multiple intelligences but are meeting youths' social developmental needs as well.

"Effective arts programs are shaped by the youth themselves, helping them to make the projects 'not like schools'" (Burke, 1996, p. 15). They give youth the opportunity to have decision-making and problem-solving responsibilities and thus feel ownership of the program.

Of most importance, however, to this entire discussion is the transformational power existing in having the opportunity to give one's creative gift back to society, to contribute one's art, to make the world a better place. Otto Rank once stated, "Pessimism comes from the repression of creativity" (quoted in Fox, 1994, p. 21). To not be able to contribute one's gift, according to philosopher/theologian Matthew Fox, is to feel despair, despair whose "violent results can be seen everywhere: in self-hatred, increased crime, the drug trade, fear, alcoholism," etc. (1994, p. 10). And conversely, Fox writes, "To experience our own creativity . . . constitutes a rebirth of self that holds the key to the rebirth of all society's ailing and tired structures" (1991, p. 34).

The promises the arts hold for prevention—from reengaging youth in learning to societal transformation—are not advocated frivolously. Rather, they are grounded in a growing number of evaluation studies and in scientific studies of human development. Yet the challenges lying ahead are

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great, for "Ours is not a society that highly values or rewards artistic activity and development" (Sarason, 1990, p. 81). However, the "life factor" or human spirit that is both creativity and resilience flows through all of us—and is intent on expression. It is at this level of shared humanity that we must connect with others in order to build the critical mass that will bring about the healing of our social fabric, the welcoming back of youth and ultimately the saving of our planet. As individuals we can start by believing in the innate creativity and resilience of all beings. We can then infuse in our work the caring relationships, high expectations and opportunities for participation that foster human growth, learning and creativity. And last, we must connect with other kindred spirits to work for the following vision:

> *"We do not have an inkling of the power that will be unleashed when artists [and we all are artists!] are welcomed back to education, to religion, to the healing arts, to the service of the people . . . No one can predict what gifts the human imagination has in store for us, for imagination is a thing of mystery, a treasure house of secrets untapped until some genuine invitation comes along to elicit them."*
>
> (Fox, 1991, p.34)

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Project Choki & Old Pascua Youth Artists

Making respect, traditional culture, art and business skills integral parts of the education of Yaqui children and adolescents

Deer Dancer
Gavi Espinoza, age 11

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Old Pascua is an urban village of the Pascua Yaqui Tribe. Ten blocks square on Tucson's west side, it is home to 625 persons, 56% under 18 years of age. The community was founded at the turn of the century by Yaquis leaving the highlands of Sonora, Mexico, to escape the genocidal policies of the Porfirio Diaz regime. The 1990 U.S. Census reported 75% of all adults unemployed. Median income for a family of five was $5,032, less than half the national poverty level. Most families are affected by violence, alcohol and other substance abuse. Within the community, gang affiliation includes Crips, Bloods and a home-grown gang called OP for Old Pascua. Guns, alcohol and other drugs are readily available.

Multigenerational, multilingual extended families still value their traditions and pass them on to the youth. Opportunities exist for even very young children to participate meaningfully in community religious observances that include strong visual, musical, dance and theater components, such as the Pascua Yaqui Easter Ceremonies.

Old Pascua Youth Artists (OPYA)

OPYA is a community-owned enterprise through which Yaqui children design, create, market and sell T-shirts, tote bags, posters, note cards and individual works of art. The youth-directed program introduces its members to the free enterprise system by sharing profits based on age, production hours and 50% of the proceeds for individual sales. Earnings are also based on Native American principles of cooperation, respect and support. Behaviors consistent with these principles can double a youth's earnings. Children often report spending their money on necessities their family could not otherwise afford.

OPYA was started in 1987 by the San Ignacio Yaqui Council, Inc., Old Pascua's governing body, and Arts Genesis, Inc., a local arts organization. The program includes a Pascua Yaqui prevention specialist who participates in meetings, field trips and sales events, working with individual OPYA members in the Yaqui way. At various times specific prevention programming is integrated into other OPYA activities. The Arizona Governor's Office for Children funded one series of workshops for members, staff, their families and friends on traditional Yaqui approaches to substance abuse prevention, for example participating in the dancing and ceremonies of the Tribe. This series was taught by Yaqui elders, educators, artists and social service personnel.

In 1993, the Western Regional Center for Drug-Free Schools and Communities selected OPYA for inclusion in *An Eagle's View, Volume 1: Sharing Successful American Indian Prevention Programs.*

Hummingbird & Flowers
Silas Gallardo, age 13

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Reuben Roqueñi, an artist-educator with OPYA from 1992 to 1994, describes the program's benefits:

"When I go back to the neighborhood now, as an adult of 30 years, those boys I used to run around with aren't there anymore. Sergio is in prison for murder. Michael got out and started drinking himself to death. George got shot in the back in 1986.

"When I go to work with the kids on Mondays and Wednesdays I see myself in these kids. I hear the same things out of their mouths. I see them wanting to draw the same things I did. Same problems on the street and at home. Yes, very similar. I hear the statistics from the neighborhood: 90% never graduate from high school; 30% never even go to high school! And I think of Sergio and Michael and George and I just want to cry because I know a similar fate awaits these kids unless they are offered some kind of alternative. Art has saved me and it is my belief that art has the same potential for these kids.

"OPYA is working. All of the kids in the program who remain in the area are still in school; none of them are pregnant; and only one has been arrested. That is after nearly seven years. When the kids come to OPYA they enter a safe environment that not only encourages them to stay out of trouble but encourages them to excel beyond the limitations of the neighborhood. And they are eating it up.

"Most of these kids won't become artists. But because of the program, their self-esteem is higher, their confidence is booming and they know what their older brothers and sisters may not have known: they can succeed. Art can and does save. With OPYA in their lives, these children are making smart choices, are becoming role models for their younger siblings and examples for the greater Native American community."

Richey student performing the Bahai O'Olum old man stance as part of the Pahtorela Posadas, a midwinter Yaqui observance.

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© Old Pascua Youth Artists

Pahkola
Andrianna Yucupicio, age 11

In 1996, 50 to 60 youth participated in the program, bringing to 160 the total number who have participated since its inception. Most youth remain in the program three to five years, some as long as eight. Participants range from 6 to 16 years of age. They receive 250 hours of programming annually, meeting after school (two afternoons from 2:30 to 5:30 p.m.) and during the summer. Evening and weekend workshops in arts and prevention, field trips and community sales events add about 100 hours a year. The adult-to-student ratio is 1:5-10 depending on the activity. Five youth have graduated from membership to staff positions.

Historically only 10% of Pascua Yaqui youth graduate from high school. In the past seven years the graduation rate has increased to about 15%. All Old Pascua students who have graduated since 1993 have been OPYA members. The program substantially decreases the danger of members engaging in destructive behaviors. The environment itself is drug, alcohol and violence free and fun. As a college student who participated in OPYA notes, it gives youth a safe place to go after school, a place where they don't have to worry about gangs or drugs.

All education, business and prevention programming is directed from within the Old Pascua community. Full ownership for the enterprise will pass to the Old Pascua community in October 1997. La Frontera Center, Inc., a community behavioral health agency, partners with OPYA. Sharon Flores, a La Frontera prevention specialist born and raised in Old Pascua, has worked with Pascua youth every afternoon for seven years. Arts Education Coordinator Paula Yucupicio, a resident of Old Pascua, and her teaching assistants guide every OPYA session. Older teens who have graduated from OPYA serve as assistant arts education coordinators. Resident staff are joined

Photo by Bill Girden
©1989 San Ignacio Yaqui Council

come from the National Endowment for the Arts Expansion Arts Program, Arizona Commission on the Arts, the Tucson-Pima Arts Council, the Pima County Anti-Racketeering Fund, the De Grazia Foundation, the Tucson Community Foundation, and a variety of other foundations, businesses and individuals. The 1996 budget totaled $35,000; $2,500 was earned by sales. The greatest obstacle to the success of this type of program is financing. Proposal writing goes on continuously and funds tend to come in small increments.

Project Choki

When you walk through the halls of Richey Elementary you are surrounded by a celebration of Yaqui and Hispanic art and culture. Children's drawings line the walls, glass cases hold their pottery and weaving, and classrooms have art centers with works in progress. Richey Elementary serves 250 pre-kindergarten through fifth grade children drawn from the Pascua Yaqui community and the neighboring Barrio Adelanto: 40%, Native American; 55%, Mexican American; 2%, African American; 2%, Anglo; and 1%, Asian American. The school is community buildings on the north and south.

The abundant art is the result of Project Choki, a school-based art program started in 1980 by Tucson artist Carol Kestler that has grown into a formal and strong collaboration between Richey Elementary, the San Ignacio Yaqui Council and Arts Genesis, Inc., the nonprofit community arts organization directed by Kestler. The Old Pascua Youth Artists program grew out of Project Choki.

Before Project Choki, valuing of Yaqui culture and art stopped abruptly at the door to the school. As Anna Katie Taffs, Choki on-site coordinator, says, "You went to school and you did the expected Anglo thing. Nobody cared about who you were." Culture and academics inside the walls of the school were Anglo and somewhat Hispanic. What Project Choki did was introduce appreciation of the children's culture—values, history and arts—and the value of art in general inside the walls of Richey Elementary. Formally Project Choki's goal is to use the arts to create a community where each child feels supported by home, school and Council, building on Yaqui culture to develop self-actualization skills, "Project Choki is dedicated to helping all Richey students fulfill themselves in the dominant culture without having to give up their own traditional cultural roles, languages or values. Its role within Richey is in recognizing, developing and supporting the creative and artistic gifts and talents of each child."

Photo by Mary A. Goodman ©SIYC

These young Yaqui boys are dressed for a Deer Dance performance. The dance is traditionally performed with backs to onlookers. Deer masks are worn on the back of the dancers' heads.

One example of these gifts is a pencil-and-crayon drawing by Monica Godoy, age 12. The scene is a bedroom with neatly made bed, pictures on the walls, television on the dresser. In the center of the room an older woman holds a baby. To the side, a younger woman says, "Thank you." The caption reads, "This picture is about my Grandma. She is a curandera which means she is a person who heals people. My Grandma heals different kinds of people, especially babies."

Another example is the Richey School Yaqui Children's Cultural Dance Group members performing s Deer and Pahkola Dancers for the Yaqui Easter Celebration. The Deer Dancer honors the spirit of all creatures of the natural world—

"When I used to go to Richey, we did not have any program like Project Choki. There were no Yaqui Cultural Dancers, no other Native American artists, and no other Yaqui artists that made the children feel proud of who they are. I am happy for the students that they have Project Choki and all the artists that come through them. Choikoe Uttesia, Thank You."

Eulalia Valenzuela
Tucson Unified School District
Yaqui language specialist,
San Ignacio Yaqui Council member
and Project Choki parent

"Children, whom I had observed in their classroom behaving like other third-graders, were transformed in the dance. Bare-footed and bare-chested, with legs wrapped in cloths and secured in specific patterns, with ankle rattles and belts that held the accouterments of the dance, these very young boys' entire body posture and demeanor underwent a total transformation in the dance. It was spine-chilling to observe the concentration in these children; they appeared transfixed by the inner meaning of their ceremonial dance, totally absorbed in their Yaqui world's rhythms, patterns and meanings. One saw none of the self-consciousness that often accompanies child performance, but a ceremony and celebration integral to their own culture."

Friederike Seligmann
Arts Genesis, Inc., Board member and guest artist-educator

animals, birds, fish and insects. Boys apprentice to adult men of the village to learn the dance. Some of this learning now takes place in the school.

During 1996, primarily through artist-educators, the project offered more than 800 hours of classroom instruction and teacher, staff, parent and community workshops and programs. That number has grown steadily over the past 16 years. All 250 students participate in a spiral curriculum made up of music, dance/creative movement, storytelling, puppetry, weaving, sculpture, ceramics, drawing, painting, mural making, drama, paper arts, printing, creative writing, literature, and humanities, working intensively in the same medium several times during their elementary years. Classroom teachers are enthusiastic about arts education because they have co-created the Project Choki vision. Each Project Choki artist-educator meets in advance with the classroom teacher and Project Choki on-site coordinator to agree on the topics and key academic skills that will inform each unit.

Teachers at the school, who are predominantly Hispanic, bring Mexican American culture into the curriculum. Other traditions are represented as well. For example, children have been introduced to Jewish, West African, Ecuadoran and Japanese art by guest artists from those cultures.

Yaqui elders, parents, and other community members participate in Project Choki workshops, plan Project Choki each year through the Community Governing Board, and attend the many performances and exhibitions brought to Richey and Tucson by the project. Many have taught their arts as community and guest artists, sharing skills ranging from music and dance through painting and traditional mask making. In 1993 *Redbook* magazine recognized Richey as 1 of 23 America's Best Schools in parent/community involvement largely because of Project Choki efforts. The result of this collaboration is mutual respect and commitment to arts education among people with different backgrounds, priorities and vocations. It explains in part how Project Choki has grown each year despite continual funding obstacles.

Yearly evaluation includes interviews with children and adults involved in the project, classroom observations and questionnaires. Because Project Choki is run jointly by many parties, evaluation is essential to a consensus for the project. In addition Project Choki and Richey Elementary staff meet at least twice a year and evaluation information is reviewed three times a year at Arts Genesis.

The benefits of Project Choki are many. The art helps teachers understand psychological difficulties children are experiencing. Taffs says, "I see these special moments continually. There was a boy in

Photo by Mary A. Goodman ©SIYC
Fifth grade girls led by Marie Patino and Veronica Valencia perform "Corn Dance" by Blue Horizon.

fourth grade whose grandfather had committed suicide. Reuben Roqueñi had taught Día de los Muertos, helping students produce shoe box shrines for someone in their lives who had died. This boy started telling me about his grandfather and how he shot himself a year ago, 'holding the baby because he was tired of life.' Doing the shrine was a healing thing for him. Also, I was able to point him out to the new psychologist for some extra support."

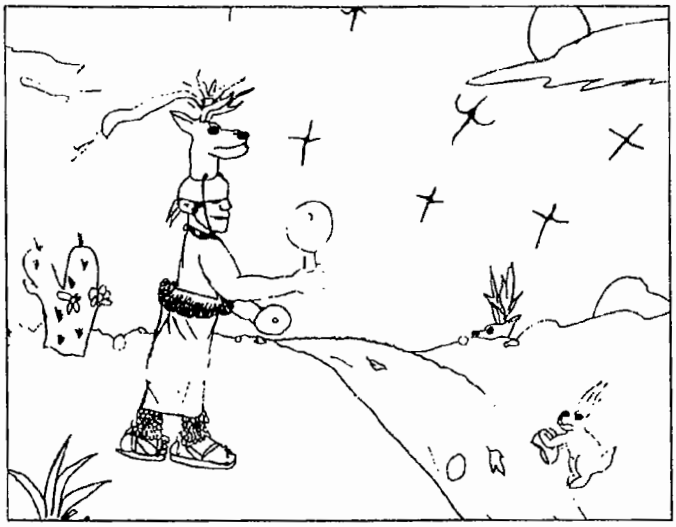
Prior to Project Choki the drop-out rate of Old Pascua middle school students was as high as 30%. The first class to go through six years of Project Choki programming was also the first in which every child, who could be traced, graduated from middle school. Since that time the middle school drop-out rate has stayed below 10%. Other positive outcomes for Richey School students are artistic development; academic development, particularly through the use of "multiple intelligences" and different learning styles; growth in cultural awareness; improved self-esteem; and increased safety in the neighborhood. Longtime Richey teacher Chris White says, "Sometimes I laugh now when I have to quiet kids down because they're talking too much. Before it was that frustration of trying to get them to talk. [Now], we have very self-confident children."

For Kestler, the thrill has been watching individuals develop from kindergarten into adulthood. Old Pascua's current Deer Dancer danced as a youth in the first Deer Dance presentation at Richey. A successful community muralist first painted on the school courtyard mural. A successful mask-carver made his first mask with Project Choki in first grade.

Project Choki visual art has been seen around the world. Shows have toured the United States, Mexico, the Far East, eastern and western Europe and Israel. Dance and musical performances are given throughout Tucson. In 1996 total youth audience for the program was estimated at 85,000.

Funding for Project Choki has come from the Arizona Commission on the Arts, the Tucson-Pima Arts Council, the Tucson Unified School District, the Stocker Foundation, the Tucson Community Foundation, and a variety of other foundations, businesses and individuals. The 1996 budget of $45,000 included $5,500 earned by performances, residencies and benefits. Annual benefit concerts, held since 1985, have featured Navajo-Ute flutist R. Carlos Nakai.

In 1990, through the efforts of TUSD Yaqui educator Frances Delgado, Project Choki founded the Richey School Yaqui Children's Cultural Dance Group. This new strand in



Deer Dancer, Aaron Ruiz, age 11

Project Choki's history led to the remembering and returning of lost Yaqui culture to the community. During 1990-91 Delgado researched, developed and produced "A Children's Pahtorela," a re-creation of the shepherds' part in the Christmas story. It was the first performance of this important ritual in Arizona in 50 years. During 1991-92 the Pahtorela moved to the Pascua Cultural Plaza and by the next year it had been taken over by the Tribal Council. Members of the Dance Group perform widely throughout the state at museums, schools and festivals while fulfilling key ceremonial responsibilities within their community. Since 1990 they have danced for nearly 50,000 people. The Dance Group assures that a new generation of Yaqui ceremonial singers and dancers are being trained in Old Pascua.

Mother and Child
Angela Garcia, age 12

Vietnamese Youth Development Center Peer Resource Program

Using the arts to develop leadership skills and build community among Southeast Asian refugee youth

Peter H. is a 17-year-old Cambodian youth who is a school dropout. He is illiterate and hangs out with other high-risk youth, many of whom are involved with drugs, alcohol and other illicit activities. He comes to the Vietnamese Youth Development Center for the employment program. Peter becomes involved in the summer leadership project primarily for the stipend and because he thinks it will be easy. He begins with apathy and distrust and is initially very withdrawn. In fact, he is the outcast of the group. Peter exhibits a natural talent with a video camera and becomes intensively involved in the project. People praise him. He volunteers hours of his time digitizing tape footage on a computer, although it is difficult for him to read and write. By the end of the program he expresses interest in volunteering on future projects and maybe in working with younger kids. He sees new possibilities for his future and expresses gratitude to the program for providing him an alternative to life on the streets.

The Peer Resource Program (PRP) of San Francisco's Vietnamese Youth Development Center (VYDC) targets youth from Southeast Asian refugee families growing up in an environment that lacks traditional adult leadership structures. The program addresses that lack of structure by developing youth themselves as leaders. Founded in 1989 PRP involves life skills and leadership training, community education and advocacy, and intensive work in the arts.

Photo by Glades Perreras
Timmy Hoang, age 16, with video trainer, Paul Mayeda-Burgess

The VYDC is located in the Tenderloin, an inner-city neighborhood near the downtown commercial district. Since the late 1970s, it has been dramatically transformed by an influx of Southeast Asian families and children, most of them refugees. The 49-square-block area, now 70% Asian, is one of the poorest in the city and has the highest crime and drug arrest rates of any San Francisco neighborhood.

The VYDC, founded in 1978, serves 600 youth per year with a wide range of services. Afterschool and summer programs exist for employment training and placement, academic assistance, educational counseling, recreation, therapeutic counseling and case management. The employment programs alone serve as many as 200 youth per week, five days a week.

Young people served by the Peer Resource Program are 14 to 18 years of age. Most are from Vietnam, Cambodia or Laos. Some came to the United States between the ages of 3 and 10. Others are recent arrivals. Most escaped oppressive political situations and have chaotic memories of displacement: being pulled out of their homes at night, fleeing through the jungle and living in refugee camps in Thailand or the Philippines, sometimes for years. One boy remembers escaping Cambodia after his father was taken away by the Khmer Rouge. Usually families were separated by the move. The remaining parent, aunt or uncle often works two jobs to make ends meet, leaving little time for family, let alone community involvement. Intergenerational conflicts between Old World values and current realities are often difficult. When a bilingual

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teenager earns more money than his monolingual father, for example, who is the boss?

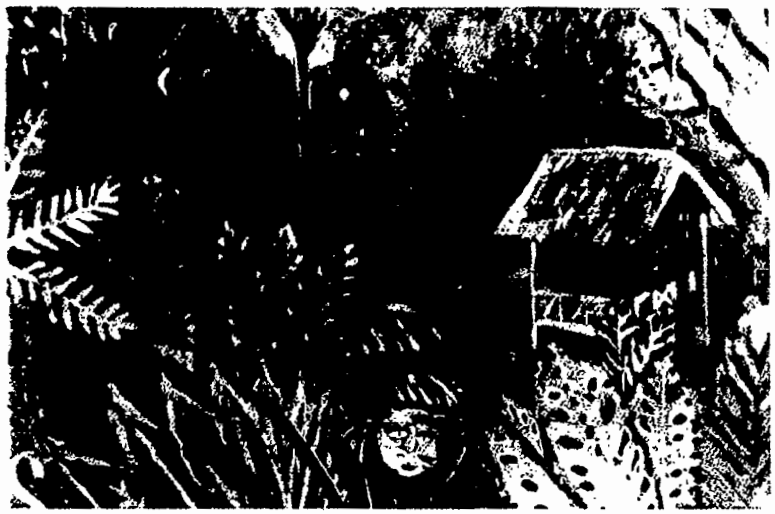
Risk factors affecting these youth also include school failure or dropout, delinquency, physical and sexual abuse. Most youth in the program are not themselves using alcohol or other drugs but have family members who are. Involvement in the program usually reveals risk factors that are hidden for cultural reasons. A large number of youth are latchkey children. They are in various stages of learning to speak English.

The Peer Resource Program grew out of the Asian Youth Substance Abuse Prevention Program (AYSAP). This consortium was founded in 1987 to give visibility to the problems of high-risk Asian youth and "to increase the resiliency/protective factors within the youth, peer groups, families and community to reduce the likelihood that youth [would] use alcohol and other drugs."

AYSAP, made up of an Asian outpatient drug counseling unit and five agencies serving the Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Filipino and Southeast Asian populations of the peninsula, became part of the first cohort of high-risk youth prevention programs funded by the Center

Photo by Sonny Le
Rina Phon (front), age 9, and Linda Lam, age 11, dance to a folk song, "Scent of the Flower."

for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP, formerly OSAP).



The Jungle–Vietnam
This oil-on-canvas painting depicts a scene from the youths' homeland. It was created as part of a cultural pride identity project consisting of eight canvas panels.
Kav Phou, age 13
Hoa Luong, age 14

The core group of PRP at any one time is made up of at least 8 youth participants, half boys and half girls. The program sometimes runs two groups in the summer, bringing the total to 16. Forty youth have been members of this core. Young people, recruited from the neighborhood, are selected based on willingness to participate and interest in expanding leadership in their community. Stipends enable some to participate who might otherwise have to work at paid jobs.

Participants meet three to five times a week for two-hour sessions during the school year and five days a week in four-hour sessions during the summer. The program uses a leadership/life-skills curriculum pulled from a variety of sources, including CSAP materials. Glades Perreras, coordinator of the PRP for five years, conducts this training in 1-to-2-hour workshops that give youth a chance to use constructive communication, decision-making and problem-solving skills in their own lives and in solving community problems. Perreras is Filipino and has a B.A. in communication studies with an emphasis on cross-cultural communications.

PRP involves training and work in theater, dance, visual arts, creative writing and video. To teach and manage the various arts components, the program chooses multicultural, multiethnic artist-mentors who are well known for creating quality public and community art and who have worked previously with Asian American youth. For example, Spencer Nakasako, a Japanese American film and video maker who worked on *Chan Is Missing* and *The Joy Luck Club*, has worked with PRP teaching video since 1991. According to VYDC Executive Director Louella Lee, "VYDC has developed a long-term relationship with these artists and there is a strong commitment on their part to keep coming back."

Work in a particular art form begins with several weeks of short-term projects and skill building with a lot of interaction. A sense of the collective experience quickly develops. Major projects coalesce out of participants' evolving interests and skills, although the artist-mentor sometimes has a project in mind. Keith Grier's work with the PRP demonstrates this process. An African American actor-director, Grier has run his own theater company, A Black Box Theater, since 1972 and has worked with youth in the Tenderloin for 11 years. When he started teaching improvisation at VYDC in 1991, the core group first came up with issues like drive-by shootings, drugs on the street, prostitution and conflicts with parents. Sometimes improvisations were outgrowths of the life-skills workshop or events and concepts youth had been taught about their history and folklore. After a year the group wanted to do a full-blown play for the community. Following considerable research, they brought Grier *A Raisin in the Sun* by Lorraine Hansberry, proposing a Vietnamese-in-San Francisco twist. They mounted this production at the Exit Theatre in May 1992. It was well received by the neighborhood and the critics.

During the school year, classes and workshops are held for only one art discipline at a time. Theater workshops are an exception. They meet once a week year-round. The program uses theater to explore personal, program and community issues as well as the communication, conflict resolution and problem-solving techniques taught in the leadership/life-skills workshops. The theater class maintains an open-door policy. It always includes

the core group but neighborhood youth can drop in whenever they like. The intensive eight-week summer program includes work on video projects and other media as well. Usually all youth participate in all art forms.

How the arts and a good artist-mentor help youth grow in discipline and in mental clarity emerges from Grier's account of working with PRP. He says, "I tell them, 'At 16, you're closer to being adults than kids, you have to learn how to make that transition. If something is expected of you, you have to see it through.'" When youth, whom he says are often "babykids," walk out on a rehearsal, storming and crying, he tells them, "You got to be bigger than that." And when they stay, they work out a lot of issues through performing: authority issues, family and tradition issues, what happened in Southeast Asia and how it translates here.

Nakasako supports youth in taking control of the creative process from concept through final product. Videos have included stories of teens dropping out of school, teen relationships, family businesses, images of the Tenderloin and how different individuals feel about it. Whatever the topic, youth explore significant themes, often not those they expected to explore. For example, according to Nakasako, "a video on break dancing ended up being about friendship, about friends taking advantage of each other, about going after what you want." The VYDC doesn't have a video lab. It rents equipment and gets in-kind contributions for each summer's projects.

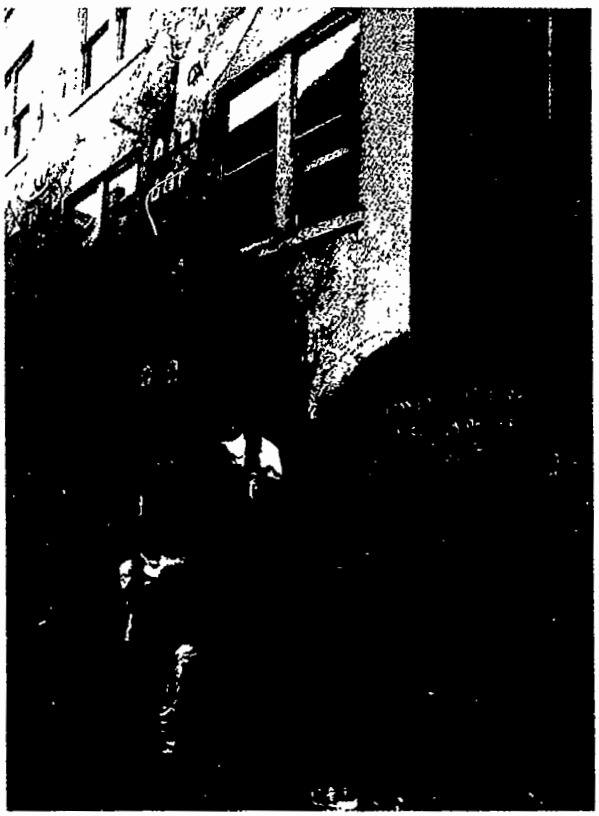


Photo by Johanna Poethig

Shrine to the Guardians, multimedia art project created for neighborhood beautification effort

The videos are shot in the community and force students to express themselves in a variety of contexts. For example, they must ask permission to shoot scenes, which involves explaining to residents what they are doing.

Escape Into Grace
Detail of mural on the Arlington Hotel directed by artist Johanna Poethig and painted by youth in the program.

The VYDC has had good success in getting films out to the public. The agency has featured them in community forums. According to Lee, "We make it a point for youth in the neighborhood to see the works of their peers." Some videos have been broadcast on the local public television station, and shown at the Asian American Film Festival and the Pacific Film Archive. One, partially funded by the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, was shown there. Nakasako also does unofficial showings. Last summer he had participants set up a television monitor on the sidewalk in front of an apartment building and play a video. Neighborhood kids made fun of it. PRP "youth had to defend their premise and later examined whether

"The program is there to inspire youth so that they can change destiny as it happens and feel hope that the community will be improved with their contributions."

Thuong Le
Prevention specialist

they had presented it as effectively as possible." Nakasako says, "It made them learn, you made a video, you're responsible for that video."

According to Perreras, "We encourage the notion of community and group development rather than individuals developing. Individuals develop on their own." The program includes yearly activities in community building. Youth produce and lead one or two teen forums each year. These forums have included such issues as substance abuse, gang involvement and sexual abuse and use either drama or PRP videos as the leadoff for discussion. Turnout for these forums has numbered 100 teenagers from the immediate neighborhood. Participants advertise their own events and get their peers and friends to come.

Photo by Louella Lee

This Alley Dance was part of "Performance in the Gutter—Part II," bringing art to alleys of the Tenderloin.

PRP has also conducted advocacy projects in which youth identify a neighborhood need and attempt to meet it in the political arena. When a recreation facility was being built in the Tenderloin in 1992, older adolescents were afraid it wouldn't serve their age group. The PRP core group contacted the San Francisco Parks and Recreation Department and set up a meeting between 100 neighborhood young people and public officials to ask how the City intended to address their needs. As a result the City's program administrator put together a plan of services for older youth.

Finally, the major arts projects themselves have been exercises in community building. The mural *Escape into Grace*, which is featured on the cover of this book, is an example of that work. Public artist Johanna Poethig had done murals and ceramics projects with PRP since 1989. When the 509 Cultural Center contracted with her to paint a mural on the Arlington Hotel, she recruited PRP members Gia Hy Chung, Sokly Ny and Puthara Chuop to help conceptualize, design and paint it.

The Arlington is a residential hotel for people in recovery and an independent living site. Poethig and Perreras discussed the nature of the site with the youth, and how best to bring it out. The teens, with adult input, came up with a series of images that represent the process of recovery, the idea of freeing oneself from addiction to substances and also from other negative influences and behaviors. Youth researched and used figures that symbolize *spirits, health, change* and *movement* in Native American, Buddhist and other traditions. In the mural, a snake winds the entire length of the building. It starts as a poisonous snake, a person trapped in a bottle of negative influences and behaviors. People shot heroin on the street while PRP youth worked on the mural. The snake becomes a wave, shedding its skin and transforming. At the end it is a human figure. The snake, superimposed, has become a spiral, representing the cyclical nature of life and eternity. The overall message is *change requires movement.* The mural is a wonderful tribute to all neighborhood residents struggling to build positive lives for themselves, one that speaks to young and old.

Poethig says, "I've seen the kids go through a lot of self-education and transformation. Art opens their minds and hearts up to what's going on around them, to different ways of living, and to how they can own and affect their own environment. They see culture is something that we make together."

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Getting the involvement of young women in some components of the program has been difficult. Many projects are done in the late afternoons and evenings when girls aren't allowed to do things outside of their roles in the family. When girls have gone through the program, they have tended to work together, which staff encourage. They want to tell their own story.

Toubi, a girl from Laos, came into the program at 15. After a series of difficult foster homes, she was living with her mother again but having trouble with the relationship. She was a natural in telling stories and was very successful in various PRP theater productions. Staff encouraged her to keep going. She subsequently participated in high school plays and in one VYDC youth forum, speaking out on the image of refugee youth in the neighborhood. PRP recruited her to be a video assistant and mentor during the summer of 1996. Toubi is currently studying psychology at San Francisco City College and now has a good relationship with her mother.

The program offers occasional parent workshops. According to Lee, immigrant parents tend to have little idea of the pressures their children face, both in school and on the streets. Workshops help them understand what their children are experiencing and encourage them to become more involved. According to Lee, "The need for this information cuts across the board for families, whether they are from a rural area, village or city in Southeast Asia. In addition, workshops often become a safe place for parents to discuss their fears and concerns without losing face, for example, their fear that children are becoming too Americanized. Such discussions help ease tensions and improve communication within the families of participants.

CSAP provided all funding for VYDC during 1996. Of this, $85,781 went to PRP. The program has also been supported by the San Francisco Police Department, AmeriCorps (WritersCorps), the National Asian American Telecommunications Association, San Francisco Museum of Art and a variety of arts organizations including private galleries, theaters and cultural centers. The Justice Council and San Francisco Parks and Recreation also fund the project and the artists often bring in their own funding. AYSAP is currently looking for local, foundation and other funding sources to maintain PRP.

AYSAP evaluation of PRP in 1993 showed significant increases in social skills, assertiveness and goal-directed behaviors among participants. The program successfully engaged youth who were not originally invested in their academic and social lives and provided an incentive and goals for greater participation. Bart Aoki, AYSAP's evaluator, noted that once youth felt they were part of the group, their participation was sustained. Substance abuse did not decrease as a result of the program, at least not in the short run, since most participants were nonusers in the first place. Overall, Aoki attributed the program's success to its use of experiential and interactive activities as well as to its community service piece. He found that youth enjoyed the sense of doing something for the broader community and realized their efforts ultimately would empower the community to develop linkages and resources from within.

An Easy Day in the Village
This acrylic on canvas depicts a time to relax and reflect in a Vietnamese village.
Howard Ly, age 10
Christ Trinh, age 13

Bronx Council on the Arts, WritersCorps

Using writing to increase personal and social vision, literacy, communication and community-building skills

Do you see people dying?
—Shantel Wilson

Do you see the blood stained ground at the latest crime scene?
—Jeff Taylor

Do you see me hoping for no more violence?
—Zumar Ortiz

Excerpt from *New Settlement Apartments Community-Poem*

Detail from a mural created to display lines from the 1996 New Settlement Apartments community-poem.

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WritersCorps is a three-year volunteer project of AmeriCorps, which President Bill Clinton signed into law in 1993. An initiative of National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) chairman Jane Alexander, WritersCorps establishes community-based literary arts programs for underserved communities. The project is being piloted in three target cities: The Bronx, Washington, DC, and San Francisco. The Bronx Council on the Arts (BCA), directed by Bill Aguado, was selected as the sponsor for the Bronx component. The Bronx WritersCorps has put 25 writers to work with schools, art centers and nonprofit community organizations helping to promote literacy and literary skills.

The Bronx has a population of 1.2 million: 44% Latino (85% Puerto Rican), 31% African American, 23% white and 2% other. In 1990 more than 20% of Bronx families were living below the federal poverty level, compared to the citywide rate of 15.5%. In 1993 youth shelters in the Borough served 10,000 homeless and runaway youth, and law enforcement agencies received 50,000 reported cases of runaway, "throw-away" and homeless youth. Violence and substance abuse are high. In 1989, 951 young men ages 15 to 24 died by acts of violence, a 14% increase since 1980. In a 1992 study by the Bronx Borough President's office, 43% of Bronx youth ages 7 to 19 said that they had witnessed a homicide. Almost half of the schools that the New York Education Department defines as "Under Registration Review" for their declining performance are located in the Bronx. While the public schools struggle to meet their needs, underfunding is reflected in students' lack of basic writing skills.

BCA develops programs and services that increase community awareness and participation in the arts and that nurture the professional development of performing, visual and literary artists and arts organizations. WritersCorps fits under the Council's education and community program initiatives. BCA's director, Bill Aguado, has been a community organizer and administrator of alternative schools in New York City since the early 1970s, and has worked at BCA since 1978. His personal mission is to empower communities, to help people find their voices for community and cultural development. Aguado says, "Once you feel you are free to speak, that is one of the most liberating experiences. Then, you don't have to ask permission to express your opinions on your neighborhood." He notes that WritersCorps gives power to "the voices of individuals who are not frequently heard."

From 1994 to 1996 the BCA WritersCorps collaborated with 60 schools, older adult groups, homeless shelters and community groups to develop literacy and literary initiatives. Collaborating organizations and sites have

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included Tilden Towers II, Citizens Advice Bureau, Bronx Lebanon Hospital, C.E.S. 235 Rafael Hernandez, I.S. 183 Paul Robeson and Bronx Satellite Academy.

WritersCorps's writer-teachers use their skills to improve a community's future and the sponsoring organization's ability to serve their clients. Aguado found that not all writers could function on the community level and not all organizations were ready to work with a literary program even when the BCA had assigned a writer suited to their needs. To be successful, writer-teachers have to find a staff person within the sponsoring organization who appreciates the value of the program. They also have to discover what they can provide that will motivate the participants. Aguado notes, "WritersCorps is not a writer-in-residence program."

During 1996, 1600 individuals participated in Bronx WritersCorps activities each week; of these an estimated 900 were children or adolescents. During the project's final pilot year, 1996-97, BCA is working with 20 sites, building community and educational infrastructures that support the literacy needs of the community. At some sites this will involve learning the needs of small business owners in the area as well as educating them to the value of the writing project. The goal is to make each group in a neighborhood aware of the needs of every other group and to help them find the common ground that benefits children.

During 1995-96 poet Michele Kotler developed the Community-Poem Project with youth living in the New Settlement Apartments (NSA). NSA consists of 893 apartments in 14 buildings, clustered in a four-block area in the southwest Bronx. Formerly unoccupied and used as crack houses and heroin shooting galleries, the buildings were purchased from the City by Settlement Housing Fund, gutted and renovated in 1990-91 as part of Governor Mario Cuomo and Mayor Ed Koch's 10-year housing plan. Residents are low and moderate income, and 30% were previously homeless. Buildings are now 100% occupied with tenants who have been screened to exclude those with a record of nonpayment of rent, criminal propensity or extremely poor housekeeping standards. Most families are headed by a single parent or guardian, with the adult either working or actively seeking employment. Only a few blocks from high-crime areas where unemployment and drugs are common, New Settlement Fund has created and is sustaining a healthy, safe environment for residents. There is a security force. NSA runs a domestic violence prevention campaign. Afterschool and evening programs for children and adolescents are provided free for tenants. Parents need only to sign up their kids. Once people become part of this community, they stay and their morale is high.

Michael Reyes works on New Settlement Apartments mural.

The afterschool and teen programs give youth a constructive, fun alternative to the streets. Supervised by Maria Santana, activi-

The forces that work against fear and separatism are the creative forces. Writing as a creative act is making something from nothing, and if a child can learn to write a story, she can learn to create her life.

Mary Heber
WritersCorps instructor

Writing has always given me the chance to express who I am and who I want to be. I believe that when a young person is inspired to use his or her voice, he or she is less likely to be influenced by the negative voices. WritersCorps ensures that youth are exposed to the arts and have the opportunity to have their ideas heard and their vision celebrated.

Michele Kotler
Bronx Council on the Arts
WritersCorps instructor

ties include one-on-one tutoring, computers, dance, theater, ceramics and basketball. Volunteers from high schools and colleges help run all of the programs. A support group for teenage girls deals with health, pregnancy, drugs and other issues. Bronx Helpers organizes community service projects, such as cleaning up the neighborhood and distributing fliers for the domestic violence campaign. A program called Books and Baskets requires young men to participate in an academic aspect of the teen program for at least one hour a week in order to use indoor hoop courts. In the summer, NSA arranges for a street to be blocked off for a camp program, offering games, arts and crafts. The afterschool and teen programs' major substance abuse prevention strategy is that they provide safe, stimulating, supervised activities. In addition, youth must be drug free to participate in the activities. Parents trust the programs and check to make sure their offspring are attending.

Kiani Henderson works with Bronx graffiti artist "Sein" on a section of the mural used to share the community-poem with the neighborhood.

While youth at New Settlement are at risk, those in the afterschool program demonstrate important signs of resiliency. All have at least one influential adult who has encouraged them to excel in school and to avoid negative influences. Most believe that they have positive opportunities ahead of them and feel encouraged to stay in school.

NSA's Community-Poem Project involved creative writing and mural construction and served 76 youth, 80% of them 7 to 12 years old; the other 20% were 13 to 17 years old. Of these participants, 51% were African American, 49% Latino, 59% male and 41% female. The project involved workshops (one hour per week with children, two hours per week with adolescents) in which participants, in groups of 7 to 15 each, discussed and wrote about their daily lives—their hopes, fears and visions for themselves and the community. Using writing, drama, drawing and imagination exercises, Kotler encouraged the youth, in individual and group writings, to develop X-ray vision with their poetry, to create and hone images that allow the reader to see clearly into the writer's mind.

Lourdes Delgado and LaToya Studwood wrote line beginnings for the community-poem:

I imagine—,
If I could change—,
Do you see—, and
When I am quiet—.

The realities of the participants' lives jump out of their poetry. These lines were written by 16-year-old Jeff Taylor:

I imagine desperately fighting for my life.
I imagine saying farewell to those I can't forget.
I imagine myself being outlined in chalk upon the cold ground and being dragged away by strangers.
I imagine drowning in situations beyond my control.

One student, Marsha Goshine, then spent eight hours organizing the resulting 183 lines into a 12-page poem, with the author's name after each line. When Kotler passed out the poem, youth counted how many times their names appeared before they read it. Participants had decided early on that they wanted to get their messages out to the community in a visual way. They chose four lines to illustrate on four 4-by-8-foot murals.

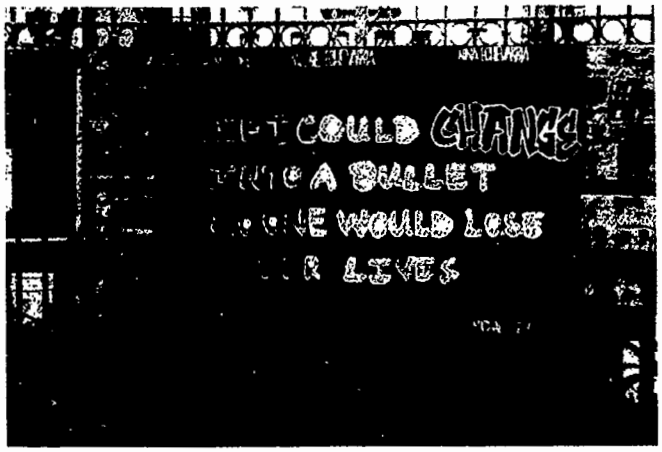
New Settlement Apartments Community-Poem Mural Lines

When I'm quiet I hear the wind wishing and the thunder is like drums.
—Thurraya Amadu, age 11

Do you see that violence is no way to solve a problem?
—Vanessa Samuels, age 9

If I could change into a bullet nobody would lose their life.
—Irving Hamilton, age 15

I imagine drowning in situations beyond my control.
—Jeff Taylor, age 16



New York City mural and graffiti artist Darwin "Sien" Bharath worked for two months with NSA youth to paint the lines of poetry into life. Kiani Henderson, Michael Reyes, and sisters Malorie and Nina Echevarria put the most time into this effort. Each board features a separate line and has a border of pictures drawn by the younger participants expressing their hopes and fears. The youth all wanted a mural on their block. Instead they will hang in four different sites in a four-block radius of NSA. An individual must walk or drive through the community to see all of the lines, a community-building action in itself. The murals let the community hear what their young people are thinking and feeling. It also shows the young people that their thinking, decisions and voices are powerful tools for social change.

Kotler is a poet from a working class background. She grew up in Flushing, Queens, New York, and went through the public school system when the first series of budget cuts had eradicated arts from the schools. When a sixth-grade teacher gave her an anthology that included Langston Hughes's poetry, it changed her life. She recalls that she thought, "Wow, this man is writing in his own voice." She started writing, got a scholarship and worked her way through Sarah Lawrence College, earning a B.A. in liberal arts with a focus on creative writing. While working on an M.F.A. from the University of Michigan, she worked on a Nomadic Pictures' documentary on at-risk Chicago youth called "No Time to Be a Child." She first used the community-poem method to create text for this documentary. Kotler also consults on community-poem projects outside of WritersCorps. She is currently working with students in East Harlem, New York, and Killington, Vermont, bridging the perceptions of youth in urban and rural communities.

Kotler used the NSA requirement for academic activity to recruit young males into the writing/poetry program. She walked on "the hoop courts" and got the boys: "It was hard. They didn't know me. They are constantly encouraged by society to use their bodies and not their minds. Why should I

Excerpt from

Dream: Children's Rites

by Mary Heber

. . . children write on an
open book
. . . children write on the
edge of their seats
in the cafeteria platform with
a train careening
off the edges children write
do you see me do you see
we are not passengers, we
are the train?

From *not black and white: inside words from the Bronx WritersCorps*

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working on something for the community. It was fun because it had to do with creating, drawing and working hard 't gives poetry a good look. I believe it will influence my community in a good way.

Kiani Henderson, age 12
About working on the NSA community-poem and mural

with extremely poor reading levels, whether they played ball or not, wrote some of the most beautiful lines in the world."

From left: Michael Reyes, Kiani Henderson, Bronx graffiti artist "Sein" who guided the mu process, Malorie Echevarria and Michele Kotler, Bronx WritersCorp writer-teacher

Youth involved with the project are now more knowledgeable of the process of change, that it involves making a commitment and honoring that commitment. The community-poem and mural alone took six months. Last year Kotler had to round up her troops. This year they are at the building, waiting for her. The project has made them conscious of their community as a place that they can change. They have learned how to encourage their peers to speak out. They have also realized that art represents a lot of thinking and doing, and finally, that it is practical and useful.

Writing has been exchanged by NSA youth and participants at the Washington, DC, and San Francisco WritersCorps sites. Participants at the San Francisco South of Market site were intrigued by the familiarity of many images and ideas in the Bronx writing—bullets, killing, drugs, but also kids wanting change. Meanwhile, Bronx participants were amazed to learn that their words made sense to youth 3,000 miles away and were happy to know they were not alone in their aspirations for a better life.

As a result of the WritersCorps project, NSA now sees poetry in a new light. Before the community-poem, staff didn't see how writing could make a difference. "Now," Kotler says, "they see that creative writing strengthens basic writing skills. And they see how incredible our kids' visions are, how badly they want to institute positive social change." Staff are printing the community-poem in its entirety in the NSA newsletter, 10 lines at a time. The newsletter is hand delivered to all 893 apartments.

The 1996-97 budget for the Bronx Council on the Arts was $1,278,923; its budget for the WritersCorps program was $125,500. Government funding was provided by the National Endowment for the Arts, the New York City (NYC) Department of Cultural Affairs, NYC Department of Youth Services, New York State (NYS) Department of Education, and NYS Council on the Arts. Foundation funding was received from Greentree Foundation, American Express Foundation and JM Coplan Fund. The NEA evaluation process requires each writer-teacher to keep a journal, to submit writings by the recipients and to compile quarterly and annual reports identifying successes and problems at individual project sites.

Bronx WritersCorps's successes are many. In 1996 BCA produced the book *not black and white: inside words from the Bronx WritersCorps* (Austin, Texas: Plain View Press). The book is a compilation of writings by WritersCorps teacher-writers and community member-students of all ages. Editor Mary Hebert notes that the book "is a work of the heart . . . it is the heart of the Bronx that we tried to connect with and evoke." The beliefs and methods of the teacher-writers shine through pieces the students felt inspired and supported to write.

Because of P.S. 122's respect for jennifer jazz [sic],

its WritersCorps-assigned writer, the school has invited BCA to be a part of its redesign team for the literacy and visual arts plan of its new Board-ordered education complex. As a spin-off of WritersCorps, BCA opened The Bronx Writers Center in May 1996. Housed at the Westchester Square Branch of the New York Public Library, it provides private work space for writing professionals. Its resource library includes volumes on how to teach writing to young people.

Many of the youth who participated in the Community-Poem Project have an improved attitude toward academics, and a wider vision of who they are and can be. Lourdes Delgado, the young woman who helped design the line beginnings for the 1995-96 community-poem, wrote then, "Do you see me walking and walking into the middle of nowhere?" This year she isn't around the teen program as much. She has realized that she has a mind and that people respect her when she uses her mind. She's at home studying. Kotler says, "It takes so little, it takes so little to motivate them." As the community-poem asks,

"Do you understand—?"

Chain of Thoughts

by Joshua R. from the Bronx Satellite Academy

Being a person of color means a lot to me. . .
I still have a lot to learn about my family. . .
and background to help me identify myself. . .
It's hard for my sisters and brothers to
achieve certain. . .
goals,
getting an education,
taking care of a family,
or even playing a role in society. . .
people are feeling that they are oppressed
but not using their knowledge to escape
from their enclosure.

Be strong to overcome this cruel but
overzealous world. . .
Only your choices and actions will determine
your future.

The Way a Candle Light Burns

by Pedro C., middle school student in the South Bronx

The way the wick of a candle
burns
is the way the
inside of my heart burns
As I see the way the death of a loving mother
can go out
so quick
just like the way the candle flame
goes out so quick

The pain is burning inside me
seeing a loved one
die is like seeing a candle
burn out

It is hopeless and empty
I wish my mother could live forever
just like I wish a candle
would never burn out

What I try to teach my students is not necessarily to be a writer, but to be a person who thinks. If you think about what's going on with you constantly, and deal with it, then you can start looking for options and figure out how to deal with the next level.

Steven Sapp
WritersCorps instructor

Having lived on this planet for a while, what I've learned as a human being is that life is a contradiction, that there are going to be challenges and obstacles. So I write to confront life, to keep myself from going crazy. . . . I would hope that these kids have learned how to listen to what's inside them, and to what's going on around them, and not take things for granted.

Ana Ramos
Pedro C.'s
WritersCorps instructor

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CHIL' ART Playwrights Program

Using playwriting, improvisation and positive adults to increase the autonomy, confidence and communication skills of inner-city youth

Young Sayreville participant holds a T-shirt created for the summer program.

Contact: Anna M. Aschkenes
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North Brunswick, NJ 08902
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CHIL' ART is a summer playwriting program that serves children living in low-income housing projects in Perth Amboy and Sayreville, New Jersey. It was founded in 1990 as a Local Arts Development project of the Middlesex County Cultural and Heritage Commission (MCCHC). It is co-sponsored by Middlesex County Economic Opportunities Corporation (MCEOC), which administers the program.

Middlesex County was incorporated more than 300 years ago and has among the most diverse populations in the state. In Perth Amboy, at 49,000 residents, Middlesex County's largest city, 55% are Latino—representing 17 Spanish-speaking nations, 28% are Caucasian—mostly from Eastern European countries, and 17% are African American.

CHIL' ART targets children entering the fourth grade. Some children return from one summer to the next, so ages range from 9 to 14. The program averages 60% female and 40% male participants; 50% Latino, 30% African American and 20% Caucasian. During 1996 CHIL' ART served 56 youth at two sites and reached a one-time youth audience of 125. Since the program's inception, 175 to 200 youth have participated in playwriting workshops and 750 children have witnessed productions of their works.

Participants of CHIL' ART are all economically disadvantaged. Unemployment is high among their families. Many youngsters come from one-parent households or families in crisis. All have witnessed alcoholism, drug use, domestic violence, street crime and gang activity. With parents at work, young people "on their own" during the summer are prime targets of drug dealers. A number of the youngsters perform poorly in school and test below their grade level. Others are in English-as-a-second-language programs, with Spanish or another language spoken at home. According to Anna M. Aschkenes, MCCHC executive director, in one of the cities it is obvious that the public schools are advancing students to higher grades when they do not have basic reading and comprehension skills.

Most youngsters experience the support and encouragement of their families, who have developed coping methods and survival skills as they struggle against poverty, economic and cultural disadvantage and poor living conditions. Overall, however, positive adult role models who touch the lives of the young people are sorely missing. The social environment has taken its toll on the participants. Self-esteem is low. Many use intimidation and force to extricate themselves from problems. Peer pressure is by far the most influential in their lives.

MCCHC was established as a department of County government in 1971. It is responsible for the County Museum/Cornelius Low House, which offers exhibitions and educational programming on New Jersey history; the Folklife Program for New Jersey, which preserves ethnic cultural expressions; and technical assistance to local historical societies. MCCHC also provides technical assistance to Teatro Café, a local Latino community theater, and the Latino Arts Task Force, which seeks to provide for some of the cultural needs of Latino residents in central New Jersey.

MCEOC is a private, nonprofit community action agency with a mission to promote the economic and social self-sufficiency of low-to-moderate-income residents of Middlesex County by operating programs, building coalitions and mobilizing resources. MCEOC is the largest provider of child care services

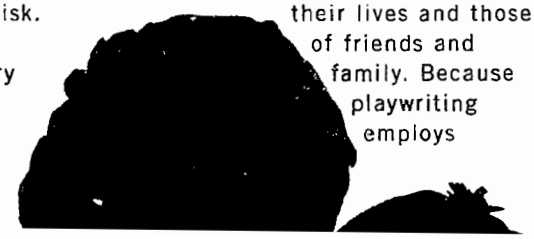
in Middlesex County and established the first pediatric dental facility in the state for Head Start families. In addition to operating 14 centers throughout the County, it has provided training to residents of public housing. MCEOC has also developed a comprehensive teen parenting support network to complement its drug elimination efforts. As part of its service delivery and anti-hunger networks, the agency also provides food to support soup kitchens and food pantries. Anita Orio coordinates the agency's Community Services Division, which includes the CHIL' ART program. MCEOC is the key agency in the delivery of social services within the public housing communities. Carroll H. Thomas, executive director for MCEOC, says that the organization has incorporated CHIL' ART as a permanent part of the community action agency's anti-drug efforts its inception. John Pietrowski and Jim Peskin have worked most frequently with the program. Pietrowski is Playwrights Theatre's producing artistic director and director of drama at Far Brooks School in Short Hills, New Jersey. He helped develop the curriculum for the New Jersey Department of Corrections Division of Juvenile Systems' playwriting program, and is a professional actor and director. Peskin has an M.F.A. in directing from Yale University. He helped create the New Directors Project at the New York Theatre Workshop and was the founding director of the New Jersey Young Playwriters Program. Both playwrights have experience with youth and adults at risk.

For every 25 to 30 students, there are two playwright- artistic director and five community volunteers.

The program runs eight weeks, meeting three times a week, three hours per session. From the first day, youth improvise and write scenes. Working as a group, children create a two-to-three-page structured scene that one child records and several youth perform. Later, the group is broken into four writing teams, and then into pairs. Many youth eventually demand to write alone, an important milestone because doing so helps them find their individual voices.

Students are encouraged to write about what they know best: themselves, their lives and those of friends and family. Because playwriting employs

In 1991, the first year of the Perth Amboy project, the concluding play reading was attended by a member of the Housing Police, who stood in the back of the auditorium so he would be unobtrusive. He had planned to exit before the post-performance reception began. But before he left, he expressed his disbelief that these were the same kids he dealt with every day. He wondered how they could have written such moving and poignant words. The plays, he said, gave him new insights into their emotions and lives and he had a newly found respect for their capabilities.



Professional actor G. Rodney Owens works with youth preparing for a CHIL' ART performance.

Geneva Ortiz (left)
Sydenham (right)
ith playwriting

YWRIGHTS
HEATRE

ee what it's like—
work up on stage.
good. Last year one
the audience] was
Wow, I really did

Nicole Santana, age 13

tter here. It's a place
ou can express your
, write what you want
about, without peo-
hing at you."

Manny, age 12

everyday language and the language of the streets, youngsters who might have difficulty writing prose find playwriting accessible and relevant. The last two weeks of the program, youth write toward a public evening performance, for which young-looking professional actors are hired. The plays are read at the local high school and are attended by friends, family, residents of the projects, Housing and Urban Development representatives, local officials and, of course, the young playwrights themselves.

Parents in each housing development's tenants association select participants each summer, taking recommendations from the Public Housing Police. They choose youngsters who are considered "edge kids," at high risk for being influenced by negative factors in the social environment. No young person is turned away if they exhibit a desire to participate. The kids do not know this, however, and selection is perceived as an honor. Fifteen to 20 kids start the program at each site at the beginning of each summer. Others join, once they see what their friends are doing and realize that the playwrights are "cool" and nonjudgmental. The tenants associations work to ensure that a positive interaction occurs at home by having an adult family member sign a form pledging support for the child's efforts in the program. The parents also promote and attend the concluding play reading.

CHIL' ART addresses substance abuse prevention by being a viable alternative to drugs and the behavior that might put youth in contact with drugs. It improves self-esteem by reinforcing a "can do" attitude; listening to and respecting the thoughts, opinions and life experiences of the young people; providing opportunities for decision making; and valuing the accomplishments of the participants. Finally, staff from MCEOC's Drug and Alcoholism Network conduct sessions on drugs and life choices.

Aschkenes says CHIL' ART's staff were not prepared for the combination of street smarts, toughness, anger, frustration, innocence and lack of primary educational skills exhibited by some youngsters: "No matter how much we expected it, we were still overwhelmed at times by the life experiences of the kids: they had lived the lives of adults and were not yet teenagers. One boy wrote about drug pushers and pressures from the drug culture on the streets. When asked to write about his *one wish*, he wrote that he 'wanted a daddy.' Some youth had been emotionally abandoned by their families. Others had supportive and caring family members but at 9 and 10

CHIL' ART youth watching rehearsal of one of their plays.

years of age had already yielded to the pressures of the inner-city culture and had rejected their families, choosing instead to make other 'children of the street' their extended family."

CHIL' ART is a low-cost, portable program. In 1996 it operated on $7,000, including $3,500 in federal monies, $3,000 in Public Housing funds and $500 from United Way of Central New Jersey. Funding has changed over the past six years and has included monies from the Middlesex County Board of Chosen Freeholders and a Community Development Block Grant. Funding from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts helped to inaugurate the program.

Evaluation has been informal. Agency staff meet each summer with youth

to know the project is important and valuable.

For John Pietrowski, the essence of CHIL' ART is captured by an experience he had with Muhammad in 1993: "One day, while we were working on his play, he started picking at the hair on my arm. He said, 'Am I ever going to have hair on my arms?' I said, 'Has anybody ever talked to you about this?' He didn't have a trusted adult to ask that question. We stopped working on the play and just talked about puberty for half an hour. You start off working with the play and the craft but other issues come up. You begin to form these close bonds and you begin to talk about these other important things. That was the one thing he truly needed to know that day and he finally had the courage to talk about it."

Muhammad has endured many trials in his family. His parents are separated, several family members have serious drug abuse problems and his sister recently ran away from home. At 14, he does what he can to help his family. Muhammad learned to read while at CHIL' ART. Now a freshman, he is doing well in high school and is interested in going to college. He continues to participate in many of the housing project's recreational activities.

Love Is Unconditional

by Nicole Santana, age 12

Jackie, 14, daughter, responsible, too old for her age
Josh, 18, brother who cares but his life is too busy
Angie, 35, mother, drug addict, self-absorbed
Pedro, 37, boyfriend, drug addict, bully
Melissa, 1, baby sister

Opening scene.

Jackie. I'm tired of doing everything in this house. Everybody else sits around and does nothing

Angie. Shut up! Stop complaining. Go and get your sister, she's crying.

Jackie. Watch! One of these days I'm going to get out of here! Watch!

Angie. That will be the day when I see you with a job and an engagement ring on your finger.

Jackie. No, because I can't live like this for a couple more years, I'll kill myself.

Angie. Yeah, o.k., right, sure. Hurry up and go get your sister.

Jackie. Why do you do this to me? You always make me feel I have no life. All I do is your part.

Angie. And what exactly is my part?

Jackie. Watching after your child, a helpless baby. Caring for her the way you're supposed to.

Angie. Go get your sister, she's crying. Now!

Jackie. No you go get her, she's your daughter. She's crying. You go and get her for once. I'm tired of this.

Angie. I said go get your sister.

Jackie. All you do is sit around and get high with that man in there. I'm tired of this.

Angie. I said NOW!

Angie slaps Jackie in the face. Jackie runs to her room to get her sister. Angie turns around, in shock. She goes to her room.

Angie. I can't believe what's happening. *(Pause)* It's nothing to lose sleep over. I'll just do the usual to calm myself down.

Angie gets high.

(The play goes on to show common experiences in the life of the responsible child in a family where the adults abuse drugs.)

Professional actors give a play reading of student works.

"One quiet, street-smart boy, Muhammad, entering fourth grade in the fall, was found to be unable to write a sentence. Was he receiving help at school? (It turned out that he was not.) He was highly creative, though, and had much to say. A volunteer was assigned to him, to write down his words as he spoke them. Every night the youngster took that day's writings home. The next day he returned with his script in his own handwriting, a painful, jarring print. Each evening he would carefully copy every stroke of each character, every word, that had been written by the aide on his behalf, so that each story and each play would truly be his own."

Anna M. Aschkenes
Executive director
Middlesex County Cultural and Heritage Commission

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CornerStone Project NETworks Center

Employing tutoring, the arts, life skills and community service to build the academic and social well-being of inner-city youth

CornerStone students Kristen and Bryant address the block party introducing the "Chill!" media campaign.

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The NETworks in CornerStone Project NETworks Center stands for "Neighborhoods and Education Together works." Collaboration among a wide variety of community organizations to provide comprehensive youth services at the neighborhood level is the essence of this program, which serves mainly African American youth in Little Rock.

CornerStone was started in 1987 by the Pulaski County Coalition, a broad-based coalition of organizations looking for a better way to provide high-risk youth with opportunities to reach their full potential. CornerStone's founder and first director, Dennis Beavers, was a social worker with a 1960s sense of social responsibility who advocated a holistic rather than a patch-up approach to working with youth. Beavers was one of the first professionals in Little Rock to stress the need for collaboration and to pull the community together around this concept. Several comprehensive programs in Pulaski County and Arkansas are spin-offs of the CornerStone network model. Betty Lou Hamlin was a Junior League member who served on the Board of Directors. As CornerStone's second director, Hamlin provided stability to the organization at a difficult time and expanded the organization's funding base. Laveta Wills-Hale, the organization's current director, volunteered at CornerStone and received training from Dennis Beavers in 1989. Wills-Hale continues to expand and diversify the organization's funding base and to build local partnerships.

CornerStone's goal is to increase academic and overall life success of neighborhood youth and reduce the likelihood that they will use alcohol or other drugs. Strategies include tutoring, homework help, life-skills training, the arts, community service and emotional support. The organization has received numerous awards. It was the 536th of President George Bush's Thousand Points of Light in 1991 and winner of the Gould/Wysinger Award of Outstanding Juvenile Delinquency Prevention from the U.S. Office of Juvenile Justice in 1992.

CornerStone operates out of a renovated post office. The immediate inner-city neighborhood is 75% African American, 23% Caucasian and 2% Hispanic. Youth who attend the program have significant obstacles to overcome. Gang, drug and criminal activity in the area put all children at risk. Over 50% of youth served by CornerStone live in poverty; 60% function below grade level in school; many have poorly developed social and communication skills. Some kids lack the confidence, grades or resources to participate in extracurricular activities at school but feel more secure, more welcome and more able to do so within their neighborhood.

Most youth come from single-parent homes or homes with a stepparent. Often they are children of drug- and/or alcohol-abusing parents and are victims of abuse. Usually if there has been abuse, children are living with grandparents who provide loving homes. The adults in these families are hardworking people. Many work second jobs, leaving latchkey children. About 60% of participants are referred by the schools; the other 40% are brought in by parents and other community organizations. Families encourage par-

ticipation in the program, often for the tutoring and safe, nurturing environment. Children overall are encouraged to achieve success.

CornerStone serves 12-to-18-year-olds during the school year and 8-to-12-year-olds in the summer. During 1996 a total of 125 youth attended the program, including 55 who attended afterschool activities. CornerStone has served approximately 700 students since its inception. Of these, 97% have been African American, 2% Hispanic and 1% Caucasian.

The afterschool program meets from 4:00 to 8:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday. At CornerStone academics take precedence over everything else. Each day involves one hour of tutoring by paid tutors. In addition, volunteers supervise and help with homework, and youth cannot join other activities until their homework is done. Points for grades, program attendance and positive behavior can be exchanged at the Center's Exceller Store for donated goods such as clothes, shoes, games and radios.

CornerStone provides many of the cultural benefits upper and middle class Americans routinely provide their children but that are beyond the reach of lower income families. Through partnerships with a series of arts organizations, the Creative Expressions piece has provided one-hour classes in music, art, jazz and modern dance twice a week year-round. Currently the Little Rock Arts and Humanities Commission supplies artist-instructors to teach

A staff person from Arkansas Repertory Theatre helps with set construction for Pieces of a Dream.

"Without CornerStone, I'd be dead. It's a safe place to be."

Damion Ellis
17-year-old student
6-year participant

Chill! You Have A Choice.

The Arkansas Chapter of the Public Relations Society of America helped CornerStone participants develop the "Chill!" HIV/AIDS prevention campaign for inner-city youth.

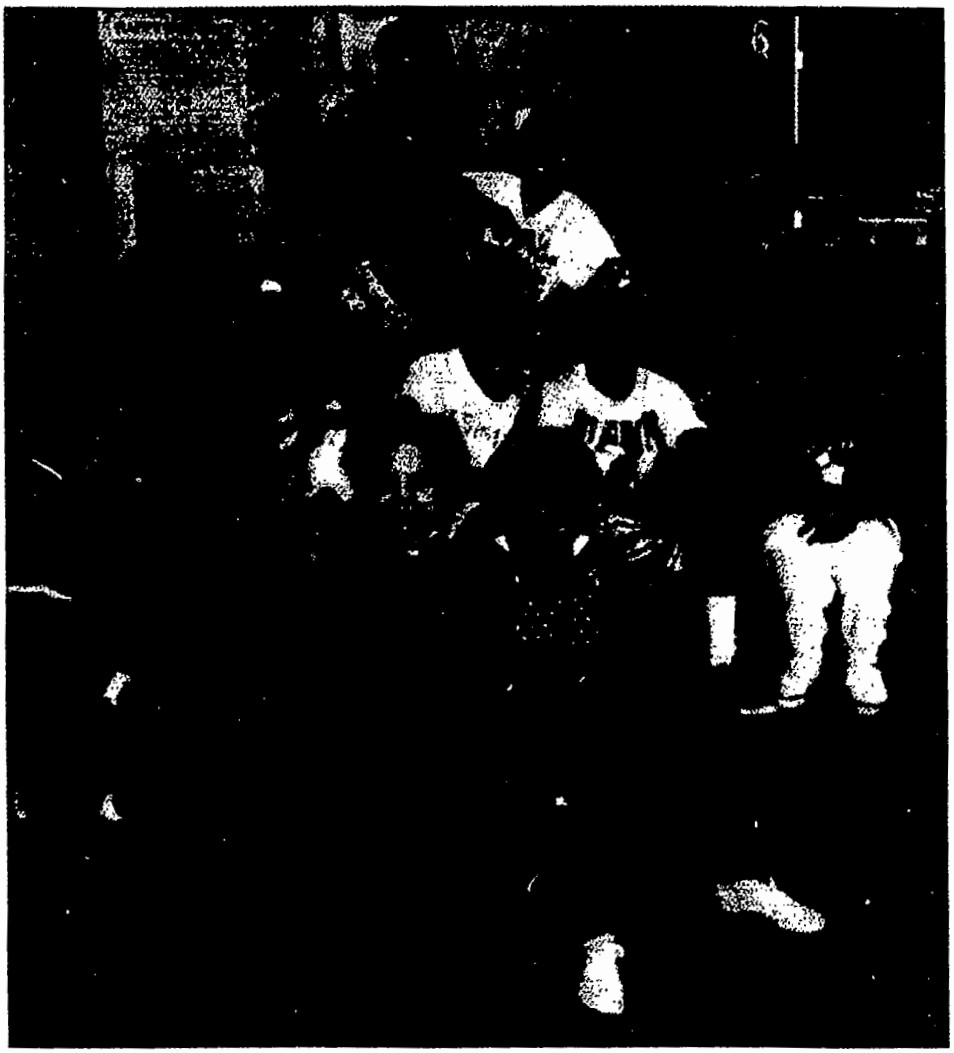
oil and acrylic painting and music theory, and to develop a CornerStone choir.

One major arts production is done each year in the afterschool program, usually a theater piece. Fred Scarborough was director of Creative Expressions from 1992 to 1994. Scarborough, a director, professional stage manager and member of Actors Equity Association, set out to expose youth to a whole range of arts activities before asking them to create something on their own. He arranged storytelling workshops. He took them to 22 productions of the Arkansas Repertory Theatre (ART) in three years, including talkbacks with actors. He had a touring company perform Shakespeare for them. He read to them from classical literature. He introduced them to the Furies in Aeschylus's *Oresteia*. When he got a freelance job constructing the properties for *Lips Together, Teeth Apart*, they helped.

According to Scarborough, "Once I was able to acclimate them to the theater, they saw possibilities. By the time they did their own show, they had a whole repertoire of references and ideas. My task was just to hold their ideas and give them feedback and support." In 1994 youth used what they had learned to write, choreograph and produce a one-hour show called *Don't Get Caught Slippin'* in which the Furies represent critical issues in the lives of the characters. *Don't Get Caught Slippin'* opens with a teenager named Bokeesha talking on the phone with her girlfriend about whether the girlfriend should have sex. Bokeesha advises her, "Oh, go ahead. Do it. Have fun." That night the Furies awaken Bokeesha and show her what her own life would be like if she made that choice. The scene, which shows her fear of telling her mother she is pregnant, was based on monologues that girls in the program wrote. Boys in the program wrote the scene in which Bokeesha tells her boyfriend, who is with his buddies, that she is pregnant. He tells her, "Take care of it yourself," and the gang members laugh and make fun of her. When Bokeesha goes to cheerleading practice, she is kicked off the squad. When she gets an AIDS test, she is told she'll have to wait six months and come back. The show ends with Bokeesha telling the Furies she does not want to go through this experience and calling her friend with different advice.

Scarborough says participants were tremendously excited backstage the night of the production.

Actors from Arkansas Repertory Theatre's The Young Con perform Pieces of Eight *for CornerStone youth.*



CornerStone's cast of Don't Get Caught Slippin'

"CornerStone has helped me to achieve most of my goals."

Michael Hammonds
16-year-old student
4-year participant

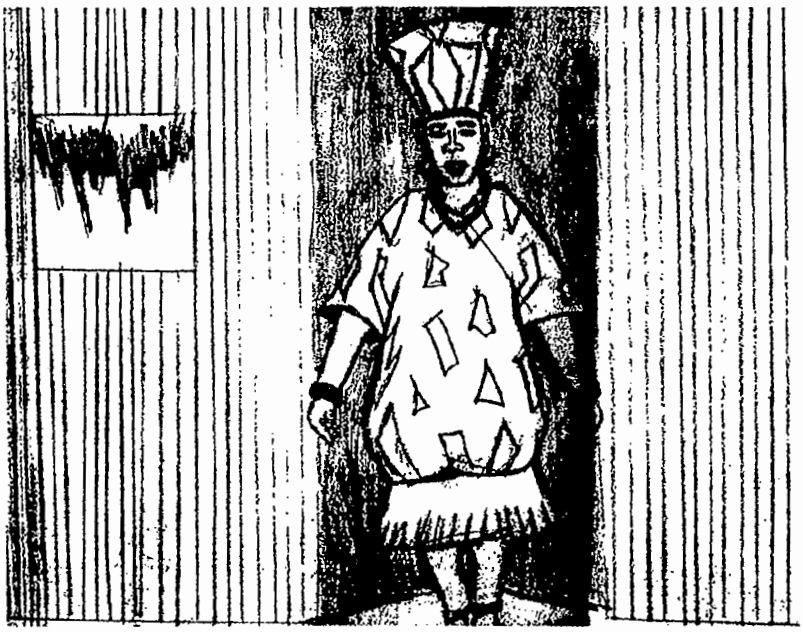
Mask of one of the Furies on the set of Don't Get Caught Slippin'

One young woman who had never been in a program before said, "My mom's never seen me in *anything*. I can't believe we're really doing this." Parents were also thrilled with the production. Scarborough believes youth carried this experience of success into their overall lives. A young woman who played one of the Furies is now a junior in psychology at the University of Tulsa, with an interest in international affairs and plans to visit Africa during the summer of 1997. She is a vibrant young woman whose growth began to manifest in this project.

During 1996-97, with funding from the Arkansas Department of Health, Curtis Tate, a professional actor and artistic director of Umojo Studios, an African American theater group, is working with the center's teenagers to create a play on the effects and prevention of HIV/AIDS. Youth are again creating the script, choreography, set design and lighting, and will advertise the play, *The Patchwork Quilt*, when they stage it in early 1997. Among their arts-related field trips in 1996 were seeing the ART's *Peter Pan* and Jacob Lawrence's series of paintings on migration.

The summer program, which runs from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon Monday through Thursday, features a daily educational hour devoted to reading and arithmetic. Once a week volunteer primary teachers lead an arts and crafts day that involves beginning artwork, such as making collages and necklaces and drawing simple pictures.

Professionals run optional structured support groups for participants each Thursday during the school year. Volunteer teachers and social workers, many from the neighborhood as well as graduate students



Michael Hammond, a four-year student in the program, created this pencil drawing in art class.

"I and three children had a very rewarding and positive experience with CornerStone. Because of CornerStone, my children have participated in many recreational and educational activities that they otherwise could not have enjoyed due to my limited finances."

Cassandra Anthony
Parent of three participants

in child psychology, teach problem-solving skills and related life-coping skills. Curricula include *Other Choices/Other Chances* (by The Alternative School, Little Rock, funded by the Arkansas Department of Corrections), *Growing up Black and Proud* (by Peter Bell through the Johnston Institute) and *Personal Achievement Skills Training* (Arkansas Department of Vocational Education). These groups, which 80% of participants attend, give youth a chance to talk about peer pressure, problems at school and other concerns. CornerStone's comprehensive program also includes one meal a day.

Youth experience ownership and develop leadership and community-building skills by participating in the Center's Ad Hoc Committee for Center Enrichment, which meets once a week to plan special events like dances, and to discuss student behavior and other issues. The project appoints youth with leadership potential to the Committee each fall, and it is open to anyone else who wants to join. The Junior League of Little Rock funds and runs the program's community service piece. League members take youth on bimonthly outings—to clean an adopted park, for example, or to decorate classrooms of special needs students for the holidays.

The Center conducts parent workshops once a month using activities from Marilyn Steele's *Strengthening African American Families*. Workshops teach skills in empowerment, self-esteem building, discipline and effective communication and give parents an opportunity to discuss their experiences and concerns. Because so many parents work second jobs, turnout tends to be small. Parents are significantly involved as Center volunteers, however: serving dinner, assisting in art classes and acting as chaperons on outings.

In 1995 Angella Savage, the current program coordinator, initiated and coordinated CornerStone's major arts project. This was a mass media piece funded by the U.S. Center for Substance Abuse Prevention with technical assistance and additional fund-raising by the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA), Arkansas Chapter. PRSA executives worked with youth to develop the public relations and design skills required to produce *Chill! You Have a Choice*, an HIV/AIDS prevention campaign for inner-city youth. The campaign produced a 30-second television public service announcement that has aired hundreds of times on four stations, a billboard displayed at 45 sites and a T-shirt displayed on the chests of 500 teens. The message was "Chill! You have a choice. AIDS is not worth the risk." CornerStone youth served as actors and models for the campaign. When participants invited the City's teens to a block party to launch this campaign, 400 turned out.

In 1992 the U.S. Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP) selected CornerStone's afterschool program for a four-year demonstration project to reduce substance abuse, juvenile crime, school failure/dropout and teenage pregnancy among high-risk 13-to-18-year-olds. The Psychiatry Department of the University of Arkansas Campus of Medical Sciences developed the evaluation component. A final report is due in early 1997.

The Junior League of Little Rock has supported CornerStone from Day 1 and helped establish the organization's local funding base. That broad base of support has included the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Sturgis Foundation, Arkansas Community Foundation and the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation. The corporate community has made substantial contributions. First Commercial Bank and Entergy (formerly Arkansas Power and Light) have made contributions that support tutoring and creative expressions at CornerStone. The Levi Strauss Corporation provided funding to build CornerStone's capacity to recruit, manage and retain volunteers in 1995 and donated six computers in 1996. Laidlaw Transportation transports youth to the Center after school, and the Little Rock School District funded the stipends of certified teachers to tutor the youth for several years. The Arkansas Arts Center, the City of Little Rock's Arts and Humanities Council, and the Arkansas Repertory Theatre have been the major contributors to the arts component providing art instructors, free art classes and tickets to local plays. Baptist Health provides the meal during the school year. Besides CSAP, government support has come from the state of Arkansas through the Arkansas Department of Health and the Arkansas Department of Human Services. The City of Little Rock has supported CornerStone through two $50,000 grants made possible through a half-cent sales tax, called Ensure the Children, that funds prevention, intervention and treatment programs within the City of Little Rock. The City of Little Rock's Education Commission awarded CornerStone a $10,000 grant in November of 1996 to fund tutors, provide incentives to the youth and to purchase educational software.

Over the years, CornerStone has attracted students from very difficult circumstances who, with the assistance of loving family members and the structure and support of CornerStone, have gone on to realize their full potential. Some are in college, some are selecting a college, others are beginning to understand the importance of education and improving their grades.

CornerStone students staged a block party to launch their "Chill!" media campaign and 400 teens turned out for the festivities. 47

Music Theatre Workshop Under Pressure Series

Using music theater drawn from the lives of youth to teach decision-making skills that generate personal and community activism and hope

The Music Theatre Workshop (MTW) serves young people who live in Chicago's poorest communities and attend some of Chicago's worst schools. The students deal on a daily basis with poverty and overcrowded housing. Most of the young people live in single parent homes, or with grandparents who are their guardians because their parents are unable to care for them due to substance abuse or criminal activity. When LaRabida Children's Hospital and MTW surveyed program participants in 1994 on their exposure to violence, 40% said they had been chased by gangs, sexually assaulted, attacked or stabbed with a knife, seriously wounded in a fight, shot with a gun, beaten up or mugged. And 75% had witnessed one or more of these events happen to someone else in their community.

Photo by Rita Kallman

Sammy (Omar D. Brancato) uses his father's gun to scare an apology out of Easy (Sal Foto) as Jamal (Daniel J. Bryant) and Cookie (Kelly Ann Clark*) look on in MTW's performance of* Someone You Can Trust.

**Actors appear courtesy of Actors Equity*

MTW's programs involve the creation and presentation of original theater works, by both professional artists and young people, that reflect the real-life stories of people from the diverse communities MTW serves. Through critical thinking exercises, participants develop decision-making skills and become aware of supportive resources available in their communities. Since its founding in 1984, MTW has created or guided the creation of 20 new theater works and brought them directly to communities that are often denied access to the arts. MTW's professional acting company has performed works in more than 300 schools for more than 100,000 young people and their families. The group has also toured throughout Chicago, its suburbs and the state of Illinois, and has performed at numerous local, state and national conferences.

MTW accomplishes its mission through three initiatives: the Under Pressure Series, Playwriting and Performance Workshops and the New Arts Intervention Program. During 1996 the Under Pressure Series served 15,000 youth and adults: 70% low income, 40% African American, 30% Hispanic, 29% Caucasian, 1% Native American and Asian, 60% male and 40% female. Actors and staff are multiethnic so that they reflect the client group.

The centerpiece of each Under Pressure program is a short contemporary play or musical written by MTW's playwright and current artistic director, Meade Palidofsky, and Claudia Howard Queen, MTW's composer. These four productions—*Captain Clean, Happy Birthday To You?, Amazing Grace* and *Someone You Can Trust*—address critical social issues that young people confront. The themes and plots of pieces are based on extensive interviews and workshops with children and adolescents on the realities of their lives and include the causes, experiences and effects of violence, teen pregnancy, gang involvement, dysfunctional families and substance abuse. *Amazing Grace,* for example, dramatizes a young girl's grief and anger when her mother dies and she must go to live with her grandparent. Part of the message is the grief process and how to move through it. Characters are composites of youth interviewed, and remarks made by teens often become lines of dialogue or lyric. For

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example, one boy's remark, "Live like a gangbanger, die like a gangbanger," became a thread and chorus line in the production *Someone You Can Trust*.

The purpose of the Under Pressure program is to use drama as a tool

- to increase young people's knowledge and understanding of the choices they face,
- to stimulate students to start talking about the pressures they feel,
- to guide students toward counseling and other support services,
- to foster interest in the arts as a method of self-expression.

Productions are most frequently performed for 50 to 100 students. Each production is immediately followed by role-playing and discussions in smaller groups. For more honest, forthright discussion, students in sixth grade and above are broken into separate "boys" and "girls" groups. Arranging students in a circle, actors establish a feeling of inclusiveness. To demonstrate that individuals can say what they truly think and feel, the actors begin by asking each student to complete an open-ended statement relevant to the show's topic (e.g., "I feel most under pressure when . . .").

Then, always staying in character, the actors guide students to talk about the choices the characters made in the play and other choices they might have made. MTW's actors follow up every choice students suggest by acting out the consequences of that choice with a student volunteer. For example, in *Captain Clean*, a show that deals with the consequences of drug use and trafficking, an actor asks a student to hold his drugs until the actor-principal has finished searching lockers. If the student agrees, he is immediately caught by the actor-principal and must decide whether to tell the truth or take the rap for his friend.

Staff do not teach the answers to problems presented or tell students they have made a good or bad decision but rather help students realize how and why they made each choice and examine its consequences. Consequences always include feelings; for example, "how do you feel when your friend pressures you?" Using this process, students begin to understand why they do things or end up in situations that

"When you see the action, you can understand more."

Maurice Mitchell, 16-year-old, on watching a Music Theatre Workshop production

Photo by Rita Kallman

Bam Bam (Anthony Diaz Perez) orders his gang (Dexter Warr* and Cynthia Suarez*) to get revenge for the killing of their buddy Easy in* Someone You Can Trust.

**Actors appear courtesy of Actors Equity*

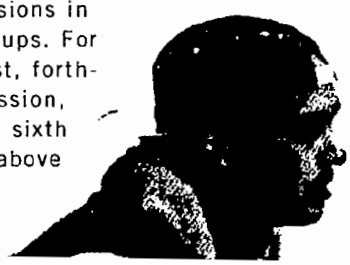


Photo by Rita Kallman

The Captain (Leslie Holland) stops a fight between Wilson (Paul Oakley Stovall*) and Angel (Anthony Diaz Perez*) over drugs in MTW's* Captain Clean.

**Actors appear courtesy of Actors Equity*

Someone You Can Trust

Lyrics by Meade Palidofsky
Music by Claudia Howard Queen
(Sung by Grandma to Jamal)

Sure you're feelin' angry,
You want to slam the door.
But before you just start runnin'
Know what you're runnin' for.

Ev'rybody gets mixed up,
They don't always do what's right.
If you cannot see the way out
Let someone hold a light!

Oh, when you're feelin' lonely
And you think you're gonna bust,
You got to raise your voice 'n'
cry out
For someone, someone you can
trust.

From the musical *Someone You Can Trust*
©1993 Palidofsky/Queen

they otherwise would believe "just happened." By talking about the characters instead of themselves, students feel safer in expressing their views and more objectively see the situations they themselves face.

Youth typically use role-playing to act out situations that trouble them, sometimes coming to additional shows to ask if they can act out a particular scenario. Typical of the benefits of the method is the instance of a high school girl attending *Captain Clean*, which depicts a youth and his alcoholic father. When an MTW actor randomly selected the girl to role-play the child of an alcoholic parent, the girl at first refused. When the actor said, "Don't walk away from me," the girl unleashed a tirade of feelings about her own alcoholic mother. She was able to speak about her feelings to a counselor after the MTW session, and later joined an Alateen group.

Each production closes with a scene role-played by an MTW actor and the school counselor in which the actor as student comes to the counselor with a problem. The adult emphasizes the positive step the student has taken by asking for help and stresses the confidentiality of the visit.

MTW's ideal situation is to be in a school a week or more, performing the program twice a day for different groups of students. This time frame allows the company to become an integral part of the school. Students approach the actors about issues and problems they were reluctant to bring up during the role-playing and discussions. MTW actors listen carefully and compassionately, then refer students to school and agency hot lines, counseling and other resources. Most programs involve collaborations with local mental health agencies as well as Boys and Girls Clubs, City Parks and Recreation Departments and other organizations that offer youth support and positive alternatives. Some districts activities and a curriculum coordinator to train teachers in their use. A typical activity has students envisioning and then creating a peaceful, ideal neighborhood out of paper. As a result of the program, students often express a new interest in the performing arts. (School districts frequently use Under Pressure as part of their Drug-Free Schools Week.)

Whenever possible, Under Pressure includes a community night. In schools where parents typically don't come out, MTW fills the auditorium. (Many students want to see the production one last time but can only come to the community night production with a parent or guardian.) Productions help educate parents, teachers and other professionals and community members to understand the challenges youth face. They point out that, contrary to the popular stereotype of adult-youth antagonism, children and teenagers need and want adults to be there for them with support and moral guidance. For example, *Someone You Can Trust*

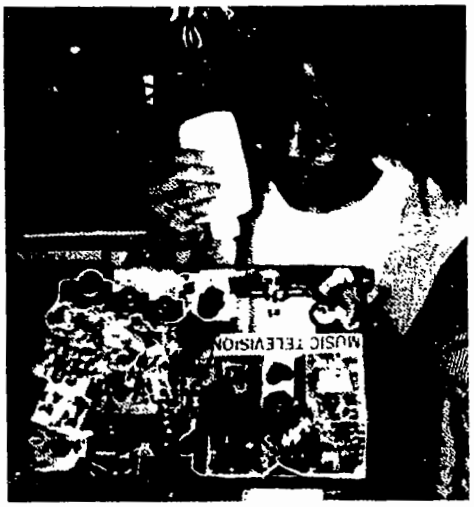
is a story of a community torn apart when one adolescent murders another. Lies, drugs and gang retaliation threaten to perpetuate the violence until the adults in the community finally help their children untangle the situation and take responsibility for their actions. Mentoring programs often have information tables at community night performances for those adults who are inspired to become more involved with youth.

The Music Theatre Workshop was founded by Palidofsky, Queen, Dan Markey and Elbrey Harrell as an organization through which new theater works might be created. The Under Pressure model and social mission developed over the years as staff listened to students talk about their lives and what the plays meant to them. Role-playing was added because it worked with behavior-disordered youth. Next, evaluation forms were introduced—and returned frequently with anonymous suicide notes. MTW then added the final scene of an actor-student asking a counselor for help. With that addition, the suicide notes stopped and the number of requests for help burgeoned.

Palidofsky believes the power of the MTW model comes from a number of its aspects: "Music sticks in your head. You go away remembering lines of music in a song better than you remember dialogue in a play. When we do community night sometimes half of the kids are singing along." Second, seeing a problem acted out lessens fear of the situation and of asking for help. Palidofsky says, "So many kids think they are the only one with an alcoholic parent, or the only one with their set of problems."

MTW selects its professional actors and artists through interviews as well as auditions. During rehearsals, staff train actors in affective learning, role-playing techniques and methods of connecting youth to school and community resources. An in-service at the beginning of a residency instructs teachers in MTW's discussion and role-playing methods and suggests how the content of the play can be related to the curriculum. After observing role-playing and discussions schoolwide, MTW recommends follow-up activities and further discussion topics. Staff also meet with school and agency counselors to facilitate follow-up of students asking for help.

MTW has collaborated extensively with organizations in the Chicago area. In 1992 special performances of *Captain Clean* were done for high-risk, first-generation Russian and Eastern European youth at Niles West High School with a special evening show and expanded discussion for their foreign-born parents and grandparents. In 1993 Curie High School, after a year of racial tens and fights, also requested a special version of the show, with discussion that highlighted issues of race relations and friendship.



Students create artwork as part of MTW's Someone You Can Trust *program.*

Under Pressure residencies often result in community action. At St. Charles High School, freshmen requested that weekly lunchtime sessions be established for students to discuss further topics brought up by *Captain Clean*. *Someone You Can Trust* ends with the full chorus singing, "Take back the streets and schoolyards, they belong to you and me/We refuse to be the victims in our own community." During 1994, following a *Someone* residency at Pulaski Community Academy, teachers and parents put together a committee to raise funds for a playground for students.

Funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Loyola University of Chicago's Children and Family Center studied the effectiveness of MTW's theater program from 1989 to 1992. Loyola found that students and teachers rated MTW's original dramas and discussions higher than the federally funded Drug-Free Schools Program, DARE, in two out of six categories, and equal to DARE in the remaining four. The

"Wherever we go, the kids are the same; they've got the same problems, and they're searching for the same answers."

MTW actor Ricardo Caro, who plays the drug dealer Angel in *Captain Clean*

Photo by Rita Kallman

Actors interact with youth at the end of the MTW production Captain Clean.

*Actors appear courtesy of Actors Equity

The Boy You're Going to Find
Lyrics by Meade Palidofsky
Music by Claudia Howard Queen

Darrell.
Spread the colors of your daydreams
With the paintbrush of your mind.
Put all of your desires
Into the shapes and lines.
Then step into this vision
And leave the past behind.
The greatest work of art
Is the boy you're going to find.

He's strong and brave and smart
And talented and kind.
He goes his own way
And he knows his own mind.
I know it's kind of scary
But your heart is never blind.
If you look deep inside you
That's the boy you're going to find.

Jamal.
How can I be strong and
talented and kind?
I'm afraid of dreaming,
Afraid of what I'll find.

Darrell.
You create the vision
And hold on to it tight
When choices seem impossible
And nothing's going right.
Paint yourself a picture
Of a boy who's going to shine
Then look deep inside you
That's the boy you're going to find.

From the musical *Someone You Can Trust*
©1993 Palidofsky/Queen

program scored high in helping students resist peer pressure, talk about their feelings, realize the importance of seeking help and knowing where to get help. During the Loyola study and every year since then, 15% of participants have signed up to talk to someone after participating in the program. The figure is higher when the program is performed for high-risk youth, reaching 55% for high-risk African American fourth graders. Students involved in the criminal justice system most readily request help. (Teachers also report stronger assessment and problem-solving skills among students exposed to more than one play/discussion.) In 1992 the U.S. Department of Education named MTW's theater program one of the country's top three substance abuse programs for outcome evaluation.

From 1994 to 1996 MTW and Chicago's LaRabida Children's Hospital and Research Center completed a two-year model program serving young victims of post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), the same disorder found in Vietnam War veterans. LaRabida's medical research team joined MTW on a tour of *Someone You Can Trust* in April 1994, documenting the level of exposure to violence of children in three schools. Children filled out a national standardized test as well as a checklist of symptoms for PTSD. Results of the tests showed that 20% of students in third through eighth grade tested positive for PTSD. MTW and LaRabida then began a pilot of the New Arts Intervention Program, which was designed to help those children develop coping strategies. The program's goal was to determine if arts activities with counseling would lower stress levels in children exposed to violence and assist them with school performance.

The pilot for New Arts was conducted with 200 students in two Chicago schools. The group that tested positive for PTSD met once a week and participated in arts exercises and lessons developed to help children alleviate their stress. The arts-based curriculum allowed students to (1) review the incidents they had witnessed and experienced, (2) examine strategies for conflict resolution, (3) explore coping abilities and support systems, and (4) discuss strategies for staying safe. LaRabida and MTW staff met with parents and teachers on a regular basis. LaRabida psychologists met individually with the young people and provided them with counseling. The initial findings showed the program to be effective in changing the children's behavior, but that program sessions would have to be conducted more frequently for radical change to occur. Art exercises did help the students gain personal autonomy, express their feelings and establish connections with one another. The art exercises also were good diagnostic tools and laid a foundation for art as therapy. Final evaluation of the program is underway.

MTW has conducted Playwriting and Performance Workshops since 1991. In these workshops youth write, produce and

Detail from backdrop for "Dreaming Among Friends," a playwriting/performance workshop conducted by MTW for Temporary Lockdown V at the Cook County Juvenile Detention Center.

perform their own dramas with music. Fifteen works have been created to date. The program has been especially successful with youth incarcerated in the Cook County Juvenile Temporary Detention Center; residents of Interventions/City Girls, an adolescent drug treatment center; and students in alternative high schools. For many of the incarcerated youth, involve ment in MTW has been their first opportunity to work intensively and without interruption in developing ideas, skills and products that awaken them to their positive potential.

Under Pressure's annual budget for fiscal year 1995-96 was $165,000. A phenomenal 49% was earned from contracted services and admissions. Of the 51% in donated funds, 94% came from foundations and corporations in the Chicago area, including the Lloyd A. Fry Foundation, Polk Brothers Foundation, Kraft Foods and Sara Lee Foundation. The Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs provided the program's only government funding.

Excerpt from *Til Death Do Us Part*

by City Girls

Coach. They say you're using drugs. Could that be part of it?

Michelle. I'm not using.

Coach. Stop lying to yourself, Michelle. You know you're using drugs. You know you have a problem. And you know your family cares about you—otherwise, they wouldn't be here looking for you. Michelle, what happened to all of your dreams? I thought you wanted to play in the championship game. I thought you wanted to be in the ABL. You know the game's coming up.

Michelle. Who says I won't be in the game?

Coach. The way you're going, you won't be, you haven't been to practice in Lord knows how long.

Michelle. You're exaggerating.

Coach. I didn't come here to argue with you. I came here to try to help you.

Michelle. I'm fine.

Coach. How can you say you're fine? You're sitting here high as a kite, you ran away from home and who is this Karl!?!

Michelle gets up and starts to walk away from her. She softens.

Coach. I know how you feel, Michelle. I've been in the same predicament. Leaving home—getting kicked out at an early age. I used drugs—

Michelle. You used drugs before?!

Coach. Yes . . . I admit, I did . . . but you don't have to go through what I went through. You have a chance to make a change. If you just be open-minded enough to go with me now so I can get you some help. Can you at least please go to one of my meetings?

Michelle. *(Hesitates, assents)* All right, I'll go. But after the game. I'm not going home.

Coach. Could you at least talk to your family?

Michelle. At the game. If they show up.

Coach. They'll be there. I'll see you there. I'm betting on you.

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West Dallas Community Centers, Inc., Rites of Passage

Using African-centric humanities, history, life skills and bonding with adults and peers to develop African American youth into purposeful, disciplined adults

Katricia Linthecum

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Rites of Passage (ROP) is a community-based program of West Dallas Community Centers (WDCC), Inc. The organization's mission is to develop youth who have dignity and self-respect and who are prepared to meet life's encounters in a hap,·y, reasonable manner. WDCC helps West Dallas youth function in society at their highest potential. The agency believes "the irresponsibility and apathy which exists among many African American youth is a direct result of the lack of clear goals and a clear and correct philosophy of life, the lack of knowledge of their unlimited potential and the absence of strong meaningful traditions." Through Rites of Passage, a tightly structured, intensive program, WDCC staff, parents and community members work with a select number of youth for several years at a time, filling these gaps through the study and practice of African and African American history, the arts and life skills.

West Dallas is located in the northwest region of Dallas County. It is an inner-city neighborhood whose population is 62% African American, 29% Hispanic, 8% Caucasian and 1% other. The area suffers the social and economic deprivation of an urban ghetto. According to the 1990 U.S. Census, 80% of West Dallas Housing Project residents have less than a high school education; 49% of households are headed by women; and 78% of households live in poverty, having a median family income of $4,999. Low self-esteem, damaged self-concept, depreciated character, cultural incompetence, psychological scars and reactionary behavior are some of the high-risk characteristics that contribute to the self-destructive behavior of African American youth living in the area.

WDCC was founded by people in the community in 1932. Its Centers currently serve 1300 to 1500 youth each year. Edgar Ward, George Loving and Elmer Scott Centers serve youth in the housing projects; Bataan and Joseph McMillan, those in residential areas of the neighborhood. Each Center's hours are 1:30 to 9:30 p.m. during the school year and 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. during the summer. Youth attend interest groups from 3:00 to 9:00 p.m. Computers are accessible at all Centers, allowing youth time for use outside of school. All WDCC programs help build youth leadership by involving the young people in the planning, development and implementation of the programs they use. All programs are also culturally based and educationally focused. Thomas Lewis, project director of WDCC's Positive Directions Program, notes, for instance, that some youth in a model car group learn basic automotive and business skills in shops owned by African and Mexican American auto mechanics and car dealers. In all special interest groups, youth learn how they might make a living pursuing that interest. Part of the message is be all you can be but also know that you can make a

Rites of Passage youth performance at a cultural ever

decent, legitimate living if you don't, for example, go on to college.

Youth are recruited into the Centers by word of mouth and community activities and are referred by the schools. Although WDCC emphasizes youth development, not recreation, billiards and other games are used to attract some youth. Once in a Center, youth are guided to educational groups by the youth specialist. With males who say they want to play professional football or basketball, workers talk about the realities of professional sports and the need to look at alternatives.

Many WDCC staff grew up in the West Dallas area and participated in the program, so they understand participants' life experiences. They provide youth with role models of positive efforts and accomplishments in school, the workplace and the community.

Kim Harrison, WDCC's full-time creative arts director, coordinates the arts program, which includes classes in African dance, folklórico, ballet, tap, jazz, theater, music, visual arts, computer graphics and crafts. Harrison herself participated in WDCC's Creative Arts Program as a child. Through the encouragement of friends and staff, she attended Dallas Arts Magnet, now Booker T. Washington High School for the Performing and Visual Arts. She went on to earn a liberal arts degree in dance and theater at Texas Women's University, then returned to her community to give something back to the youth. Harrison combines freelance dance and theater work with her job at WDCC.

Hannah Marsh, WDCC's associate executive director, developed the agency's original Rites of Passage for girls in 1988. Marsh has a degree in health and physical education with an elementary education minor from Prairie View A&M and has worked at WDCC for 28 years. The 1988-89 program was so successful that parents asked the agency to find funding for a program for both boys and girls. WDCC's executive director, Leonard C. Long, M.S.S.W. from the University of Texas, secured a five-year demonstration grant from the U.S. Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP) in 1989. With Zachary Thompson as program director, the agency began phase two of ROP.

The agency investigated various African-centric models for its expanded ROP, most notably those of Dr. Eugeni Perkins, president of the Association for the Positive Development of Black Youth and director of Family Life Center at Chicago State University, and Dr. Nsenga Warfield-Coppock.

"The opportunity that God sends does not wake up him who is asleep."

African proverb used in the *Rites of Passage* curriculum

Female initiates

Rites of Passage participants step a dance that African warriors danced in their tribal groups in the 1400s.

WDCC staff and mentors experienced the value of the program along with the youth. Creative Arts Director Kim Harrison hadn't previously known much African dance: "That was a cornerstone for me. It was therapeutic for me to seek out and learn African dance."

Warfield-Coppock wrote *Transformation*, a rites of passage manual for African American girls, and Perkins wrote *Harvesting a New Generation* and the African-centric workbook, *Bringing Black Boys to Manhood*. The first year of the CSAP grant, staff attended trainings led by these resource people and additional conferences and workshops on African and African American history, humanities and culture. As Lewis notes, "We had first to deprogram ourselves of what we had been taught about our history, and what we had missed."

From 1989 to 1993, staff and consultants developed WDCC's comprehensive *Rites of Passage Curriculum for African-American Youth*, which consists of 24 lessons, each with enough activities to keep youth busy for many weeks. Each lesson is circumscribed by rituals designed to build solidarity and a sense of personal responsibility. Class begins with a candlelighting ceremony and the recitation of a pledge of commitment. Next, staff lead youth through diaphragmatic breathing and meditation to help them focus mentally and present one of seven principles of Kwanzaa, an African American holiday that incorporates African spirituality, customs and symbols.

Lesson two of the curriculum, "To Be an Individual Is to Be Part of a Family," introduces the Kwanzaa principle Kujichagulia, "to define ourselves, name ourselves and speak for ourselves, instead of being spoken for by others." The lesson tells each youth that he or she "is a gifted child of God with a reason for being." It explores the concept of self-determination, helps youth explore their talents, skills and interests and feel pride in their achievements. Activities include researching African Americans who accomplished African and African American history in considerable depth, exploring how various experiences shaped the African socially, physically and spiritually, and applying lessons from this history to the initiates' present lives and immediate concerns. Quoting from slave narratives, "The Struggle for Literacy and Education" lesson shows the great risks African Americans took under slavery to learn how to read. The lesson explores the importance and place of reading and intellectual activity both during and after slavery and challenges initiates to take responsibility for their own education.

An activity on the post-Civil War period, when southern blacks were considering various economic and political options and facing the rise of the sharecropping system and the onslaught of white terrorist groups, teaches various methods for withstanding pressure and handling stress. It defines stress and emotional health, points out that human beings always experience problems, and explores introspection, courage, positive friends and music as ways of managing stress. The lesson connects the pressures the children's ancestors felt with the

pressures they will feel from their peers, for example, to take drugs. The curriculum is holistic, interactive and highly motivational.

Information on substance abuse was integrated into group discussions and overseen by WDCC staff like Lewis, who has a bachelor's degree in social work and an M.A. in counseling from the University of Texas at Arlington; he is also a licensed chemical dependency counselor.

Youth enter ROP between the ages of 8 to 12 and can stay until they graduate from high school. After the first year of the CSAP program, retention was 60%-70% from one year to the next. The CSAP program served 200 young people. Referrals were made by parents, the schools and the African American Advisory Council, community business and professional advisors to the program. No attempt was made to choose high-risk children, on the premise that all inner-city African American children are at risk. This premise was borne out as mentors gradually discovered, for example, that children who were doing well in school often had difficult home situations. In addition, WDCC wanted a variety of kids from the West Dallas area.

The initiates met at Elmer Scott Center every Wednesday from 6:00 to 9:30 p.m., for the core curriculum. Classes in the arts, entrepreneurship, hair braiding and other components met throughout the week.

Rites of Passage female members with West Dallas Community Centers' executive director, Leonard C. Long (far left); associate executive director, Hannah Marsh (far right rear); and one of the mentors.

ROP's arts component included dance, drumming and theater. Participants had to be involved in at least one art discipline and most cycled through all three. Local consultants taught the arts. An African living in Dallas, Serge Quaye, taught drumming. WDCC African Dancers taught some of the dances. Classes were scheduled for one-and-one-half to two hours, and Harrison says the youth "would get so excited we would run over the time." During the first year, a weekly karate class helped youth develop body awareness and concentration.

The dancing and drumming were critical to the program because of the place movement holds in African and African American cultures. Youth learned a variety of traditional dances from East and West Africa—dances of welcome, celebration, unity and purpose. The young women mainly learned the more expressive dances. The young men learned to step dances and sing chants African warriors executed in their tribal units in the 1400s. Harrison believes that because the dances require precision, the most important skills they taught the youth were self-discipline and cooperation. Troupe members would help someone who was having trouble with a step so the whole group would look good.

Drumming lessons included the history of the drum beats and how they were used to communicate between villages. Youth also learned the folk art and purpose of Swahili songs that accompanied the drumming.

In the theater group, initiates researched traditional African American playwrights and writers like Leroi Jones, Maya Angelou, Ron Milner and Joseph A. Walker, as well as African folktales like "Ananse the Spider." They did numerous readings and occasionally staged pieces for the community. ROP youth Katricia Linthecum, Michael Thomas and Brent Wilson performed in a local production of *Rites of Passage* by Houston playwright Thomas Meloncon. The theater activities particularly helped youth who were very shy.

"I don't have a father in my house, but if I go to the Center I have someone to look up to. If I had a problem with anything, I would feel free to go to talk with one of them. If I had a problem with a teacher at school, they would go with me to find a solution."

Roderick Bivin, age 15

ROP took youth on cultural field trips, for example, to the African American Museum in Dallas and to movies dealing with African American figures and life. Issues and behavior in each movie were discussed. For example, if youth laughed when a man slapped a woman in the movie, the morality of that behavior was later examined.

One participant's account of the Rites of Passage business enterprise, African-Centric Designs:

"In the summer we developed our economic development program. We all came together and thought about different ways we could make money. Once we narrowed the list, we had two choices, buttons and African pillows. We didn't know how to sew and our mentor didn't know how to sew, so we asked the senior citizens in our community to teach us. It helped them and they helped us. If our little product wasn't good, they'd make us take it apart. If it was good, they would praise us. We went to Harumbe Festival with the pillows and made $100 in profits. Everybody was happy. The next year we made $150. We were showing improvement slowly. Money was going into our savings accounts. It wasn't much but it was something. In April 1996, at the National Association of Black Social Workers conference in Houston, we made $1200. We were the first youth group to run a table at Kwanzaa Fest and also at the NABSW conference. People would say, 'You should have an adult at that table,' but we ran the whole operation. It teaches us responsibility, with orders to fill and it helps us with our grades. Before we made the pillows, we got our homework done. We had personal business cards for future sales and an advertisement."

Roderick Bivin, now 15, five-year participant

Roderick Bivin stitches pillows for African-Centric Designs.

ROP's economic development component, African-Centric Designs, involved 10 youth per year in the real-life skills and experiences of running a business. Initiate Roderick Bivin participated in the component all of the five years he was in ROP and has continued with the enterprise through Positive Directions. He is now an honor roll student at L.G. Pinkston High School in West Dallas and wants to start his own business as an adult. African-Centric Designs currently has an office at Positive Directions where youth sell handmade pillows and quilts.

ROP paired a mentor with each youth. They met with mentees once a week to discuss their goals, positive and problematic behaviors and other issues, and had daily contact with the youth, sometimes a phone call. Often the most important sharing occurred outside of the organized activities. Some mentors came from the African American Advisory Committee. Other mentors were identified by asking the youth whom they admired in the community. Staff then approached those adults named—ministers, Sunday School teachers, uncles—and asked them to serve in the program. Lewis says, because of the method used, "we got great participants" and they tended to stick with the program. Many mentors filled in for absent fathers. Mentors met weekly in their own education and support group.

ROP staff acted as advocates for youth with their schools when parents were unable to do so. They also supported parents in becoming more involved in the school system, something that was difficult for parents who had had negative experiences themselves as students.

ROP parents met monthly in an education and support group. Ashira Tosihwe, co-owner of Black Images Bookstore, one of the largest black bookstores in the Southwest, taught parents the same information the youth learned, so

they could dialogue with their children about the program's current topics. Some parents were concerned initially that lessons in African culture and spirituality conflicted with their religion. In the group, staff answered questions about the program, helping these parents to better understand its philosophy and methods. It also provided a place for parents to discuss more openly their overall concerns about parenting.

A parent-initiate group met twice a month. The staff member or mentor assigned to each family regularly facilitated communication between parent and child. According to Lewis, bonding occurred both when family members learned more about one another's beliefs, feelings and preferences and when the child accepted his/her responsibility to the parent and other family members.

A group called "The Council of Elders" formed another community resource for the program. These were retired professionals from the community and other older individuals who served as life-experience counselors. They developed rapport with youth, gave historical perspective on the community and told their true life stories.

Youth blossomed in ROP in large and small ways. Many ROP graduates are excelling at their studies and remain involved in the community. Brent Wilson, who helped lead the ROP step group, has come back to WDCC to work with the Buffalo Soldiers Program. Katricia Linthecum now attends the Booker T. Washington High School for the Performing and Visual Arts. Once very shy, she is now an outspoken, take-charge person. She tutors youth at WDCC, does choreography for dance groups there and at her church, and is a member of the National Honor Society. In 1996 she was one of four youth chosen from 300 contestants to receive Southwest Bell's Youth in Action Award. ROP also raised the expectations of teachers, principals and the community in general for black youth in West Dallas.

Evaluation was measured using a combination of observations, structured and open-ended instruments. For pretesting, for example, students were originally interviewed using the Family Interview Form and the Oral History Guide, and information was collected from staff observations. An attempt was made to locate ethnically, educationally and economically appropriate evaluation instruments. None could be located. A variety of other factors impeded the evaluation effort. Pretesting was not consistently collected. This lack of data subsequently reduced the instruments and analyses that could be used for posttesting. Descriptive data did show that relationships between youth and parents improved, school attendance and performance increased, and youth learned the content of the curriculum and of the substance abuse activities. Not enough information was collected on drug use to report outcomes.

Rites of Passage initiates point at their African-centric products on consignment in Dallas West Shopping Center.

WDCC is currently organizing the third wave of Rites of Passage. Forty-five new initiates will formally start in the summer of 1997. Because ROP has been so successful, the agency is trying to ensure that the community is never again without an ongoing program. WDCC staff consult with organizations around the country on starting and running rites of passage programs. The agency's curriculum and video on Rites of Passage are available upon request.

WDCC's original ROP program for girls was developed with a grant from the Dallas Women's Foundation. From 1989 to 1993 the program was funded by a $1.5 million CSAP demonstration grant. The agency is currently seeking funding from United Way for the ongoing program.

Maulana Karenga says, "The struggle is a long and difficult one, therefore we must mask no difficulties, tell no lies and claim no easy victories." West Dallas Community Centers' Rites of Passage—its youth, staff, parents and community—is writing an important chapter in the African American history of traditional values, spirit, survival, community and excellence.

South Dakota Improvisational Theatre

Using improvisational theater, processing and team building to increase awareness, belonging and decision-making skills of South Dakotans

Arriving at camp

"Trust the Process" is one of the slogans that guides Improv. Staff and participants alike find that sticking with the program brings insight, resolution and a stronger sense of both individual well-being and community.

Alcohol continues to be the drug of choice in South Dakota. In 1996, 81% of individuals receiving treatment in-state reported alcohol as their primary substance of abuse. According to the 1995 South Dakota Youth-Risk Behavior Survey, 39% of youth had drunk at least five drinks in a row in the past 30 days, 30% had operated a motor vehicle after consuming alcohol and 23% had carried a weapon. Within the past year, 35% had been in a physical altercation and 11% had been raped on a date. Forty-six percent are trying to lose weight and as a part of that effort, 6% have taken laxatives and/or purged themselves in the past 30 days.

In 1985, to help deal with these problems and their underlying causes, Donna Fjelstad, assistant to the state superintendent for the South Dakota Department of Education, introduced improvisational theater to the state. Fjelstad had seen Lori Hargraves's program, Teen Improvisational Theater Training, Inc., of Bountiful, Utah, showcased at a youth-at-risk conference. Playing off this model, she started South Dakota Improvisational Theatre (Improv). Since that time, 2,700 young people have had the Improv experience.

Improv trainees come from all backgrounds, from the most advantaged to the most deprived. Troupes are sponsored by schools, parent/teacher/student associations, as well as County Extension offices, boys and girls clubs, correctional facilities and treatment programs. During 1996, 230 students—24 troupes of five to eight youth and one adult advisor—were trained in Improv's concepts and methods. They, along with 20 previously trained troupes, reached several thousand children, adolescents and adults throughout the state with hundreds of performances and discussions. Of the ninth through twelfth graders entering the program, 69% are female, 31% male, 90% white and 10% Native American.

Improv troupes are selected for training based on a mix of age, gender, ethnicity, culture, risk level and experience with the program, as well as their organization's commitment to support Improv throughout the year.

Trainees are at lower risk of destructive behavior than statewide averages but are at risk nevertheless. For example, during a pretest at the beginning of the 1996 training, 10% indicated they had seriously considered attempting suicide in the previous 60 days; 5% had gone so far as to make a plan. In the previous 60 days, 17% had physically fought. In the 30 previous days, 27% had used alcohol, 18.5% had ridden with someone who had been drinking and 7.6% had operated a motor vehicle after drinking. Among examples of their resiliency, all are still in school, many possess leadership skills and all have the support of an adult in the organization that sponsored their participation.

Improv is a program of the South Dakota Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse, which receives funding from the federal government

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for the prevention, intervention and treatment of alcohol, tobacco and other drug abuse in South Dakota. The Division, a part of the South Dakota Department of Human Services, serves all citizens of the state.

South Dakota is a state of small towns and rural areas. Only 13 communities have populations exceeding 5,000. The ethnic breakdown is 91% white, 7.9% Native American,0.5% African American, 0.5% Asian/ Pacific Islander, and 0.2% other. Most European Americans are of German, Scandinavian and Irish descent; Native Americans are primarily of tribes within the Sioux Nation. According to the South Dakota Department of Education, the public school dropout rate for the state is 2.53%. In 1993 South Dakota was 38th in per capita income, at $17,879. At 63.1%, Shannon County on the Pine Ridge Reser-vation in southwest South Dakota has the highest percentage of persons living below the poverty line in the entire country.

According to Jeff McDorman, a certified prevention specialist who coordinates Improv at the Division, "South Dakota Improvisational Theatre is a form of psychosocial drama that treats substance abuse, violence and other types of destructive behavior as symptoms of much bigger problems . . . people problems." The program's primary objective is to teach participants to make healthy lifestyle decisions and to heighten knowledge and awareness of the issues facing young people in the community as a whole. The program's methodology always takes into consideration individual attitudes and beliefs, as well as the influence of family, peer group and culture.

Two members of the Takini School troupe pose with their newspaper and masking tape bridge, an Improv team-building activity.

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The Wagner-Marty troupe makes plans during "Bridge Building," a team-building exercise.

"We had Improv from Monday to Thursday. They had a thing on Tuesday that was called Family Sculpture. It was a play that had to do with the family. In the family there was a dad who was an alcoholic. It was like they were acting out our family. They had the same problems that we have. I started crying really bad. I had to leave the room. When I left I had a talk with Ms. Bely. I got so much out that day that should have been let out a long time ago. I shared my feelings with my group that day. I feel so much better about myself now. I made a goal for myself. The goal is to become sober and to stay sober."

Lamont correctional resident to the "Outside"

The Improv experience begins with a five-day training camp. Two camps are conducted every June in retreat settings: one in Lake Poinsett in eastern South Dakota and one in Storm Mountain in the Black Hills. Camps have also been held at the Lamont Youth Development Center in Redfield, a correctional facility for girls, the State Training School in Plankington, and the Youth Forestry Camp near Custer. The summer sessions are preceded by a two-day training of trainers for the youth workers, chemical dependency counselors, educators, mental health personnel and health care workers who serve as staff. Each troupe comes with an advisor—sometimes a school counselor, sometimes a parent—and is assigned one adult trainer and one peer trainer. Camps include an advisor track that provides information on maintaining an Improv troupe, targeting audiences, scheduling performances, seeking support and facilitating troupe meetings and performances.

Altogether, Improv training for youth includes information sessions on issues such as substance abuse, codependency and decision making; workshops on theater skills; talent shows; time for each troupe to create and perform a scene for the entire assembly; and opening and closing activities. Training includes a two-hour workshop on processing that teaches participants the purpose and natural evolution of processing and gives them practice in the facilitation of processing. Each troupe member and leader receives a training manual with resource materials.

At Improv training, youth and adults share the common bond of spending a week together creating a positive environment and discovering where their talents lie. John Beranek, formerly with the South Dakota Department of Corrections, is a longtime theater trainer with Improv and a consultant on the needs of youth. He believes the heart and soul of the program is making kids feel they belong somewhere and belong to someone: "Kids are allowed to be who they are for that week. We have a saying, 'Once you are part of the Improv family, you are always part of the Improv family.' We also show them a nonviolent and safe community where people can be who they really are." McDorman says it as well—"We try to display with our staff and in the way we conduct ourselves that no two people are completely alike and that, rather than dwelling on our differences, we celebrate our similarities and learn from our differences." Camp norms don't allow violence in any form, including teasing. Training camp includes several other non-negotiables: no alcohol, tobacco or other drugs, no exclusive relationships, and respect for one another's property.

Youth come out of the camp better understanding the concept and practice of respect for others and for themselves. This includes the ones Beranek calls the silent voices. They have learned "that their voices are reasonable, that they have something to say." And knowing this helps them become more active and more constructive members of their families and communities. "I think it's a lifelong memory for these kids." Part of the teaching is also the concept that I am a part of

this community and I need to be willing to give back for the benefit of the community. Youth are asked to think about and observe "how a community happens" at Improv so they can carry that knowledge and behavior to their troupes back home.

The training teaches individuals how to take healthy risks of all sorts. Karrie J., a young woman at Lamont, writes to the guidance counselor of her hometown high school: "Improv was one of the best experiences I have ever had in my entire 17 years. I experienced things I never thought I would be able to do. I was actually able to get up in front of a group of people and perform effectively. I didn't look and talk at the floor or hang my hair in my face. I stood up straight, pulled my hair back and did it. It was such a magical feeling."

Back home, Improv groups vary considerably in the number of performances they put on, in part because of varying support from sponsoring organizations. Some put on a single performance. Others put on many performances. The remote locations and small size of many South Dakota schools and communities have often proven difficult to troupes trying to find places to perform. Over the years, with increased communication, schools have clustered together to share resources and performance venues. A troupe's scenes might range from one on drunk driving for a Fourth of July celebration to one on generation gaps at a retirement home. Among other topics are: nothing to do in this town, my friend drinks too much, racism, moving away, eating disorders, environmental concerns and decision making.

The Watertown Boys and Girls Club troupe has been active since Club director Linda Schoepp first introduced a group to Improv in 1986. That first year Shoepp, who has an M.S. in counseling and considerable drug and alcohol education, enrolled her daughter, three first-time offenders from a diversion group and several other teenagers. She says, "I couldn't believe the transformation in the kids. One boy named Tom was very overweight, introverted, not good at sharing his feelings. When he came back, the first thing he did was hug his grandmother, who he was staying with. I also saw a transformation in my daughter and other kids to stay away from alcohol and tobacco. For them the norm became being good role models."

All Improv dramas end without resolution, at a high point in the action, with the audience invited to discuss what they think will happen as a result of the characters' attitudes and decisions to that point. Basically the audience writes their own ending or endings. For example, in the scene *My Chauffeur*, a sober driver picks up kids who are drinking. While he stipulates, "No drinking," they sneak in alcohol, pass it around and throw cans out the car windows. The scene breaks for processing by the audience as a kid in the backseat is

One Improv training at Lamont Center included a dance. There were several girls crying in the recesses of the gymnasium. One 16-year-old girl said, "I've never been to a dance where I wasn't drunk and high. I don't know if I can do it." Then, with support, she did it.

A dance during Improv training at Lake Poinsett

The Custer Troupe arrives at camp for a five-day training session initiating their Improv experience.

The drug-free norm of Improv members creates a peer group for all youth in the community who want to be alcohol and drug free, including youth returning home from treatment or the correctional system. In the past in South Dakota, when such youth came home ready to make changes, often the only teenagers who would welcome them back were the ones they got in trouble with originally. Improv gives these youth a positive peer group to connect with and the support to stay clean and sober.

looking in the mirror saying, "Oh, look at the pretty red light," and the driver is moaning, "Why me?"

On the road, troupes frequently perform for students in the afternoon and parents at night. Daytime performances are sometimes done without teachers so youth feel freer to share their opinions and experiences. Troupes are trained to handle discussions by starting with informational questions and proceeding to those that involve beliefs and are more emotional—moving from "what did you see?" to "what do you think the character did afterward?" to "how else could this situation have been handled?" Troupe members often face hostile peers as well as adults bluntly asking them questions they would like to be asking their own children—who are some times sitting next to them. Audience and troupe members explore and discover their own answers, as well as ways to respectfully communicate, handle conflict and find help when they need it.

In evaluations of Improv performances, parents say they learned what is going on with youth in their community, including the ones Beranek says "we're willing to throw away." He believes this is one of Improv's greatest values, that it begins to educate adults to what young people are saying with their behavior as well as their words. For example, he says, "many girls are at Lamont for running away from home. Those girls are running away and keep running away from home for a reason. No one wants to take a close look because they might have to act. Young people know what they need if adults are willing to listen to them." He believes the program helps adults see that "we have to take care of our own kids in our own community."

Often the hardest audience the Improv troupe has to face is their own classmates. According to Shoepp, it is out of confrontations with classmates that some troupe members choose to totally end their drug use, so they won't have to hear, "Who are you, pretending to be Goody Two Shoes?"

Shoepp has led Watertown parents in supporting youth with drug-free activities. Once, when Improv peer trainers came to town, parents of the Watertown troupe borrowed an old limousine for the youth to use. They stayed up all night, she says, "acting crazy and having fun without drugs."

Among several slogans that have arisen around the Improv program is "trust the process." Improv trainers have discovered that it is equally true for staff who fear their troupe is "not getting it" the first day or two of training and for performers having a hard time discussing an issue with an audience. Insight, resolution and a stronger

sense of both individual well-being and community are generally the outcomes when individuals stay with the program's methods.

The total budget of the Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse for 1996 was $5.5 million. Of the $70,000 Improv budget, $43,000 came from the federal government's Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment (SAPT) Block Grant, with the balance recovered through troupe registration fees.

initiative and the lost money was replaced from the state's general fund. According to McDorman, in South Dakota, "so many people have come to believe in the program, we haven't had to fight a losing battle to keep it alive. There are state legislators who have kids involved in the program and who have personally witnessed the difference Improv can make."

During 1996 the Division began formal

skills, 42% felt their ability to make healthy decisions had improved; 58%, their ability to manage stress; and 55%, their ability to communicate. In addition, 65% reported they had advanced in their theater skills. The Division plans to interview a sampling of Improv trainees going back to 1986 about the difference the program has made in their lives.

South Dakota Improv's success has jumped its

Storm Mountain Center in the Black Hills is one of two Improv summer training camp sites.

"I used to be heavy into alcohol. I used to drink all the time, 2-3 times a week, even weeknights. Last summer it was all the time. I quit during football season, but slipped a little during basketball and track and prom and graduation, but haven't for over a month and don't plan to. Improv showed me that you can have fun just being yourself without any alcohol or anything."

Wyatt S.
1995 Improv participant

Several treatment and prevention programs within the state lost 20% of their budget in FY1995 due to a decrease in the SAPT Block Grant. However, one of the greatest indicators of the program's success was the continued support of the Division and some of the individuals involved. Many Improv trainers agreed to waive their stipend for the June sessions. The Division designated Improv as a priority prevention program

evaluation of knowledge, attitudes and behavior of Improv's youth participants. Baseline data from this evaluation are reflected above in the description of youth trained in June 1996. Evaluation design includes a pretest on the first day of training, a posttest on the last day of training and a six-month follow-up. While the last-day evaluation is not interpreted to mean participants experienced lasting change in these

borders. The model has emerged in the neighboring states of Nebraska, Minnesota and North Dakota. Improv troupes from the Lamont Center performed at the State Corrections Association Conference in 1994 and at the 1996 South Dakota Governor's Conference on Substance Abuse. The program was also featured in the May/June 1995 issue of CSAP's *The Prevention Pipeline* on prevention and the arts.

Hard work takes its toll.

United Action for Youth Synthesis Arts Workshop

Using youth culture music to help Iowa City teenagers develop artistic skills, self-esteem and positive relationships with adults and peers

United Action for Youth, Inc. (UAY), serves Iowa City, Johnson County and five surrounding counties in eastern Iowa. Johnson County's population was 96,119 in 1990, a 17.6% increase over the 1980 Census, which makes it the fastest growing county in the state. The names are mainly European American here: Gustaveson, Krough, Sinclair, Goss, Mizelle, Rogers, Pelkey, Urbanowski. Iowa City schools are about 9.9% minority youth. Poverty and economic disadvantage in the county are significant for Iowa, with 17.1% of residents living below the poverty level. There was a 43.8% increase in child poverty in Johnson County during the past decade.

Alyssa Bowman standing by part of the mural she helped paint in the Youth Center basement.

United Action for Youth provides a broad range of counseling and prevention sevices to 12-to-18-year-olds and their families. These include short-term counseling, runaway services, support and advocacy services for those who have been sexually or physically abused. Support extends through the court process when necessary. UAY's Drop-in Center, which includes the Synthesis Arts Workshop (SAW), has provided safety, appreciation, positive adult/youth relationships, counseling, music and fun to young people in the area since 1979. SAW provides lessons on the guitar, bass, keyboards, voice, drums, recording and sound mixing equipment as well as studio recording time to individuals and bands involved in youth culture music. The program's overall purpose is to provide for the primary prevention of delinquency, drug abuse, child abuse and teen pregnancy by organizing activities and projects that contribute to the health and development of young people and their families.

Stu Mullins, Youth Center coordinator, has run the program and the music studio for the past eight years. He has a degree in communication and has specialized in counseling with victims and perpetrators of sexual abuse. He also has his own alternative pop and rock band, and writes, records and produces music. As Mullins notes, "I don't perform all of the styles of music but I know how they're done, how to get the audience of kids who are into a particular style."

The Center is open year-round, Monday through Friday 3:00-5:00 p.m., Tuesday through Thursday 7:00-9:00 p.m. and Saturday noon-5:00 p.m. Youth can drop in, use the music studio, participate in an art activity, play games, talk to a counselor, volunteer for one of two peer counseling phone lines or just socialize. During 1996

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"United Action for Youth has opened many very important doors for me. I started to hang out here when I was 13 and the positive environment was a greatly welcomed change from the stress of junior high and its problems. I saw teenagers in bands and it really inspired me and opened my eyes to all of the creative opportunities and outlets that are available. I've met other young musicians here and now I have a band of my own. With the help and advice of UAY's helpful, caring staff I've developed my own expressive music. The staff of UAY is the greatest. Kids are treated with the utmost respect and are encouraged and helped in truly positive ways. I can come here to talk to someone when I have a day where everything has gone wrong because there will always be a caring heart to listen patiently to me."

— Grace Sinclair, age 15

an estimated 900 young people used the Center's facilities overall. Typically 20-25 youth, mostly males, come in on a regular rotational basis to jam or record. Tuesday night is jam night. There are four or five recording sessions a week. Another 50 musicians come in periodically to record. Occasionally a band from one of the outlying counties comes in to use the studio. Concerts, dances and plays sponsored by the Center reached an audience of 400 during 1996.

Historically the number

Before she went to play a gig in a high school in a small town he told her, "You're going to be a great role model for those young women."

Mullins tries to send all groups home with a tape of their music. Over the years, hundreds of tapes have been made. Many have been printed and sold or given to radio stations and record labels.

The Center directs itself toward all youth and those who use its services fall along

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have a positive family life and use the Center simply as a resource and support system. With these, staff may only say, "Hey! You sound good." Others are struggling and not doing well. Similarly, those youth who use nonmusic services run the gamut. At the high-risk end might be a girl who self-mutilates and has deep troubles at home. Mullins says adult staff make it a point to check in with every teen who comes in every day, but with high-risk individuals the check-in is sometimes: "On a scale of 1 to 10, how suicidal are you today?" During the 19 hours a week the Center is open, four or five staff members are on duty. Staff double on kids who are especially needy. Kids get dispersed around several adults, so they aren't isolated in one adult-counselor relationship. The main form of recruitment and referral into the program is word of mouth among youth in the community.

Stu Mullins, Youth Center coordinator, and Kylie Budin, Youth Center counselor, run the music studio at UAY.

"Music is just a tool for working with kids, a place to develop skills, a positive outlet but also one that always leads to more diverse relationships with adults."

Stu Mullins

Varied personal styles are an important part of the atmosphere of the Center. It attracts youth into gothic (black dress, white face paint), heavy metal, punk with spiked hair—who Mullins says "scare adults downtown but are great kids"—folk as well as preppy. Mullins notes that Iowa City, at 50,000, is a "big city in a small frame."

The Center provides a place where young musicians trying to make sense of themselves and their world can explore their music and their message without censure. According to Mullins, "Music is something they can get a hold of their whole life with." Staff address attitudes expressed in the music that are destructive. Mullins says, "Music is a wonderful door to get into the issues like negative attitudes toward women but in a low-key fashion, like 'Well, what about your mother? Isn't she a woman?'"

Staff give each newcomer an orientation to the Center. The practice of Unconditional Positive Regard, as it is spelled here, is the first rule. It helps the differing styles, who are sometimes antagonistic toward one another in other settings, get along. Other rules are no drugs, confidentiality on the part of staff, and policies for scheduling and use of studios. The program holds on to recording equipment by telling youth the program is theirs, and when equipment disappears it doesn't get replaced and the studio suffers. Staff also keep close track of equipment. Mullins believes one key to the program's success is "the sense of ownership that youth feel for the programs and equipment." The orientation also covers all UAY services, both to educate youth to community resources and to educate them to the idea that everyone needs help at times.

All SAW staff have both art and counseling skills as well as the ability to establish rapport with

Dave Rogers, youth employee and major contributor/organizer of the Fountain of Youth *tape, plays with Mr. Blanding's Dreamhouse.*

youth on a quick basis. The arts program, other than the music component, has varied over the years based on the arts skills of current youth workers. It has included drama, mural painting, silkscreening and beading. The Center has a video studio with Super 8 animation, video camera and editing facilities and a 33mm black-and-white photography lab. The music is integral, though. When kids come in they always check what's going on in the music studio.

Youth created this hanging mural at the Youth Center.

Like the rest of the Center's programs, counseling is often informal, at the end of a recording session or while painting a mural. But regular sessions are set up as well. Formal substance abuse prevention or life-skills workshops are not a regular part of the program but are provided informally as the need arises. The program teaches and models positive life skills based on individual needs. For some kids that is the encouragement to persist two or three months with the unromantic hard work of getting a song ready to record. With the serious ones it might be the instruction, "Today we are going to have fun and enjoy life." Youth are frequently referred to programs in the rest of UAY and at other agencies.

The Drop-in Center runs noncrisis phone lines for elementary and high school youth staffed by trained peer helpers and backed up by staff who handle crisis calls. To work on these a teen must go through a 20-hour training in peer counseling, listening skills and community resources. There are also academic tutoring and parent support services for both teenage and adult parents. Recreation activities include various sports, outings in nature and a ropes challenge course. The Dating Cellos, a performing drama troupe consisting of high school students, write and perform for area schools, community and professional groups on problems faced by children and teenagers such as teen relationships, dating issues, parent/teen communication and substance abuse. The group started in 1984 to explore dating violence and was originally called the Dating Violins.

A concrete result of the Synthesis Arts Workshop is the compilation tape *Fountain of Youth* that 40 Iowa City High musicians produced in 1996. Dave Rogers, a Center youth staff member and member of several local bands, got the idea as a Class Council fund-raising event. He organized the 18 bands represented. All had their start at UAY. SAW provided support and technical assistance for the tape. The bands used SAW facilities to do all of the recording. The tape has hip-hop, punk, blues, funk, grunge, rap, rock and alternative rock. "Be the One," written and played by Dave Rogers and Dustin R. Busch, conveys a piece of SAW's wisdom: "I know there isn't anything anywhere if I don't try."

UAY's budget for 1996 totaled $730,663, with $35,000 going to SAW. Funding for SAW came in approximately equal

"As a parent, my respect for UAY is personal and deep. At a critical and difficult juncture in her early adolescence, my daughter found a place which she describes as 'full of love . . . [a place where she feels] totally comfortable and accepted.' As a teen line volunteer, she found direction, self-confidence and connection. She was given skills and opportunities to use and develop them. As an individual, she found nurturance, support and respect. UAY is able to serve young people as well as they do because they know kids, like them, and value them."

Janet Peterson
Parent and coordinator, Johnson County Decategorization Project

"I am a Youth Center staff member here at United Action for Youth. I have been working here for about eleven months, and before that, hanging out for about a year. When I was offered the job, I saw it as a good way to meet people and learn about them. I have made new friends here, teens and adults, and I feel that this has made a major impact on my life. Every once in awhile I wonder where I would be without UAY. Would I be going to parties every night and getting drunk and smoking pot, or would I be sitting in front of the T.V. all the time? I am happy to say that I am doing neither and that I spend sixty percent of my free time here at UAY. The rest I spend practicing guitar (which I learned to play here) and enjoying life."

Phil Ochs, age 14

The Dating Cellos drama troupe rehearses at the Youth Center.

amounts from State Crime Prevention, State Comprehensive Substance Abuse Prevention, the City of Iowa City and Johnson County. The agency often collaborates with other agencies and organizations. For example, this year's State Crime Prevention moneys came through a community collaboration to engage youth that involved many youth agencies and the schools. Adults in the community who used the program as adolescents periodically put on musical benefits to earn money for additional studio equipment.

UAY recently began evaluating SAW and Drop-in Center programs using instruments that measure self-esteem and resiliency skills. No results are available as yet. However, youth and parents often comment on the value of the program. Mullins says, "They'll come back after several years, walk around the Center and say, 'This was the place where I felt the safest, where there were some adults who cared.'" Or they'll say, "I wasn't doing that well when we were doing that tape. That was the only thing positive in my life at that time, that we were friends."

Jesse Pelkey of Mr. Blanding's Dreamhouse

From a recent performance of the Dating Cellos drama troupe:

Four high school friends are revisiting their childhood games of truth or dare. The discussion soon turns to a more adult tone of answering truth questions about their personal feelings.

Youth 1. Seriously, what's your biggest and worst fear?

Youth 3. My biggest and worst fear, I am not telling you that. That's way too personal.

Youth 2. How about we all do it then.

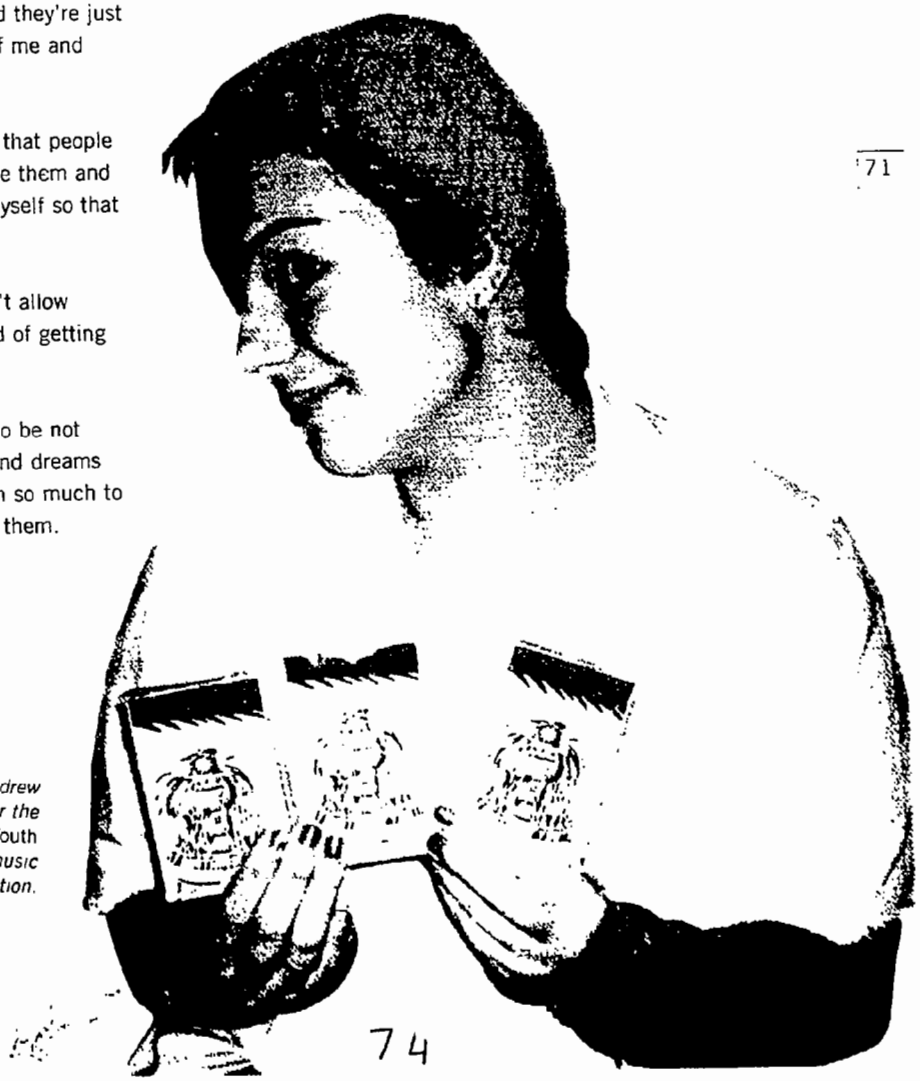
Youth 3. Fine, I'll go first then. Okay, my biggest fear would be that when I go into public and people are going to laugh at me, like I'll do something wrong and say something wrong and they're just gonna laugh at me and make fun of me and hurt my feelings.

Youth 4. Oh, it's my turn. My biggest fear is that people won't accept me unless I'm just like them and that I'm going to have to change myself so that I can do what I want to do.

Youth 2. Okay, my biggest fear is that I won't allow myself to feel because I'll be afraid of getting hurt.

Youth 1. I guess my worst fear would have to be not being able to fulfill all my hopes and dreams and aspirations because they mean so much to me that I feel I'm nothing without them.

United Action for Youth's family service house



Rebecca Goss drew the cover art for the Fountain of Youth *UAY music compilation.*

Teen Resource Project/New Visions/ Nueva Visiones Theater

Empowering Latino youth through theater, life-skills training and community involvement

A gang member from the play, Colors: Tales from the Flats

Contact: Daisy Jimenez
Program Director
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Holyoke, MA 01040
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New Visions Theater/Nueva Visiones writes and performs plays that explore and illuminate issues that involve being a teenager and Latino in Holyoke in the 1990s. These plays educate the young theater members, their peers and the community-at-large on poverty, violence, teen pregnancy, substance abuse, HIV/AIDS and family issues. Among the program's objectives are helping youth to develop higher self-esteem and a sense of belonging, and to learn decision-making skills.

Holyoke, located in western Massachusetts, is a city in transition and a city in trouble. Ethnically the community of 44,000 is 65% white —mostly older; 34% Latino—mostly Puerto Rican and younger; and 0.5% African American. Almost two-thirds of Latinos in Holyoke live below the poverty level. Many of the adults came to the area 20 years ago to work in tobacco fields and paper mills that no longer exist. A majority of families who live in poverty do not have the support or educational tools to help themselves out, often because of their lack of educational achievement based in turn on their lack of English language and literacy skills.

Teen actors react when a tragedy occurs in Colors: Tales from the Flats.

Gangs, teen pregnancy, substance abuse and dropping out of school are rampant among Holyoke's young people. The teen birth rate is the highest of any Massachusetts community and has been more than twice the national average since 1985 —in 1993, it was 13.8% in comparison to 6.8% nationwide. Holyoke's high school drop-out rate for 1994 was the third highest in the state. The pregnancy rate is related to the high drop-out rate among teenage females but with a twist: in one study, 60% of young women dropped out of school before they became pregnant.

New Visions is a program of The Care Center, which was started in 1986 to deal with teen pregnancy in Holyoke. It operates an educational center for young families, providing licensed day care for children and, for parents, GED and life-skills classes in English and Spanish, counseling and referral services, and ways to overcome other obstacles to staying in school that young parents encounter, such as lack of transportation and homelessness. It also works in Holyoke schools with at-risk teenage parents who have returned to school under Massachusetts's state welfare reform plan. Finally, the Center is the lead agency for the Holyoke Youth

Alliance, a community alliance of youth, parents and agencies seeking to prevent teen pregnancy.

The Care Center opened its Teen Resource Program (TRP) in 1988 with a Governor's Challenge Fund grant, expanding its mission to the prevention of first pregnancies among adolescents. TRP operates a two-hour afterschool program that provides prevention activities such as games, writing activities and teen court. Pregnancy prevention in both The Care Center and TRP focuses on decision-making skills and uses *The Teen Resource Project Curriculum*, which was written in 1988 by The Care Center's first executive director, Ellen Edson. This curriculum has chapters on the physical and emotional changes of puberty; emotions and relationships; choices, values and peer pressure; dealing with school, drugs and sex; and planning for education and employment. TRP recently added tutoring and help with homework to its afterschool program. In addition, TRP conducts prevention workshops in the middle schools for youth who are at high risk of dropping out of school.

The majority of TRP and New Vision's staff members are Puerto Rican and live in Holyoke. They have developed strong program ties with the Latino and Anglo communities, serving on community boards, helping put on city-wide festivals and sharing space with churches in the area. The team includes Daisy Jimenez, program director for the TRP, Juan Rivera, New Visions artistic director, and Elsie Reyes, theater coordinator. Daisy Jimenez has worked with pregnant and parenting teens at The Care Center for 10 years. She helped create the agency's day care program, and has worked both as a transition counselor and center coordinator.

Program members have fun with creative art projects.

"My daughter is in New Visions Theater and as a parent I'm very proud of her. I see a lot of good changes in her. She used to be very shy and didn't do much talking. Now her self-esteem has boosted up so much that she is a much happier person. She also has high values and stands by her beliefs. Every time she performs I nudge the person next to me (whether I know that person or not) and say very proudly, 'That's my daughter.' Conceited? Maybe. You judge!"

Jenny Whitley
Parent

TRP's afterschool program includes three "clubs" that adolescents who attend prevention sessions three times a week can join: Community Organized Peer Educators (COPE), NewVision Theater, and the Newsletter Club. All three clubs are structures through which adolescents bring information on high-risk and high-resiliency behaviors to area youth. COPE conducts "Safety Net" parties in houses, community rooms in apartment buildings, and other community-based locales. These parties use games similar to Family Feud to help teens learn the dangers of unprotected sex and other essential information.

Current artistic director Juan Rivera started New Visions in 1992. As a TRP youth worker, he regularly talked with teens about relationships, peer pressure and other issues that concerned them. He started to bring a camcorder to the group, having participants work out skits and role-play situations addressing identified issues. And quickly saw how the theater-like activities gave young people an opportunity to express their feelings, fears and hopes, as well as a safe place to have fun and spend time with their peers. Rivera himself has acted in school, church and community theater productions in the area and serves on the Advisory Board of the New World Theater in Amherst.

Excerpt from *Dreams*

Ivette: In the way? What do you mean in the way? You're going to have his baby. No matter what his dreams are you're going to be in his way. So what are you supposed to do? Take care of the baby by yourself?

Iris: No . . . yes . . . I don't know. I'm so confused I don't know what to do. I want him to go on with his dream but I want him to be here with the baby.

Ivette: Well, I'm your best friend and I'll help you take care of the baby, even if it means not going to college.

Iris: No! What are you talking about now? I won't let you ruin your life for me!

Ivette: Just by not going to college? I can still get a job and work.

Ivette moves to one side of the stage while Iris moves to the other.

Ivette: Why Iris? Her dreams, her future all disappearing. I'm not going to let her down, even if I have to stay here with her. Adam's going to the army and she'll be here all alone. I'm one of the only people she's got, her parents won't understand and I'll be there right beside her. Ivette Torres the Star, movies, autographs, that was just a dream. Now, who knows? I'm gonna be the baby's godmother.

Ivette looks at Iris and leaves.

Iris: Remember all the dreams I wanted to have? Well, you probably know right now, they're ruined. Why does it have to happen to me? I'm always the unlucky one. Just like the college thing. Yeah, I got accepted to a college but Ivette got accepted before me and I had to be the one to come out pregnant and not being able to go to college. I feel really bad for Ivette because she wants to take care of me and not go to college 'cause my boyfriend's going to the army. I don't want her to ruin her life because of me. I did this to myself and it wasn't supposed to affect nobody but me.

Iris exits stage.

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It was the youth themselves who first talked about putting a play together. Their first production, *The Downfall of Carlitos*, was a 20-minute scene about a young man who turns to drugs as an escape from the alcoholism and lack of support in his family. It premiered in 1993 in the Skinner Community Center in Holyoke and was an instant success. The performance led to numerous invitations to appear at community events, including Holyoke's annual Teen Empowerment Conference before an audience of more than 300 people.

New Visions' 24 members are mostly Latino young people from the Holyoke/Springfield area, ages 13 to 19, 13 females and 11 males. Over the years the group's ethnic breakdown has been 90% Latino (almost all Puerto Rican), 9% black and 1% white. Youth enter New Visions from other TRP activities or because they have witnessed a New Visions performance and want to participate in the role the theater plays in the community. Many enter the program with the ability to take risks, to work well in teams, to speak their minds and to see the humor in situations, abilities that make them resilient to destructive influences in the community as well as suited to theater work. To participate, students must be doing well in school or show improvement in their studies. The program monitors academic achievement.

The troupe meets on Saturdays year-round for two three-hour sessions. If the group is preparing for a performance they may work through the weekend. Youth remain in the program for up to four years, on average two years each.

In 1994 New Visions formed an alliance with New World Theater to provide all theater training. New World, which operates out of the University of Massachusetts in Amherst, is the first professional theater for people of color in the Holyoke area. Brenda Cotto and Gloria Celaya, New World playwrights, conduct workshops with New Visions youth and staff in playwriting, acting, staging and set design. They also guide and support each production from start to finish.

The process for each production, which runs 30 to 45 minutes in length, is to talk about personal and social issues that concern the youth and to choose the one that most interests them. Youth research the topic by talking to individuals in the community, arranging guest speakers from community agencies such as the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, and reading articles. The group then brainstorms ideas for characters, plot and message. Youth choose and make their own costumes and help choose the music. Besides providing theater training, New World provides opportunities for New Visions youth to meet theater professionals and see professional theater companies in action.

In the drama *Dreams*, the message is how badly teen pregnancy interrupts a girl's dreams for herself. Iris, the heroine, may continue to pursue

"New Visions gives me a chance to give something back to my community. I'm able to change what goes on by performing on stage plays about community problems. I've grown up a lot because of the group. I've become very responsible and I've learned how to work with the group."

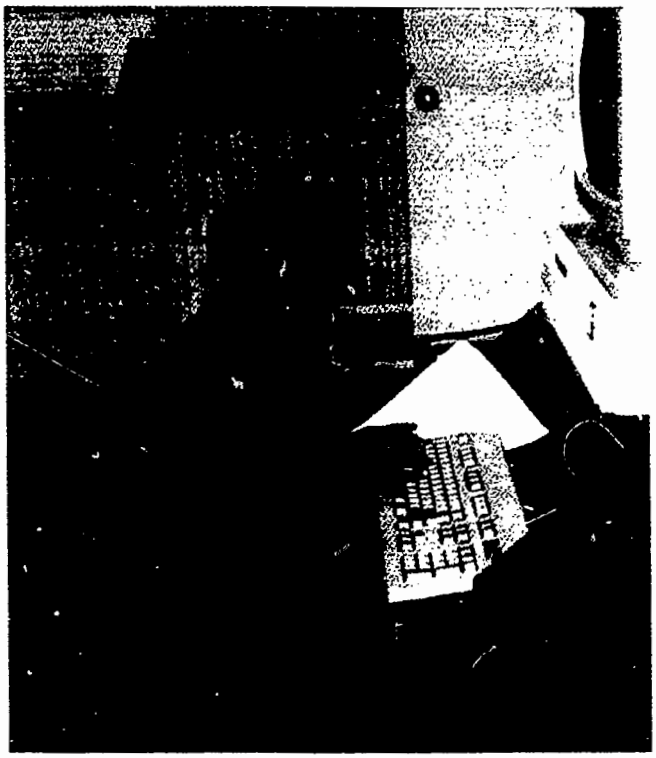
Leida
17-year-old student
4-year participant

"There are a lot of problems in the community and in their personal lives. They feel discriminated against. They are pressured by gang members. Often they're afraid. For them to live in this environment, be in the group and try to do something positive, they are the heroes. They have to work hard to stay on track. We guide them but they decide to grow with it. The bottom line is that if they were not strong enough to come and work with us, we couldn't do it."

Juan Rivera
Founder and artistic director
of New Visions Theater

her goals but it will be much harder. *Dreams* also addresses the reality of going to college, that it's not all fun, that you have to leave some things behind, often including friends. Finally, the play casts a skeptical eye in general at the promises of success this society makes. Adam, Iris's boyfriend and the father of her child, following the slogan, Be All You Can Be, joins the military. He is killed in action.

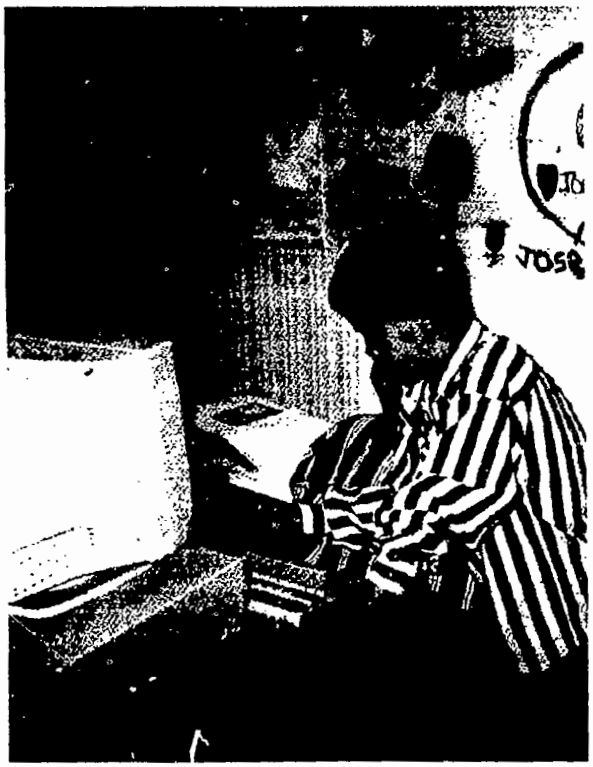
Colors: Tales from the Flats (an area in Holyoke) was the first play New Visions youth created with the guidance of New World Theater. It is a gang-related play, written out of the troupe members' own experiences. The play takes the perspective of Peter, a 16-year-old Puerto Rican immigrant who doesn't yet speak English. Peter hangs out with the New Visions theater group. In school and in the group his more acculturated Puerto Rican classmates make fun of him and reject him. Wanting to belong somewhere, to have attention, respect and affection, he joins a gang. He realizes his mistake when gang members kill the little brother of one of his friends. With difficulty he gets out. The theater group tells him, "We loved you but you never saw it." However, group members also realize they must break through their prejudice and take responsibility for their own behavior in the community.



Afterschool program participant does his homework.

During 1996 New Visions gave 10 performances in Holyoke and surrounding communities that reached more than 500 youth. They performed at several high schools, at Worcester Community Center and the University of Massachusetts. In 1995 they performed *Colors* at the three-day Hispanic Family Festival, which reached several hundred people. Dramas are presented in English and/or Spanish to suit the needs of each particular audience. When the sponsoring organization provides the time, performances are followed by discussions with the audience on issues raised. As a result of their success, the group has received funding to develop prevention works on HIV/AIDS and substance abuse issues.

Current members of the New Visions group screen and select new members with the guidance of program advisors. Perhaps the strongest indication of the group's effect in the community is the reason young people give for wanting to join. Elsie Reyes observes, "I now have two new members in the theater who saw the group do a show. They liked the way the group works in teams and the message they bring to the community. They called me and said they wanted to join. When New Visions brings a message to the community and one or two youth listen, it's powerful." Rivera adds, "Holyoke has a bad reputation for drugs and violence. They want to show people not everyone in Holyoke is violent or involved in gangs. They want to be a different role model and they want to have fun." The group's very existence says you don't have to belong to a gang to have fun and feel supported.



Learning how to work on computers.

At the instigation of the group new members must now sign a contract that commits them to attendance at practices and performances. Parties, dinners and outings like roller-skating and going to a local park to picnic are all used to help retain group members. When funding permits, stipends are given at the end of the year for consistent attendance at training workshops and performances.

What youth gain from New Visions is a long-term mentoring relationship with positive adults, both staff and theater professionals. Participants build knowledge, skills and confidence by creating small projects that help them succeed in larger projects in their lives. One member who started young had a very short temper. Through rehearsals and meetings she learned to control her anger and to work better with the group. According to Rivera, "that reflected in her way of thinking about the future. She was in vocational school and had never said anything about going further. After two or three years in the program, however, she decided to attend the University of Massachusetts, to pursue a degree in nursing with a minor in theater." Rivera observes, "I've seen them grow and become more mature in many ways. They become more open-minded and accepting of differences. When they did a play about HIV, for example, they learned about HIV, but they also learned about people with different sexual orientations and they became more accepting of gay and bisexual people as a result."

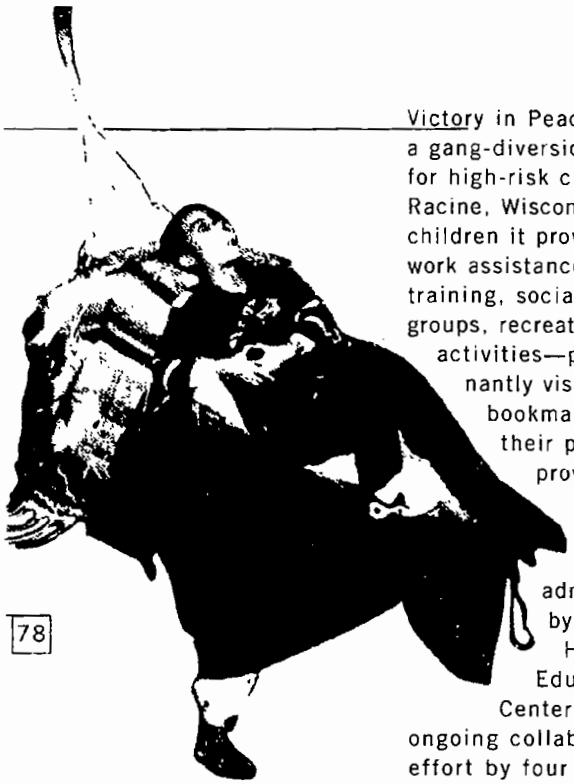
One of the greatest successes of the program has been the outcome for four New Visions members who had started to experiment with drugs while they were members of the group. All had problems at home such as domestic violence, parents using drugs, and living in foster homes. All gradually talked to staff about their personal use, stopped using and continued in the theater program. One young man is now in college and two are getting ready to enter college in the fall of 1997. The fourth is a sophomore in high school.

Parental involvement in the program is low, primarily because of cultural assumptions. In Puerto Rico, it is assumed that in programs run by adults for children, there is no need for parents to be involved. Many parents are aware of the program's value in their children's lives, however.

Teen Resource Project's 1996 budget was $120,000, with $33,000 supporting New Visions. A Massachusetts Department of Public Health Challenge grant, through the Governor's Office, provided $23,000. The Massachusetts Health Research Institute, Greater Massachusetts Prevention Center, Massachusetts Cultural Council and Peace Development Fund—all foundations—provided $8,800. Corporate funding amounted to $1,500.

Charles A. Wustum Museum of Fine Arts, Victory in Peace

Fostering self-esteem, pride in ethnic heritage and cooperation skills through book arts, visual arts and homework assistance



Nigerian Dance Troupe member Olabayo Olaniyi in a 1996 cultural event performance

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Charles A. Wustum Museum of Fine Arts
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Victory in Peace (VIP) is a gang-diversion program for high-risk children in Racine, Wisconsin. For the children it provides homework assistance, life-skills training, social issues groups, recreation and arts activities—predominantly visual arts and bookmaking. For their parents, it provides counseling and support. VIP is administered by the Taylor Home and Education Center and is an ongoing collaborative effort by four Racine organizations: Taylor Home, The Urban League of Racine, the Racine Council on Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse (Racine Council), and the Charles A. Wustum Museum of Fine Arts (Wustum).

Racine is a metropolitan area of 130,000 people with 85,000 living within the city limits. Its ethnic makeup is 68% white, 18% African American, 8% Hispanic, 1% Native American, 1% Asian or Pacific Islander and 4% other. In 1994-95 Racine's high school drop-out rate over four years was 12%. Racine's teen pregnancy rate is 13% compared to 10% nationwide. The City's location along Interstate 94, the corridor between Chicago and Milwaukee, makes it highly accessible to crime and gang infiltration, especially by the Gangster Disciples, Vice Lords and Latin Kings from Chicago. In the summer of 1996 there were six gang-related killings. While overall juvenile arrests in Racine remained stable from 1990 to 1994, arrests for violent crimes increased by 600%; for drug-related incidents, by 300%; and for weapons violations, by 60%.

During 1996 VIP served 45 youth; since the program's inception, more than 300 have participated. The children, 6 to 12 years in age, are mainly from single-parent families. Structure is often lacking in the home, either because the parent is working or is using drugs. Many youth have older siblings who are gang members. Youth are referred to the program by Racine Unified School District counselors and social workers, the police department and other human service agencies. From the program's beginning in 1993, children were aware of its purpose. In fact, when the program started, some with gang connections came wearing pagers. As a group, however, they objected to the original name, Gang Diversion Program, and chose the name Victory in Peace.

All VIP participants live in Racine's inner city. Taylor Home and Urban League vans provide transportation, with the drivers routinely tracking kids down in the neighborhood if they aren't at home. Families of many participants move frequently, but Taylor Home is usually successful in keeping them involved as long as they live within the city limits. Including transportation time, the program keeps participating youth off the streets from 3:00 to 7:00 p.m.—the prime time for getting into trouble—nine months of the year. Some youth have dropped out of the program, then called and asked to return because they recognized their need for structure and constructive activity. Ethnic breakdown for participants is 67% African American, 31% Hispanic and Latino and 2% white.

Taylor Home—for most of its history an orphanage—was established in 1867 out of the estates of Isaac and Emerline Taylor. Isaac, orphaned in

England in the early 1800s and mistreated as a "bound-boy," decided, if he ever had the money, to build a refuge where children would be treated compassionately. Eventually he ran away, came to America, and made money in the lumber business.

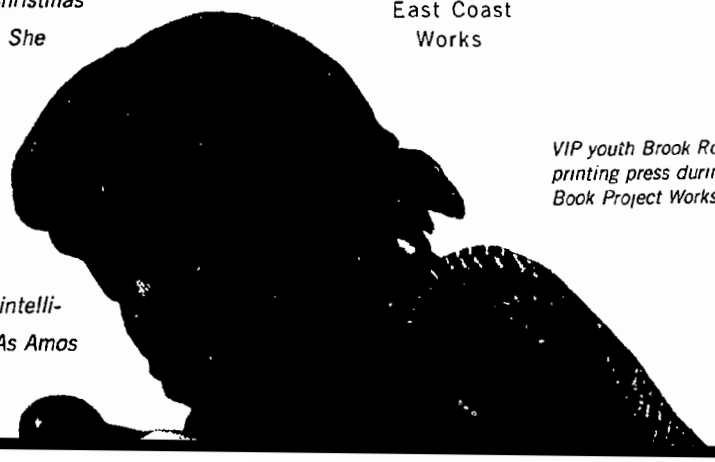
Over the years, Taylor Home has been through many metamorphoses. Since the late 1980s it has run residential treatment programs for adolescents. It also conducts a day treatment program in cooperation with the Racine Unified School District and the Racine County Human Services Department and a family support program for families of at-risk children, ages 6 to 11. Teen Challengers, a gang-diversion program into which VIP children can graduate, provides tutoring and discussion groups on topics such as sexual activity and venereal disease, prepares adolescents for the job world and helps them get jobs. Dr. M. Sathya Babu is the executive director of Taylor Home, and Alice Portis, a master's-level social worker with a private practice, is program director.

The Wustum Museum was founded in 1941. Its collection focuses on 20th-century crafts and "works on paper," including drawings, prints, photographs and book arts. The collection originated with works done in the 1930s by East Coast Works

In 1993, at 11 years of age, Pleschette Robinson created her first book, Harriet Tubman: A Story by Pleschette Robinson *(Racine, WI: th [Taylor Home] Press). Pleschette is from a traumatic home situation and has primary responsibility for her two younger siblings. Pleschette's writing and bookmaking skills have blossomed with the program. Working one-on-one with Wustum's associate curator, Caren Heft, she has written and produced a whole series of books, including a book about angels that appeared on the Christmas tree at the White House in Washington, DC. She has gone from writing simple to complex sentences and from printing her books to setting the type. Pleschette is now in ninth grade, has maintained her grades and is playing basketball, in spite of the hardships she experiences. She has won awards for her writing. Pleschette is a very intelligent young woman with leadership ability. As Amos Paul Kennedy, Jr., notes, "Those are the children we can lose to the streets*

"The VIP program gives the children something to look forward to. I like the creative aspects of the program, especially the art component. The children painted a mural on the wall and it is so beautiful. The homework assistance offered is really helpful and beneficial to the children. I feel this program keeps the children off the streets."

Wendy Gomez
Parent of a VIP participant



VIP youth Brook Robinson uses the printing press during the 1996 VIP Book Project Workshop.

The Rain Stick

The Rain Stick sounds like a waterfall,
Like rushing waves,
Like rain hitting a puddle,
Like a rainforest during showers,
Like a hard rain coming off the leaf of a tree,
Like a toilet flushing.

The rain stick sounds like a chicken frying,
Like the machine that counts money at the bank,
Like the candy that fizzes in your mouth,
Like the whirl of the wind.

When the bird the rain stick becomes
flies through the woods,
I see a rattlesnake
and a nail falling on linoleum,
Like a snake slimmering all the way home.

Catalog-poem consisting of simile lines by various VIP student writers, arranged (with the line at the end added) by David Steingass

Progress Administration artists. Wustum believes that encouraging creativity aids people of all ages in self-expression, communication and problem solving. The museum's Special Education Program for Children provides Outreach 4, which enables all Racine fourth graders to tour a Wustum exhibit and do a hands-on art project in the art medium they have just seen. Wustum also sponsors an annual Children's Fine Arts Festival with participatory art workshop stations, an art therapy project with young women incarcerated at Southern Oaks Center, and workshops for children housed at Women's Resource Center—a local Center for battered women and their families. Donna A. Newgord is the museum's curator of education and primary VIP contact.

Victory in Peace is a year-round program. Children meet at Taylor Home every weekday, 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. during the school year and 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. during the summer. Students are divided into age-appropriate groups of 10 to 12 each and cycle through activities together. Each session begins with a snack. Urban League youth workers, assisted by teen peers hired by Racine Council, conduct homework assistance daily. Children must complete their homework before they can join other scheduled activities. Youth workers visit the schools weekly to monitor the behavior and academic performance of participants. The VIP program also helps parents more knowledgeably participate in their children's education, for example, interpreting specific test results and accompanying parents to parent-teacher conferences.

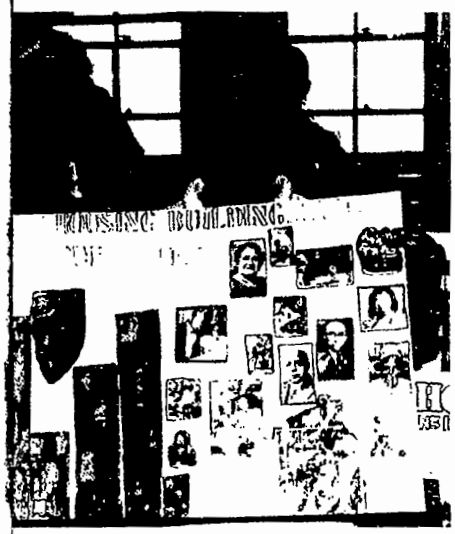
Taylor and Urban League staff provide one-hour groups twice a week on life skills and social and minority issues. These groups cover family issues, gangs, substance abuse and school behavior. The children are taken on adventures about once a month. These outings have included horseback riding, boat rides, movies, sledding at the Police Winter Carnival, skating, bowling, and Christmas and summer parties.

Wustum's art instructor, Tricia Blasko, also conducts visual arts and craft classes with VIP youth twice a week. In individual and group projects, Blasko, who has a B.A. in art history, sees her main objective as "bringing to the children a sense of pride, self-fulfillment and self-expression, as well as feelings of togetherness and teamwork." When they first come to Taylor Home, many youth don't want to participate in the art component. Blasko says, "They don't think art is cool." However, they are sparked by the enthusiasm of peers who have been in the program longer, and, once they have experienced an art project they enjoy, want to participate further.

Since the summer of 1996, youth have worked intensively on a mural for Taylor Home. This work has involved planning the various sections, doing preparatory drawings, experimenting with color, and then finally painting. The mural, "Victory in Peace," is modeled on the World War II victory gardens and expresses the idea of working together

for survival. The border is made up of self-portraits of the younger children. Ethnic groups from around the world are shown living and working together in harmony. Green vegetables, flowers and trees grow in abundance. Youth have incorporated symbols of peace such as people holding hands and an angel overlighting the scene. According to Blasko, the mural gives youth a chance to envision a peace that they often don't experience at home. It also teaches them the importance of working together forming a cohesive statement piece by piece, and that a group effort needs and survives only with the wholehearted participation of each individual.

Wustum plans many VIP projects that are publicly displayed and often adjudicated, believing both processes help participants realize that their artwork is valid. In 1995 Quiana Gardner worked hard on her entry to Wisconsin's annual Fair Housing Poster Contest. She didn't think it was good enough to enter. Out of 700 pieces from across the state, it won first prize in her category. Winning made her feel more confident in herself and her abilities. She came to class willing to do more.



Jennifer Bell won the statewide 1995 Fair Housing Poster contest in her category.

VIP youth participate every year in Racine's Festival of Trees, a winter event that involves decorating trees for a downtown site. In 1995 VIP's offering was "Angels Watching Over Me" and featured ceramic angels and a quilt the children had made. According to Donna Newgord, besides validating the youth, these exhibits let the community know how creative and productive the children can be when given proper direction and adequate support for their efforts. Newgord takes care to get news coverage for various projects and to share it with the youth.

Many children have not been taught their cultural heritage at home and projects are included that help them learn about and develop pride in their ancestry. A Nigerian Dance Troupe has performed for VIP youth twice, involving them in the call-and-response chants that accompany the dance. Regular museum tours introduce children to the artwork of many different cultures. Children are taken to the Wustum to view each new exhibit and, when the budget permits, are taken on art-related day trips out of the City. In Chicago they have visited The Mexican Fine Arts Museum, The Art Institute of Chicago and Field Museum. The program seeks to build a lifelong interest, not only in the arts, but in attending and supporting museums.

Cultural programs that involve hands-on participation are arranged for the families, too. In 1994 children and parents attended a sandstone sculpture workshop led by Mr. Imagination, a Chicago-based artist. Mr. Imagination (born Gregory Warmack) begins his workshop by telling his own story of hardship, survival and commitment to

VIP youth Shed James (left) and Antoine Dixon (right), with Wustum art instructor Tricia Blasko, create their contribution for Racine's 1995 Festival of the Trees.

"I like the VIP program because it helps me stay in school. It also helps me to stay focused in general. The program is fun and I like it a lot!"

Shed James
14-year-old participant

I walk around Racine seeing people.

I walk around Racine and smell the inside of a new book.

I walk around Racine and smell hall polish.

I walk around Racine tasting burgers.

I walk around Racine hearing cars.

I walk around Racine touching bikes.

Nikki Tolliver
age 12

following his calling, which is working with found objects and materials people usually throw away. Blasko reports that the youth are inspired by him. In these workshops, Mr. Imagination says the adults complain they can't make things but that, in the end, "something is always created. The families work together in a hands-on fashion and hands-on art is wonderful therapy."

Since 1993 the art program has included a five-day book art workshop each summer by African American artist Amos Paul Kennedy, Jr. A systems analyst and programmer who quit his job to make books, Kennedy creates limited editions on Negro and African folklore and conducts artist-teacher residencies in bookmaking nationwide. He is the author of *How Wisdom Came to the World*, the retelling of a Yoruba folktale; *A Charmbook*, a book of African proverbs in the shape of a snake that is worn as a necklace; and *Strange Fruit*, a book protesting the lynching and burning of Negroes—all published by Jubilee Press in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Each of the past three years he has created *Children Don't Count*, a memorial installation piece on children under the age of 14 murdered in Chicago. Kennedy is also working on an M.F.A. at the University of Wisconsin in Madison.

Counselors and the art instructor choose 10 youth for the book art workshop based on interest in art and writing and likely benefit to the youth. The workshop is usually scheduled in conjunction with a poet or writer, so children have written their stories or poems before Kennedy arrives. Then, in groups of 5, they meet for three to four hours a day to make paper from scratch; print the text; illustrate, usually with monotypes; assemble; and bind their own books. As a group the children and teacher go to the public library and present a copy of each book for the library's collection. Some have never been to the public library before, and get library cards while they are there. The book program promotes literacy and reading. Once a child makes a book, he reads that book, and then is more interested in reading other books. VIP's bookmaking project has been explored in depth by Karl Young in "Off the Streets and Into the Book" (*Bookways: A Quarterly for the Book Arts*, No. 10, January 1994).

Most VIP parents have or have had a drug problem or have a close family member with a drug problem.

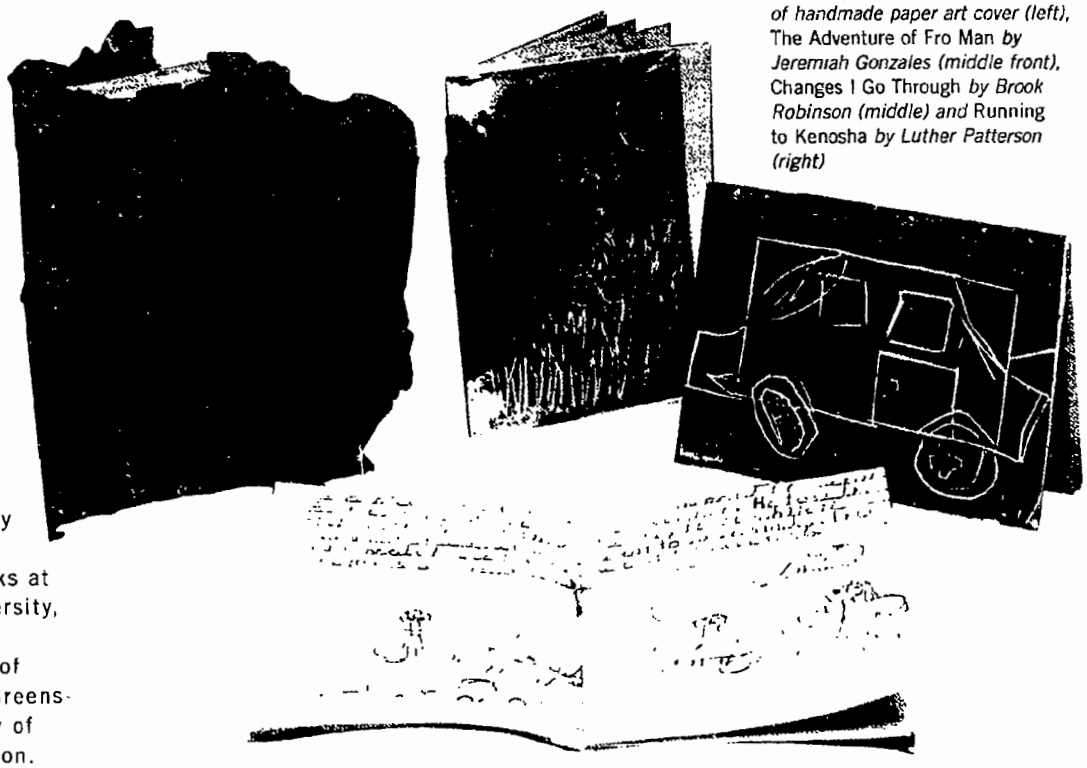
Taylor therapists do family counseling in the home, assist parents with needed drug and alcohol treatment services, provide legal information and support, and help with job hunting, food and clothing needs. Racine Council conducts alcohol and drug education sessions for parents at Taylor Home on Thursday nights, twice a month. The sessions include a 35-minute lecture and discussion period for parents and then a fun hands-on activity for the whole family. Family photographs were taken at one session and each family made frames at the next session. Jane Valenti, VIP coordinator and therapist, notes that communication is a weak spot in many families. When they sit down and work on a solution together including the solution to an art project, the family begins to function better.

During 1996 well over 10,000 youth and adults viewed VIP books and other artwork at Wustum, public schools in Racine, the Cardinal Stritch College in Milwaukee and other museums across the United States. Books created by VIP youth have been sold to major library collections of rare and handmade books at Northwestern University, Chicago's Newberry Library, University of North Carolina at Greensboro and University of Wisconsin at Madison. One of Pleschette Robinson's books has been on interlibrary loan from Northwestern to UCLA.

The Taylor Home and Education Center administers funding for VIP. The program's 1996 budget of $100,000 was provided by the Wisconsin Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Youth Services. Taylor Home in turn contracts for services from the collaborating organizations. Wustum contributed $10,000 in art instruction, supplies and other services, not included in its allocation from the state.

An evaluation of VIP conducted in 1994 found that 71% of youth improved in academic performance and 66% improved in school attendance. Over 33% of VIP parents gained employment. Besides the family support component, Taylor House attributes this outcome to the fact that children were safely and constructively occupied until 7:00 p.m., allowing parents to take a wider variety of jobs and feel confident being away from home.

VIP student Jeremiah Gonzales with Book Project Workshop instructor Amos P. Kennedy, Jr.



Products of 1996 Book Arts Workshop: unidentified example of handmade paper art cover (left), The Adventure of Fro Man *by Jeremiah Gonzales (middle front),* Changes I Go Through *by Brook Robinson (middle) and* Running to Kenosha *by Luther Patterson (right)*

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The Arts as a Tool for Prevention: The Evaluation Process

by J. David Betts, Ph.D., and Juan Paz, Ph.D.

The Arts as a Tool for Prevention

Arts programs in the substance abuse prevention field are rapidly growing. The arts programs presented here are evidence of this trend. The integration of arts programs and substance abuse prevention programs is natural. Both focus on the development of positive social skills, life skills, good decision making and resiliency. Both require the development of self-regulation and self-assessment. Substance abuse prevention programs focus on changes in attitudes, beliefs and behaviors regarding drug use. Meanwhile, dance, theater, music, visual or media arts stimulate the young person's innate creative ability in ways that promote personal growth.

Student in trumpet workshop at Bank One Tucson International Mariachi Conference, a benefit of La Frontera Center, Inc.

Art is a part of human psychology. Getting together to "do art" as a group is a natural social activity. Whether individuals discuss art, silently reflect on art or actually create art, it all comes from the same shared characteristic of human communication. That is, the ability to take a concept from one medium and express it meaningfully in another, and to understand the expressions of others.

Art taps innate feelings and emotions and promotes their expression in culturally significant and accepted ways. Artistic experiences stimulate people to better understand their feelings as they strive to express them in various media. Art also promotes understanding the feelings and emotions of others.

Arts programs are uniquely suited for helping youth learn new attitudes, accept new beliefs and learn new ways of living that prevent them from using alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. Self-discipline is a valued life skill that results from active engagement in arts programs. In theater, for example, students have to learn to work individually and as members of a team. Actors develop discipline to carry out their own responsibilities and have to learn the responsibilities of their fellow actors in order to develop a play's plot. Other crew members contribute to creating a set, organizing props, providing adequate lighting and creating costumes. All of this culminates in the play's performance. The effective performance of valued social roles contributes to the development of a positive self-concept, the ability to interact with others effectively and the development of positive problem-solving and decision-making skills. Each artistic medium has the potential to do the same. In dance, a dancer often has to perform solo, in duet, and with a corps de ballet. In painting, the painter may work individually or in a team to create a mural or a monument.

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Juan Paz, Ph.D., is an associate professor, School of Social Work, Arizona State University.

Arts activities benefit both individuals and the culture of the community in which they live. Such activities mirror the culture of a community. Art is intended for an audience. Spectators, fans and aficionados connect with the artist when they listen, witness and demonstrate outward appreciation for an artist's work. In such a way, the artist and the audience create meaning and share common understandings of art.

In a complex and diverse society such as ours it is not uncommon to find competing artistic values. In such cases, the artist and the larger culture's artistic

values may be in conflict. For example, street theater used by Teatro Campesino in the grape boycott by Cesar Chavez was initially frowned upon by the traditional theater community. Over time their work slowly became accepted by the larger society. Generally, however, when the community and the family are part of the appreciative audience, a connection will be possible and disassociation and alienation that youth feel will be lessened.

Measuring Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Abuse

When planning and implementing an arts/prevention program it is necessary to have a realistic picture of the levels of alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use among youth in the community. This information can often be obtained from school principals or the local school district. If data are not available, surveys can be conducted to measure the levels of drug use in the schools. The local police department may also have statistics on the levels of drug use in the community. Such sources are useful in documenting levels of drug use in the larger community, as well.

Knowing what the participants were like before entering the program and measuring their changes in attitudes, beliefs and behaviors after participating in the program are basic to understanding how well the program works.

It is necessary to collect these data in order to measure and document the effectiveness and efficiency of the arts/prevention program and its impact on youth. Knowing what the participants were like before entering the program and measuring their changes in attitudes, beliefs and behaviors after participating in the program are basic to understanding how well the program works.

What to Measure	*How to Measure*
Change in Attitude	Pre-/Post-Questionnaires/Interviews
Change in Knowledge	Standardized Questionnaires/Surveys
Change in Behavior	Archival Data/Records Monitoring
Change in Skills	Ratings/Observations
Program Goal Attainment	Focus Groups
Client Satisfaction	
Client Goal Attainment	
Changes in Perceptions	

Evaluation

The initial step in the evaluation process is to clearly outline the mission or purpose of the arts/prevention program. What is the program trying to do? If the focus is prevention, its goals would be to reduce alcohol, tobacco and/or other drug use among youth. The second step is to establish goals indicating how the arts/prevention program is going to reduce alcohol, tobacco and other drug use. While the central point of the program may be to use the arts as a preventive tool, it is necessary to include education, treatment, support services and community change strategies as parts of a prevention program.

The Evaluation Process
- ***Outline the mission***
- ***Establish the goals***
- ***Identify the tasks***

Once the mission statement and goals have been established, the next step in the process is identifying the tasks necessary to achieve them. A key question to ask is: Are we reducing the use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs by using the arts as the central point of our prevention activities? Are the goals identified being accomplished through the use of education, treatment, support services and community change projects?

The success of a program can be determined by measuring the output and outcome of a program's activities. Outcomes are measured by

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collecting and tracking data from program activ
activities like attendance at workshops, progres
new information or skills. It will be necessary to i
of process data collection. The outcome measur
that a young person is progressing. They may c
objective measures of changes in the level of d
be necessary to interview youth face-to-face or

What to Collect	How to C
Program Goals	Logs and C
Community Needs Targeted	Qualitative
Target Population	Client Intal
Client Demographics	Questionna
Program Output	
Numbers of Clients Served	
Client Referral Process	
Staffing	

Some of the more traditional evaluation desi
evaluation include

- the one-shot evaluation,
- the simple pretest and posttest design, an
- the experimental group design.

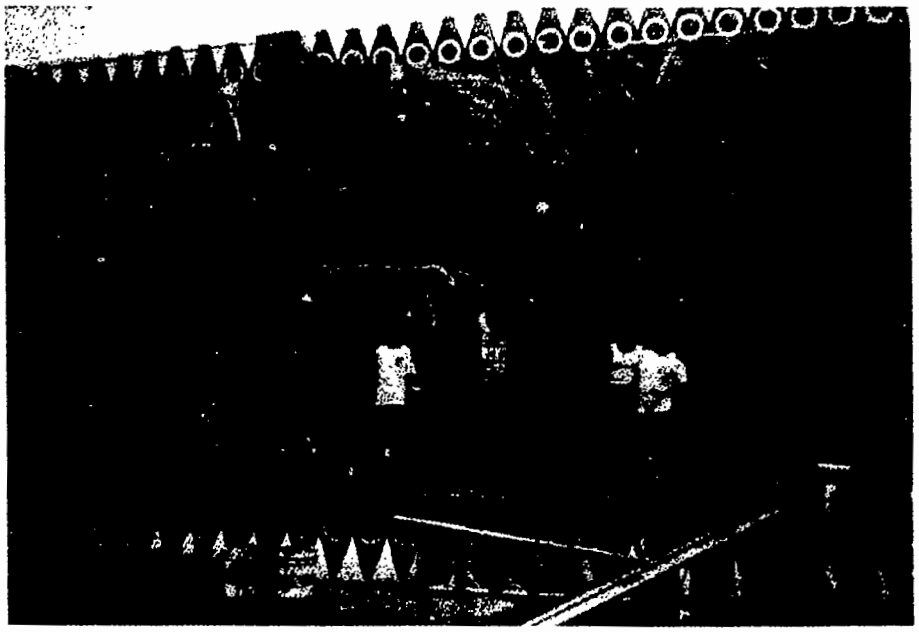
The one-shot evaluation is one that seeks to document the impact of a particular intervention, with the knowledge that it will not be repeated. The pretest/posttest design measures changes before and after participating in a particular program. In such a program, information collected is used to develop future programs. In the experimental design, a random group of youth undergo a program designed to help them acquire knowledge and learn specific skills. An experimental design, of course, calls for a comparison group and a random sample. Simple one-shot programs and pretest/posttest designs often include a purposive or convenience sample, that is, not a random sample. (For a more in-depth discussion of sample design, see Greene's article in *The Handbook of Qualitative Resear*

An empowerment approach to evaluation looks at risk and protective factors that enhance positive change within the community and promote individual growth among youth.

In many agencies, evaluation is seen by age tool to justify the existence of their current p politic, evaluation is necessary in order to ju tion or reduction of funding for programs. Fo ation refers to an organized system of collect attaining the mission and goals of a program. lishing shared values that provide data on le effectiveness.

One of the most recent developments in the prevention is the infusion of the concept of e evaluation. It emphasizes individual and com "Empowerment evaluation is the use of evalu

and findings to foster improvement and self-determination" (Fetterman, Kaftarian and Wandersman, 1996). An empowerment approach to evaluation looks at risk and protective factors that enhance positive change within the community and promote individual growth among youth.



ArtWORKS youth in front of mural completed in summer 1996 on inner-city soup kitchen. Artist Harold Gabbitch worked with youth over a five-week period.

Such an approach is useful because it recognizes environmental influences in the lives of individuals. In the arts, empowerment processes are intended to help individuals gain an understanding of their environment and cultural heritage, develop artistic skills, and develop independent problem-solving and decision-making skills. The measurement of outcomes in empowerment evaluation analyzes the results of the processes put into action. In sum, empowerment evaluation has a value orientation, it seeks to promote self-determination and is self-affirming through self-evaluation and reflection.

Social relationships are also very important in evaluation. The traditional approach where an evaluator strives to be removed from a program in order to be objective is viable but does not allow for the collection of qualitative data. When planning a program evaluation, individuals who are stakeholders in the planning and results of an evaluation often represent different ideologies and value systems. In addition, the diversity that the arts bring into the prevention field requires that evaluators have some knowledge of the creative process as well as know a particular art form.

In empowerment evaluation, the evaluator is more of an expert or facilitator who utilizes a participatory approach. A participatory approach is one in which the participants, clients, staff and evaluators are seen as stakeholders actively involved in all aspects of the evaluation process. The evaluator hears from the stakeholders about their goals for the program and their understanding of their responsibilities. Benchmarks for arts skills and social skills are identified and evaluation tools are discussed. In such an approach no one individual is entirely responsible for the evaluation.

Programs that serve youth must understand that what is learned is often not what is taught.

Programs that serve youth must understand that what is learned is often not what is taught. It is important for staff to model and pattern constructive, collaborative behavior throughout the program. Successful programs set up a high level of engagement and interaction and let individuals define their own pace and skill level. Each youth, as a stakeholder, brings something different to the program. If they, in partnership with the staff and the evaluator, are responsible for the program and negotiate its goals, strategies, documentation, time lines, evaluation, etc., then they will have a degree of ownership and be better able to respond to the program's demands. Given the opportunity to exercise their highest level of responsible behavior in an arts activity and a chance to set the goals and evaluate the outcome, youth are encouraged to behave responsibly.

Arts Evaluation

Although the successful prevention of substance abuse is the primary focus of the program, an overall appraisal of the artistic outcomes is also important. Are the participants engaged? Do they show collaboration? Is their work expressive? Does it show multiple ideas? Do participants demonstrate mastery of the media? Can youth recognize positive changes they've experienced? The progress of individuals in the program can be observed, their understanding of the processes involved in the arts disciplines noted and their products evaluated in their cultural context. The amount of collaboration that takes place can be recorded. Surveys can be taken of changes in attitudes and perceived self-efficacy (how well they think they are doing) related to the program.

The Tucson-Pima Arts Council ArtWORKS team (from left): Cristine Cardeñas, ceramacist and teacher; Joshua Ramos, Sergio Salas and Zachary Dobson. These high school students worked with Cardeñas to design and construct four mosaic murals for the Barraza Parkway sound barrier wall. The project was completed in just seven weeks with funds from Pima County Highway Revenue User Funds.

These evaluative program elements are part of successful programs that put the time and energy into self-reflection and accountability for outcomes. Key planning questions to be addressed are: How does this particular arts and prevention program contribute to the acquisition and expression of arts skills? Of useful life skills? How does it take into account the cultural context of the youth involved? How will evaluators gauge the program's effectiveness: through observation, participation or self-report? To whom does this evaluation matter most?

The key question is: Are arts/prevention programs making a difference with youth? The arts in the substance abuse prevention field are a vital tool to build on their strengths. The overarching goal in empowerment evaluation is to determine whether these programs have changed the youths' perception of their empowerment. Do program participants view themselves positively? Do they feel positively connected to their community and culture? Or in the words of the Reverend Jesse Jackson, do they acknowledge that "I am somebody"?

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Resources & Additional Programs

For Arts-Based Prevention Programs for Youth

by Dian Magie

Help Create A Masterpiece

Public service announcement developed by CSAP and the NEA

Dian Magie has been executive director of the Tucson-Pima Arts Council for nine years. She has published and spoken nationally on funding for the arts.

Resources

Many resources are available to identify funding for programs for youth that partner arts and substance abuse prevention from both the public and private sectors. Successful applicants and programs are based on a clear mission, measurable goals and objectives and outside evaluation. Both fields—arts and substance abuse prevention—require extensive professional training and experience; therefore, programs that demonstrate a partnership between established programs in each area offer youth the best of both. Sustainable programs must have a diverse base of support from a variety of funding sources.

Federal Government Resources & Funding

The prevention of substance abuse among youth has been targeted at the federal level and is supported in the budgets of many federal departments, including Justice, Labor, Education, Housing and Urban Development, and Health and Human Services. As federal funding is increasingly funneled to the states in block grants, accessing these programs at the local level may require research and tracking. To identify the point of contact for a local program, you need to know the name of the program, the federal department (HUD, HHS, etc.) and the flow of funds.

Federal funds are often distributed through grants. Program legislation directs the allocation mechanism to be used, who is eligible to receive the grant, and under what conditions. There are three types of grants: block, formula and discretionary. **Block grants** go directly to the states, allocated on the basis of a statutory formula, and states are given discretion in use of funds. **Formula grants** are usually based on population, unemployment levels, census data or other demographic indicators with most going directly to state agencies for ongoing services through block grants or categorical programs. **Discretionary grants**, sometimes called project grants, usually support research, evaluation and demonstration projects or service projects. They are awarded for specific periods of time, usually one to five years, and announced by federal agencies through the *Federal Register*. The funding cycle for discretionary grants for initiatives may receive only limited funding, such as the two-year, 1994-96, "Pathways to Success" program of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and the National Endowment for the Arts.

In Print

In print, the most user-friendly resource to identify specific programs within the federal budget is the *Guide to Federal Funding for Governments and Nonprofit Organizations*. It is published annually, with regular updates tracking current federal grant programs and their appropriations. The *Guide* provides descriptions of more than 370 federal programs that offer financial and related assistance to state and local governments and nonprofit organizations of all types. It is organized into general topic area chapters, such as Social Services, with a helpful index and detailed descriptions of each funding program's key elements, including important information such as "Flow of Funds," "Eligibility" and "How to Apply." It is here that you will find the official name (and acronym) of the funding program, and the administering federal agency.

Another publication, *Preventing Crime and Promoting Responsibility: 50 Programs That Help Communities Help Their Youth* (1995), was compiled by The President's Crime Prevention Council. This publication includes a helpful summary matrix, listing programs, fiscal year funding, population served, providers and objectives of the program. Each program also has a full-page description with contact address and phone number.

The May/June 1995 issue of *The Prevention Pipeline*, a bimonthly publication developed by the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP) and disseminated by the National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information (NCADI), focuses on the arts and how participation in the arts may prevent alcohol, tobacco and other drug problems. The issue features model programs and a collection of public service announcements (PSAs) developed for the arts community by

Grace The Life Of A Child

Public service announcement developed by CSAP and the NEA

CSAP and the National Endowment for the Arts. Copies of the publication and PSAs are available through NCADI by phone, 1-800-729-6686.

The **Drug Information and Strategy Clearinghouse** is a service of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), providing a series of publications relating to substance abuse prevention programs and funding in public housing. The Clearinghouse can be contacted by phone, 1-800-578-3472.

The **Office of National Drug Control Policy**, a part of the Executive Office of the President, has produced relevant publications including *Responding to Drug Use and Violence: Helping People, Families and Communities* (1995), a directory and resource guide to public and private sector drug control grants. Publications can be accessed through the National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS) by phone, 1-800-851-3420.

Web Sites

On-line Internet access to information on federal programs and funding can be tracked through a variety of web sites. Public, college and university libraries offer computer access to the Internet and trained staff who will help you search for targeted federal program web sites.

The **Federal Register** is the most useful of the general web sites for researching what grant opportunities are currently available. It is the official publication for presidential documents and executive orders, as well as notices, rules and proposed rules from federal agencies and organizations.
http://www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs/aces/aces140.html

The **Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA)** is the annual government-wide compendium of federal programs, projects, services and activities. It contains financial and nonfinancial assistance programs administered by departments.
http://www.gsa.gov:80/fdac/

Program-specific information on substance abuse prevention and arts can be found in several sites, including the following primary sites:

The **National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information (NCADI)** site is a service of the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP), a division of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. It contains extensive information on drugs and drug prevention, including surveys, articles and prevention programs, along with a link to the Prevention On-line bulletin board PREVline.
http://www.health.org/

ArtsNet provides funding information including the ArtsNet Development Database of grant awards made by state arts councils and other organizations. ArtsNet also maintains links to web pages of local, state and national arts funders.
http://artsnet.heinz.cmu.edu/DevelopmentResources/

NEA is the web site of the National Endowment for the Arts. The web site provides descriptions of grant programs, applications and guidelines and a monthly magazine called *arts.community*.
http://arts.endow.gov/

Specific web sites for federal departments relative to this subject include the following:

U.S. Department of Agriculture/Cooperative State
Program:
- Children, Youth and Families at Risk National Initiative

http://usda.gov/

U.S. Department of Education
Programs:
- Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities—State and Local Formula Grants
- Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities—National Programs

http://www.ed.gov/

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)

Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP)
Programs:
- Knowledge Development and Application Programs (KDAs)
- Community Schools Grants/ Substance Abuse
- Substance Abuse Prevention Block Grants
- Smoke-Free Kid
- High-Risk Youth Projects
- Community-Based Family Resource Program (CBFRP)
- Community Partnership Demonstration Program

Child and Family Services (CFS)
Programs:
- Community Services Block Grants
- Youth Education Demonstration
- Family Preservation and Support
- Runaway and Homeless Youth—Drug Abuse Prevention/Education
- Youth Gang Substance Abuse Prevention
- Community Schools Youth Services and Supervision

Public Health Service
Program:
- Preventative Health and Health Services (PHHS) Block Grant

http://www.health.org/

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U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

Programs:
- Public and Indian Housing Drug Elimination Program
- Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)
- Federally Assisted Low-Income Housing Drug Elimination
- Youthbuild
- AmeriCorps
- Public Housing Youth Sports Program (YSP)

http://www.hud.gov/

U.S. Department of Justice

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP)

Programs:
- Weed and Seed Programs
- Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Block Grants
- Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Formula Grants
- Community-Based Gang Intervention
- Gang-Free Schools and Communities
- Juvenile Mentoring Program (JUMP)
- Community Policing
- Correctional Options Program—Drug Courts Initiative
- Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) in Bureau of Indian Affairs
- SafeFutures Partnerships to Reduce Youth Violence and Delinquency (SafeFutures)

http://www.ncjrs.org

U.S. Treasury Department Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms

Program:
- Gang Resistance, Education and Training (GREAT)

http://www.alf.treas.gov/

U.S. Department of Labor

Programs:
- Year Round Program for Youth/Title II-C
- Summer Youth Employment and Training Program/Title II-B
- Youth Fair Chance (YFC)

http://www.dol.gov/

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

HIV/AIDS Projects

Program:
- Information and Education/Prevention Services

http://www.cdc.gov/

State Government Resources & Funding

State government funding for programs in arts/prevention for youth can be accessed through (1) state funding of substance abuse programs for youth, (2) state legislative allocations to state arts organizations, and (3) state administration and distribution of federal block and formula grants. The process and state funding levels vary from state to state. Several resources provide the method and point of contact for state programs that allocate federal block grants and programs funded through allocations by your state legislature.

National Association of State Alcohol and Drug Abuse Directors (NASADAD)

Director of Prevention Programs
444 North Capitol NW, Suite 642
Washington, DC 20001
Phone: 202-783-6868

This service agency can track how specific federal programs are being administered in each state, and state-legislated funding in this area.

National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA)

1010 Vermont Ave. NW, Suite 920
Washington, DC 20005
Phone: 202-347-6352

This service agency for state arts agencies, and publisher of *Part of the Solution: Creative Alternatives for Youth* (1995), has a database of arts programs reaching at-risk youth that are programs of, or funded by, state arts agencies.

http://www.artswire.org/Artswire/www/nasaa/nasaa.html

National Conference of State Legislatures

Program Director, Arts, Tourism and Cultural Resources
Program Director, Health and Human Services
1560 Broadway, Suite 700
Denver, CO 80202
Phone: 303-830-2200

This service agency for state legislators tracks programs that impact both arts and substance abuse prevention. Publications, including *Creative Solutions for Funding the Arts* (1995), compare the programs and funding mechanisms in states.

http://www.ncls.org/

Library of Congress Internet Resource Page for State and Local Governments

This resource provides Meta-Indexes for state and local government information with links to individual state pages. The quantity and quality of information by state vary with the rush to participate in the computer information delivery system.

http://www.loc.gov/global/state/stategov.html

Local Government Funding & Resources

Many city and county governments are funding arts programs that are also drug and crime prevention programs for youth. The revenue stream for these programs may be federal, state or local with the point of contact through city or county departments for nonprofit agencies at the local level. An example is the HUD Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program administered and allocated through a city and/or county government process for local projects. The Community Services Department of your city or county will have information on CDBG grants and other federally funded, but locally decided, programs. Your county attorney can provide information on Department of Justice grants and possible RICO (Anti-Racketeering Revolving Fund) substance abuse prevention program funding. Your public library should have a public record of the adopted city and county budgets that can be reviewed to determine revenue distribution to specific programs from the local tax base.

Art Works! Prevention Programs for Youth & Communities was designed to provide information on programs in cities nationwide that can serve as a guide for program development in your community. Publications and an extensive database detailing local programs can be found through the following resource.

Americans for the Arts
(Formerly the National Assembly of Local Arts Agencies and American Council for the Arts)

Institute for Community Development and the Arts

927 15th Street NW, 12th Floor
Washington, DC 20005
Phone: 202-371-2830

The service agency for local arts agencies, Arts for America published *Untapped Public Funding for the Arts* and maintains the database for the more than 214 programs profiled in *Coming up Taller: Arts and Humanities Programs for Children and Youth at Risk* (1996), published by the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities. Monthly monographs focus on specific program areas with examples of local community programs and funding sources. The Institute's database provides important information on program descriptions, funding sources and other information on local arts programs.
http://www.artsusa.org

Private Corporate & Foundation Resources & Funding

Private corporate and foundation support for local programs that target arts/substance abuse prevention programs for youth is available. Your local United Way and Community Foundation should be contacted for descriptions of program eligibility and grant deadlines. The local arts agency in the community may also offer grants that support these programs.

Foundations and corporations often fund only within certain geographic areas, so a search by state and topic will target realistic resources. To identify foundations or corporations that have a history of supporting specific programs in your region, contact your public library for a state foundation directory that chronicles the giving within your state. Guides compiled by The Foundation Center are the most thorough and user-friendly resources for identifying program-specific funding from foundations and corporations, and include indexes by state and topic.
http://fdncenter.org/

Be Vocal
Public service announcement developed by CSAP and the NEA

National Guide to Funding in Substance Abuse (1995), The Foundation Center.

This book contains entries for 530 grant-making foundations and 75 direct corporate giving programs, representing more than $91 million in support, that have shown a substantial interest in substance abuse. Index by state and subject.
ISBN 0-87954-602-6

Grant$ for Alcohol and Drug Abuse (1994/95), The Foundation Center.

This book covers 854 grants of $10,000 or more, with a total value of more than $95 million, made by 360 foundations to nonprofit organizations in the area of substance abuse, including prevention and treatment. Index by state and subject.
ISBN 0-87954-565-8

Grant$ for Health Programs for Children and Youth (1994/95), The Foundation Center.

This book lists 2,576 grants of $10,000 or more, with a total value of over $231 million, made by 549 foundations. It includes topics of adolescent drug and alcohol abuse prevention and treatment programs. Index by state and subject.
ISBN 0-87954-574-7

Grant$ for Mental Health, Addictions and Crisis Services (1994/95), The Foundation Center.

This book lists 2,591 grants of $10,000 or more, with a total value of over $216 million, made by 576 foundations. It covers grants for a variety of services, including addiction prevention and treatment. Index by state and subject.
ISBN 0-87954-582-8

Conferences & Workshops

Annual conferences and workshops are supported by most of the federal agencies included in this resource section. Calendar information through the agency's web site should be sought for conference topics, dates and locations.

CSAP provides conference support grants (for information, contact NCADI, 1-800-729-6686). An example of relevant conferences sponsored by CSAP is the annual "Storytelling for Prevention" conference sponsored by the Wheel Council of Arizona. The National Association of Prevention Professionals and Advocates (NAPPA) focused on the arts for their 1994 conference, "Arts Empowerment: The Artist Within."

Additional Programs

In addition to the eleven programs featured in this publication, the following are examples of arts programs for youth that involve prevention strategies that can be adapted in your community.

Anti-Drug A.P.P.L.E. Corps Program

Arizona Commission on the Arts
417 W. Roosevelt
Phoenix, AZ 85003
Phone: 602-255-5882
FAX: 602-256-0282

A partnership of artists, private enterprise, prosecutors, law enforcement and educators, A.P.P.L.E. Corps was designed in 1989 to facilitate and support artistic programs that help children, families and communities throughout Arizona to reject drugs. To accomplish this, the A.P.P.L.E. Corps awards grants to afterschool programs statewide to fund guest artist residencies.

Arts Apprenticeship Training Program

Manchester Craftsmen's Guild
1815 Metropolitan Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15233
Phone: 412-322-1773
FAX: 412-321-2120

For the past 29 years, Manchester Craftsmen's Guild has been working with inner-city youth, providing cultural activities and educational programming throughout the year. Classes are conducted in disciplines of ceramic art, computer imaging, drawing and photography. Through mentored training in the arts, young people participate in experiences that capture the essence of life-skills development, arts and cultural awareness. Each year 350 students from all 12 Pittsburgh public high schools enroll in this program, which has college placement rates of 74% to 80%. View Manchester Craftsmen's Guild student exhibition on the Internet. **http://www.artsnet.org/mcg**

ArtWORKS in Neighborhoods

Tucson-Pima Arts Council
240 N. Stone
Tucson, AZ 85701
Phone: 520-624-0595
FAX: 520-624-3001

The Arts Council collaborates with neighborhood associations and centers in low-income neighborhoods to identify a project that will benefit the community. Ten resident youth receive a salary for working with an artist in a seven-week summer program to complete the project. Funded with city and county youth initiative and transportation support, a counselor provides weekly sessions dealing with team building, conflict resolution and prevention. During the 1996 summer, 135 youth worked on 11 projects from design and construction of park signage to design and manufacture of individualized tiles for benches in a neighborhood park.

Awareness Theatre

Chautauqua Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Council (CASAC)
2-6 E. Second Street
Jamestown, NY 14701
Phone: 716-664-3608
FAX: 716-664-3661

Two troupes of youth, ages 14 through 18, are recruited at the beginning of every school year to perform scenes about alcohol and substance abuse before student audiences throughout the county. In performance, youth and peers talk about substance abuse and alcoholism, creating an interactive and sometimes experiential program involving both performers and audience members. Since its inception in 1985, the theater troupe has performed more than 1,500 times for more than 70,000 people, while more than 200 young people have been performers in the troupe. The Theatre receives county funding and state funding from the New York Office of Alcohol, Tobacco and Substance Abuse Services. Instructors and performers receive ongoing training.

The Boys Choir of Harlem

2005 Madison Avenue
New York, NY 10035
Phone: 212-289-1815
FAX: 212-289-4195

Recognized by President Clinton in January 1997 with the Medal of Arts Award, The Boys Choir of Harlem is a holistic program of education, counseling and performing arts that has established an amazing success record since the Choir was founded by Dr. Walter Turnbull at the Ephesus Church of Harlem in 1968. The majority of the members, ages 8 to 18, are from Central Harlem, which is known for art, culture, ethnic strife, crime, violence and drugs. A comprehensive music education is augmented by a sound academic education, counseling and tutoring with a resulting 98% of the students going on to college. The Boys Choir receives funding from the New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse for prevention services that include AOD education, values clarification and strategies for resisting peer pressure.

Children of the Future

Greater Columbus Arts Council
55 East State Street
Columbus, OH 43215
Phone: 614-224-2606
FAX: 614-224-7461

Selected in 1994 as an AmeriCorps grant recipient, Children of the Future's 26 AmeriCorps participants work with youth ages 5 to 12 in one of eight recreation centers in inner-city neighborhoods and public housing sites, providing daily afterschool arts activities, as well as weekend programming featuring visiting artists. Each center offers programs in dance, creative writing, music, theater and visual arts, depending on the facility. The program started as a way to reduce crime and drugs in housing communities and has grown to become a safe haven for youth. It is a partnership between the Department of Recreation and Parks, Department of Public Safety, the Metropolitan Housing Authority and the Greater Columbus Arts Council. The program also receives funding from HUD. Evaluation is conducted both in-house and externally.

Everyday Theater, Inc.

65 I Street SW, Room 115
Washington, DC 20024
Phone: 202-554-3893
FAX: 202-488-9209

Everyday Theater, Inc., is a summer, in-school and afterschool program targeting African American youth ages 14 to 21 using an Afrocentric model that includes African literature, role playing, music, dance and theater. Participants develop original dramatic productions that are then performed before their school peers. Prevention topics include drug abuse prevention, HIV/AIDS prevention, pregnancy prevention and violence prevention (including gang and domestic violence prevention). Everyday Theater is a featured organization in the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities publication, *Coming Up Taller: Arts and Humanities Programs for Children and Youth at Risk* (1996).

First Step Dance

Lawrence Arts Center
200 W. 9th
Lawrence, KS 66044
Phone: 913-843-2787
FAX: 913-843-6629

In a collaboration between the Lawrence Arts Center (LAC) and First Step House (FSH), a halfway house for recovering, chemically addicted women, First Step Dance was created to give the women and their children ways to work on violence and addiction prevention through the arts. Prairie Wind Dancers, a LAC resident dance company, provides weekly classes for women and separate classes for the children in creative movement designed to foster positive feelings, explore emotions and build self-esteem. Prairie Wind Dancers creates choreographic works that deal with addiction issues. These are performed in three annual concerts for the residents, staff, family and friends of FSH and in community concerts and schools throughout Kansas.

Grupo Animo and El Grupo Folklórico Atotonilco

Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center
1300 Guadalupe Street
San Antonio, TX 78207
Phone: 210-271-3151
FAX: 210-271-3480

Grupo Animo is a multidisciplinary, issues-oriented theater program for youth 13 to 18 years of age. Coordinated by the Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center, and run by and for the El Barrio community, the program focuses on public housing, latchkey children, drugs, violence and school dropouts. Youth work with a playwright five to seven days a week during the summer to write and produce a play. During the school year, the play is performed at 12 to 15 community sites.

El Grupo Folklórico Atotonilco teaches Latino children and youth ages 3 to 21 about their culture and history through dance. Youth practice from one to five times a week and perform at festivals year-round throughout the country.

Inside-Out

The Children's Museum, Seattle
305 Harrison Street
Seattle, WA 98109
Phone: 206-441-1768
FAX: 206-448-0910

The Seattle Housing Authority and The Children's Museum, Seattle, have established a partnership to provide comprehensive arts and humanities education to young residents living in two of Seattle's public housing communities, Rainier Vista and Holly Park. The programs operate year-round after school and during summer and school breaks, providing instruction on various art mediums and multicultural themes. Sessions are conducted by a staff of trained educators who teach a curriculum that has been specifically developed for the programs by The Children's Museum. The staff work in conjunction with local artists, actors, musicians and dancers to provide discipline-specific classes. The program receives funding from HUD's Public Housing Drug Elimination Program.

Kid Konnection

Oregon Coast Council for the Arts
P.O. Box 1315
Newport, OR 97365
Phone: 541-265-9231
FAX: 541-265-9464

Approximately 100 youth in five afterschool sites in Lincoln County, ages 7 through 11, meet with artists to learn circus skills of tumbling, juggling, balancing and clowning in a weekly two-hour session. On "Super Saturday" once a month, family members and mentors join in an improvisational theater (problem solving); learning new action songs, mime and clowning activities are part of the menu. Youth are identified by coalition partners in the program, including the Lincoln County School District, Lincoln County Human Services, Children's Services Division and Juvenile Services. Preference is given to youth who meet one or more of four criteria: have been subject to protective services; are currently served by Chapter 1 or other at-risk services; parents are being served by a substance abuse program; or clients have self-selected their families into combined case management services. Leadership skills are also part of the curriculum through a partnership with Lincoln County Extension.

Pasos Adelante

La Frontera Center, Inc.
502 W. 29th Street
Tucson, AZ 85713
Phone: 520-884-9920
FAX: 520-792-0654

Pasos Adelante, a CSAP-funded project, combines an early childhood education component with an intensive parent education and advocacy program set in several substance abuse treatment centers in Tucson. Parents and children attend together twice a week for 12 weeks with the option to continue into the next 12-week cycle. Children and parents utilize the arts as a cultural expression. Each cycle a mural is made that depicts the spirit of the group's members and their cultures. The project has utilized local artists as a way to enhance curriculum content. Project Director Christine E. Miller, Ph.D., wanted a project that would prepare children of substance

abusers, many of whom were drug exposed, with the resiliency skills needed to enter first grade on par with their peers.

Project ABLE

Mill Street Loft
20 Maple Street
Poughkeepsie, NY 12601
Phone: 914-471-7477
FAX: 914-471-7507

Mill Street Loft, a multi-arts educational center, established Project ABLE (Arts, Basic education, Life skills, and Entrepreneurship) in 1994 as an arts-driven job skills training, employment and prevention program for economically disadvantaged at-risk youth ages 14 to 21 from the multicultural city of Poughkeepsie. The program provides training in product design, carpentry, public art, technology, portfolio development, and retail/entrepreneurship skills. Project ABLE is also a crime and substance abuse prevention program, with a strong life-skills component that includes training in conflict resolution, leadership and communication skills, teamwork and cooperation, problem solving and decision-making skills. Youth also engage in understanding social issues through role playing, mediation and group discussion. In Project ABLE, youth are employed to *"earn while they learn."* The program operates year-round and serves approximately 75 youth per year.

Project Self Discovery

The Cleo Parker Robinson
Dance Theatre
899 Logan, Suite 207
Denver, CO 80203
Phone: 303-830-8500
FAX: 303-830-8420

Harvey Milkman, Ph.D., a psychologist and drug prevention counselor, teamed with Cleo Parker Robinson, artistic director of The Cleo Parker Robinson Dance Theatre, in 1991 to formally integrate the arts and music into drug prevention work in a program called Project Self Discovery. First-time offenders, teen parents and other at-risk youth between the ages of 13 and 18 pick an arts discipline for their focus from visual arts, drama and movement. The arts programming is complemented with cognitive behavioral personal growth sessions over a 12-week period. The cost of conventional treatment and/or correctional placement far exceeds the per capita expenses of Self Discovery in a community-based setting that uses art, psychology and adventure-based counseling to transform the lives of high-risk youth. Students who successfully complete the initial 12-week intervention phase may elect to participate in a 12-week graduate program followed by an additional 12-week mentorship experience in which they assist teachers in the initial phase of the program.

Public Housing Orchestra and Project DAISY

Levine School of Music
1690 36th Street NW
Washington, DC 20007
Phone: 202-576-6171
FAX: 202-576-6178

Teenage residents of a Washington public housing complex attend small group lessons once a week during the school year, and twice a week in the summer, to prepare for three annual Youth Orchestra performances. The Youth Orchestra is one component of a larger program funded by a HUD Drug Elimination Grant to the Washington, DC, Housing Authority. Project DAISY uses music to improve the attention spans and learning capabilities of preschool children who were prenatally exposed to drugs.

Ragtime Roadsters

Clark County Department of
Parks and Recreation
2601 E. Sunset
Las Vegas, NV 89120
Phone: 702-455-8200
FAX: 702-455-8275

The award-winning Ragtime Roadsters program, which receives funding from the Nevada Bureau of Alcohol and Drug Prevention, sends art teachers into public housing communities to use dance and music programs as a means of drug and alcohol abuse prevention. The classes build on learned skills that culminate in a talent showcase at the end of 10 weeks. Participants gain valuable life skills, including an understanding of teamwork, endurance, flexibility and leadership.

SETT

Self-Expression Teen Theater
Institute
1001 Indiana Avenue
Toledo, OH 43607
Phone: 419-242-2255
FAX: 419-242-3152

Working from a model of peer education through the arts, SETT's strategy is to train groups of teens and preteens, 12 to 18 years of age, to serve as peer educators. In this capacity they create and perform social dramas in schools, churches, conferences, penal institutions, public housing projects, parks and other places. Four days a week during the school year and five days a week during the summer, the youth perform and tour 35 to 50 shows annually to more than 10,000 other youth in the community to provide awareness, information referral, peer interaction, guided discussion, conflict resolution and decision making through drama, and serve as a vital link between services that already exist among the youth who need them most. Funding for the program comes from the Ohio Department of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services, City of Toledo, corporate and general donations. SETT is a recipient of a CSAP award and is recognized statewide for its effective substance abuse prevention work among African American and other at-risk youth.

South Dade Development Program

Greater Miami Local Initiatives
Support Corporation (LISC)
16201 SW 95th Avenue,
Suite 303
Miami, FL 33157
Phone: 305-254-8181
FAX: 305-254-4119

Artist-attorney Xavier Cortada, LISC director, believes art builds a sense of history and context often lacking in communities. The power of art reaches still further into the fabric of community life when blended with an economic agenda. In South Dade, the LISC is partnering with Centro Campesino CDC and the Metro-Dade Cultural Affairs Council to establish an "art trailer" where gang members and others can go to create and sell their arts and crafts.

Orchestrate A Small Miracle

Public service announcement developed by CSAP and the NEA

Teatro Consejo

Youth Development, Inc.
6301 Central NW
Albuquerque, NM 87105
Phone: 505-831-6038
FAX: 505-843-7727

Youth Development, Inc. (YDI), is a comprehensive program offering an array of services including prevention programs, treatment services, a crisis shelter, group homes, residential treatment centers, youth employment programs, alternative education, health education and school-to-work transition programs. Teatro Consejo provides an artistic forum for self-expression through performing arts activities including choir, creative writing, acting, dance, stage production, lighting, sound, costume design, puppetry and music. The youth and performing arts professionals meet at least three times a week for three hours during the school year and continue in the summer on an even more rigorous schedule. Instructors, who must have previous professional experience, receive ongoing training. The program is funded through the City after an initial seed money grant from HHS.

Urban smARTS

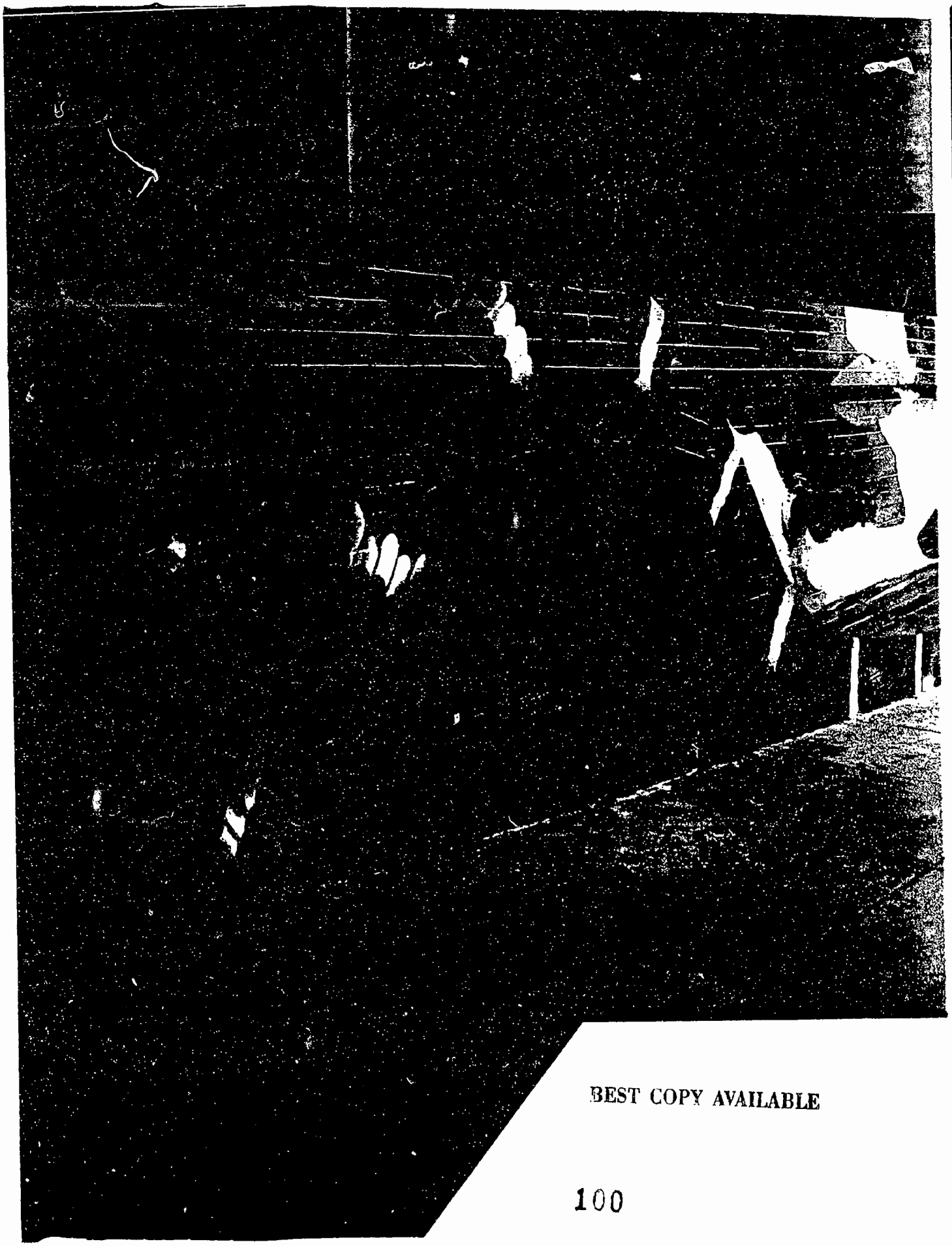
San Antonio Department of
Arts and Cultural Affairs
P.O. Box 839966
San Antonio, TX 78283
Phone: 210-222-2787
FAX: 210-228-0263

Urban smARTS is an arts-based comprehensive afterschool prevention program that operates from January to May in seven inner-city middle schools for four days a week. The program is designed to divert at-risk youth from the Juvenile Justice System, utilizing a combined arts-centered and case management approach. The smARTS team consists of three artists, four caseworkers, and one teacher per school. In addition to its diversion goals, the program seeks to improve student academic achievement and attendance, and address behavioral problems. The program strengthens protective factors that counter the effects of risk in youth. Positive emphasis is placed on education, family, community and social responsibility. Support for the program is provided by a partnership between the City of San Antonio Departments of Arts and Cultural Affairs, Community Initiatives, and the San Antonio Independent School District.

Youth Theater Project Harambe

Pittsburgh Public Theater
Allegheny Square
Pittsburgh, PA 15212
Phone: 412-323-8200, ext. 270
FAX: 412-323-8550

Former gang members, substance abusers or youth from troubled homes sign one-year contracts in which they agree to be punctual, attend all classes and rehearsals, refrain from alcohol and drug use, cease all gang activity and commit to personal transformation to participate in theater productions of the Youth Theater Project. The subject matter of the productions focuses on such teen problems as pregnancy, drug use and living with chemically dependent parents.



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