

PROGRAM SUMMARY

"Arts Education Programs for Children and Teens"

Featuring: Gayle Isa, Asian Arts Initiative; Wanda Alverio and Danny Polenco, Taller Puertorriqueno; and Glen Knapp, Philadelphia Young Playwrights Festival
Delaware Valley Grantmakers

December 3, 2001

Samuel S. Fleisher Art Memorial, South Philadelphia

Welcome and Introductions: Dale Mitchell, Executive Director, DVG

Remarks regarding relevant resources: Beth Feldman-Brandt, Executive Director, Stockton Rush Bartol Foundation (* See Resources section at end of this summary for information on how to obtain copies of any of the following)

- Lessons from an Art Teacher
- Culture Builds Communities
- PAEP Resource Directory

Features of effective arts education programs: Jo-Anna Moore, Board Member, Stockton Rush Bartol Foundation and

- parental involvement & support for children's art experiences
- kids' ownership of their work – individual pride in accomplishments, blend of cognitive and emotive capacity in art experiences
- children's art – where is the child's individual, unique voice?
- the shared voice of community is evident in the experience – discover commonalities as shared celebrations
- Effective programs are sustained, substantive, teach skills, history; celebrate and share through the arts

Panelists' Remarks:

Gayle Isa –Executive Director and Founder, Asian Arts Initiative

Worked at SEAMAC; recognizes social services aspect of children's programs

There is a growing body of research that proves correlation between arts achievement and academic performance, college, etc. Ben Cameron, Theater Communications Group, finds that teenagers who participate in theater programs are 40% less tolerant of racism in communities.

-Training artists as teachers – they're a rare resource, AAI has developed **Artists in Communities Training Program** (ACT), 6 week program where artists spend weekend retreat getting to know each other, then 6 weeks learning skills

- necessity of doing curriculum / lesson plans
- need to set up clear goals
- build self-esteem of youth
- blend of many goals

Need to **outline plans** to achieve goals, e.g., what are warm-up exercises that kids will do?

- 1) need to give reasonable time frame for what they want to achieve
- 2) need to give a list of **materials / equipment** they'll need
- 3) develop a **checklist** indicating the plan and what is needed – work with artists to develop lists of their own "push buttons" issues, what would set them off when before an audience; many haven't been in a position of authority before.
- 4) Know when is it ok to debate with a kid, when to walk away
- 5) Know when to handle problems yourself, when to refer to another
- 6) Expose artists to different styles of classroom management and discipline, various discipline types

Adequate compensation, adequate planning time

State Arts Council rates: \$175 for a 4 hour day

Mid Atlantic Arts rates: \$150 / day

Artist's fees of \$40 / hour or more are reasonable, will vary based on an artist's experience, nature of program

Planning time – try to build in 1 hour per workshop session of advance planning / preparation time

Wanda Alverio and Danny Polenco - Taller Puertorriqueno

Wanda Alverio: Worked in Puerto Rico in high-risk program – musical education, teens: dance, photography, mural painting etc.

Danny Polenco – born in Brooklyn and parents moved to Puerto Rico when he was a senior in high school. He read about Taller-- he was an artist at the time and Taller was developing its Arts Program. Polenco became a part-time instructor

Points to Consider:

- 1) Difficulty in integrating a curriculum that appeals to students but also stresses going to school
- 2) How to incorporate academics with arts (e.g. need to measure walls before beginning a mural painting, etc.)
- 3) Taller program specifically develops a portfolio for students to apply to college with
- 4) Need to teach internet skills – email their applications to universities
- 5) How to manage and deal with space and lack thereof
- 6) Non-verbal communication issues
- 7) Need for teachers who are **diverse in their politics** in the arts – a lot of students feel things that can't really talk about except through their art – violence, racism, etc.

Glen Knapp – Philadelphia Young Playwrights Festival

PYPF engages professional theater artists to partner with classroom teachers in Philadelphia schools and teach children playwriting for a year.

Glen Knapp-- Six issues:

- 1) Distinction between arts education and arts exposure – some bring art to kids or kids to art once, that's what many organizations do, but arts education is something more – time, repetition, thoroughly thought-out.
- 2) Need to be student-centered and involve project-based learning, place child at center of creative process, must have an outcome
- 3) Respect the classroom teachers, who understand what their classroom are like, dedicate some of the money to professional development retreats, skills-building programs for teachers
- 4) Awareness of school practices and environments – address school initiative, particular classrooms goals, address school structures and district standards, lack of space in planning stages
- 5) Training of workshop artists – often they teach just to supplement income – but they have to have training about ages of kids / expectations, child development issues, & other challenges. Recognize that they are essential and compensate adequately teacher / teaching artist relationship is critical – it's a marriage – can be emotional. What kind of preparation are teachers / artists given? Are there times for them to sit down and evaluate?
- 6) Measurable outcomes / assessment – students should see the results of their Work. Artists and teachers should have methods of evaluating the kids' work and their own work, they should submit evaluations at program's end.

Challenges

- Teachers in schools are always overwhelmed by their jobs everyday
- Hard to find an arts teacher in Philadelphia public schools today – mostly turning to English teachers, Spanish teachers, training them like you would a student, so they are experiencing the process that that students will (overnight retreat)
- Who is going to pay for these programs? Try to create partnerships w/ funders – show them how literacy, etc. helps create a better community and workforce
- Quantitative research of results of the programs – have lots of qualitative assessments, but less quantitative – we all have to take a look at trying to measure academic achievement

Moderated Q & A discussion:

Quantitative data is not going to happen - need to have respect for the experience that the person had, a person's life is changed. That is more powerful than "hard data" can show-funders may need to change what they are looking for as evidence.

Quality youth and community development angle - pursue funding from "youth development" sources, not just arts & culture funds.

Certain licensing is necessary for government funding, re: snacks, cots, etc. It's daunting.

Looking at this from a youth development standpoint, the issue becomes the quality of artists you will get for the money. Daycare teachers get \$8 / hour. \$25 / hour and up is appropriate for a professional artist and teacher.

Class size – 8 or 10 or 12 kids is fine for an art class, if they're putting 35 kids in a class the quality will suffer. Look for smaller class sizes. Some programs say they operate in "various public schools"-- that's wrong, schools are all different, can't use a generic template.

How to find teaching artists – organize them? Efforts – Philadelphia Arts Education Partnership, eventual goal is to create some standards and share training. Building a field and a national group. The artists become an itinerant link between organizations like Taller, Fleisher, etc. – funders & non-profits can refer teachers to others where they might also work.

RESOURCES:

The following resources are available for loan through DVG's Library. Please contact Diana Loukedis at 215/790-9700 x3 or diana@dvg.org to obtain a copy.

Lessons from an Art Teacher

Culture Builds Communities

Phila. Arts and Education Partnership Resource Directory