

THE POWER OF ART

PATHWAYS TO HEALTHY YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

**The Arts as an Effective Intervention Strategy
For At-Risk Youth**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**Submitted to Robert K. Ross, M.D.
President and CEO, The California Endowment
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OVERVIEW

If we don't have art in our lives we can never really be healthy people. If we don't participate in creative endeavors, we can never really be whole and well adjusted. And when you find those kids who are generally happy about what they do, about who they are, you can bet that somewhere in their lives, art has made a connection.

Frank Walker
Kentucky Governor's School for the Arts



In the fall of 2003, The California Endowment commissioned an inquiry into the arts as an effective intervention strategy for at-risk youth. This is perhaps the first time a major health foundation has helped develop a framework for considering participation in the arts as an influential factor in youth health and development. The researchers focused on the theory and practice of arts programs for adolescents considered at-risk, particularly efforts serving those approximately 12 – 18 years old, to explore what is known about structured, long-term involvement in the arts by young people who are commonly seen as disadvantaged. This population was chosen because it is the most vulnerable to risks, and the efficacy of arts programs in their lives is the most compelling testament to the power and necessity of art.

This report has three primary goals. One, to respond to study questions posed by The California Endowment. Two, to compile findings regarding the effect of arts participation on at-risk youth. Three, to offer recommendations to The California Endowment based on its findings. The intention of this document is to stimulate discussion and interest across a wide spectrum of parties concerned with healthy youth development.

The study team was directed to conduct a scan of current activities and knowledge in the field, and to report on its findings, guided by three questions posed by The California Endowment.

1. What is the body of evidence regarding the use of the arts as a successful intervention strategy for at risk youth?
2. What information is available specifically in terms of improving the health outcomes for young people?
3. What data exist regarding whether these interventions work among the young people in foster care or the juvenile justice system?

This report presents information concerning dozens of arts programs for at-risk youth, with the clear understanding that the programs mentioned here represent only a sample of endeavors around the U.S. The arts approaches occur in a range of settings – in public school classrooms, after-school venues, juvenile detention camps, and neighborhood spaces, among them. However, the programs share characteristics identified as contributing to their success and efficacy. These characteristics include:

1. Intensive youth participation in making art – young people are not limited to being an audience for the arts, they are creators.
2. Professional artists working as mentors and teachers in a range of disciplines.
3. Apprenticeship relationship between youth and professional artists.
4. Sustained youth participation over time, throughout multiple years, or long-term projects.
5. Youth responsibility for exhibiting, performing, or publicly presenting their own work, in groups or solo.
6. Organizational partnerships, usually with other agencies, schools, funders, or service providers.
7. Rigorous expectations of all participants regarding quality of work and human interactions.
8. The provision of safe and secure spaces for self-expression and artistic and social development.

The organizations and programs included in this report are based on three criteria. 1) Organizations that could provide answers to the inquiry, particularly

evaluative evidence and statistics; 2) Organizations that received multiple mentions in the literature and by interviewees, and; 3) Models that fit the established criteria and are based in California, the target area of The California Endowment.

The study team also conducted approximately 100 interviews with community leaders, scholars, and influential thinkers in the field. These interviews fell into two categories. One, interviews with Executive Directors, or top staff members of the models included in the report. Two, interviews with scholars and researchers who had examined the field in larger scope. In addition, two site visits in Los Angeles, to the offices of Professor James Caterall at the UCLA Graduate School of Education, and the premises of DreamYard, a program that runs poetry workshops in juvenile detention camps and foster care facilities, were included in the team's research.

To answer the study questions and organize the significant amount of information, the researchers divided the subject matter into five categories:

Arts in Juvenile Justice: Intervention And After-Care
Arts in Foster Care: Stability And Expression
Arts in After-School Programs: Safe And Creative Havens
Arts in Education: Promoting Academic Achievement
Arts in Workforce Development: Building A Skilled Future

REPORT FINDINGS

This report found a variety of factors that contribute to two major findings.

- I. Involvement in the arts is an unparalleled means for young people to develop the strength, resiliency, and self-image that allow them to participate in society on healthy terms.
- II. Youth arts programs offer an unprecedented opportunity for health professionals to gain access to young people and for young people to gain access to health services.

Defining the Field

1. There is an emerging, national field of nonprofit, community-based youth arts programs that go beyond current definitions of arts education.
2. Research shows that, compared with other activities, the arts elicits the strongest commitment from young people. Some of whom remain in school or after-school programs because they are highly engaged by their participation in the arts.

3. The youth arts field is characterized by its focus on providing arts experiences where disadvantaged youth populations are found, including schools, community centers, detention camps, group homes, etc.
4. Although there are organizations with decades of operating experience, a large numbers of these organizations were founded in the 1980s and 1990s.
5. It is possible that the growth of the field is attributable to a perceived need to fill the gap left by the large-scale reductions of arts education in the public schools, and the particular dearth of arts available to adolescents and young adults.

Program Attributes

6. Programs specifically targeted to at-risk youth are the defining trait of the youth arts field. These programs address this population in urban, suburban, and rural areas.
7. Distinguished organizations in the field share specific program attributes, no matter where the programs are located. These attributes include: long-term contact with participating youth; a core relationship between youth and professional artists; the emphasis on youth participation in making art; youth accountability for the public presentation of their art; high standards and expectations of the creative process and product; the objective of providing channels for a youth “voice.”
8. A growing body of research concerning the outcomes of these programs is helping to establish the understanding that the arts play a special role in contributing to healthy youth development.
9. The research demonstrates that arts programs for youth produce a variety of benefits, intended and unintended, including academic achievement, workforce preparedness, enhanced self-esteem and self-sufficiency, increased pro-social identity, and avoidance of risky behaviors.
10. Research shows that the arts provide adolescents with the risk-taking they need developmentally, provides them with meaning and significant mentor relationships, and supplies social connectivity and accountability.

11. Arts programs have been found to contribute to brain development and provide a cultural opening to knowledge of the world and self.

The Health – Youth Arts Nexus

12. The youth arts organizations profiled in this study are dealing with young people who face many difficulties and who have been put at risk for a variety of health threats.
13. Youth arts leaders are aware that these issues in the lives of youth participants require the involvement of health professionals.
14. Many arts organizations began as social service agencies that added arts activities to remain relevant and effective for this population. Others began as arts organizations and saw the need to provide health-related services to their participants.
15. Organizations contacted for this study expressed an eagerness to partner with agencies that can provide youth participants with services such as mental health counseling and substance abuse prevention.
16. Because arts organizations and programs experience such a high level of youth commitment and engagement, this field has the potential to become a major portal for young people seeking healthy lives, commitment to school, and support services.
17. Because of the same level of commitment, health care agencies and professionals who face the challenge of locating and connecting with youth in need of services, may view youth arts organizations as a natural entry point for providing access to health services.

Challenges to the Field

18. The field of youth arts is fragmented. Youth arts administrators and leaders do not necessarily identify themselves as a field and have not developed an identity beyond their individual organizations, or local areas.
19. Because programs and activities are scattered across various sectors – education, juvenile justice, community development – youth arts is usually seen as a subset of one of these fields.
20. Youth arts organizations are struggling financially. The nonprofit funding climate has caused restrictions of resources. Arts funding, particularly in the public sector, has been drastically cut. In the

U.S., the arts are widely viewed as a “frill” or as activities for the rich and educated.

21. Youth arts organizations have difficulty conceptualizing and articulating their strong role as suppliers of public value and contributors to youth health and well-being.

The Issue of Evaluation

22. There is a growing body of research documenting the nature and numbers of youth arts organizations, their processes and outcomes for at-risk youth. These studies range from large, longitudinal examinations of youth populations in and out of the arts, to observations and comparisons of smaller, local populations.
23. Because this field has not been clearly defined, and because an influential segment of the research is dominated by an arts education framework, there is a great need for further research.
24. The framework of arts education has contributed much to the discussion of the arts for at-risk youth. However, that framework has limitations when applied to the infrastructure of youth arts organizations, and their activities, across the country.
25. At the same time, most nonprofit, community-based organizations – the primary providers of the arts for young people – do not conduct regular, sound evaluations of their programming and its outcomes. There are several reasons stated by the organizations – expense and lack of in-house expertise top the list.
26. In the process of conducting this study, many of these organizations expressed an overwhelming desire to assess their programs.
27. Particularly, as the field of youth arts gravitates towards involvement in health access, the need for reliable evaluation of the process and outcomes of these programs is urgent. The implementation of qualitative and quantitative evaluation and assessment of youth arts programs will assist in effective program planning, provide necessary data for funders and communities, help arts providers refine their implementation, and contribute to society’s ability to understand the effects of youth participation in the arts. In particular is a need to discern the extent of wellness, healthy behaviors, and prevention of risk engendered in young people as a result of participation in arts program

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

This investigation yielded several findings that are offered as conclusions. The primary finding is the discovery of a national infrastructure of nonprofit organizations that have become adept at negotiating significant obstacles in order to provide youth in crisis with hands-on experience in the arts. The approaches and settings of this interchange vary, however, at the core is one objective – *to help give voice to the creativity of young people and contribute in ways that only the arts can to their well-being.*

The community-based arts programs offered by these nonprofits constitute an emerging field this report describes as youth arts – regardless of their settings and agency affiliations. The field is developing in response to institutional gaps -- the decline of arts education in America's public schools, the national de-funding of public sector youth services and after-school programs. At the same time, the field is growing of its own volition due to the increasing research and recognition of the vital role the arts play in the health and well-being of young people.

The experience of the nonprofits profiled in this report, and the literature regarding the impact of arts participation on young people in distressed circumstances, is measured in different outcomes, e.g., academic achievement, strong self-image, avoidance of risky behaviors, and so forth. However, these outcomes all point to the essential – *involvement in the arts is an unparalleled means for young people to develop the strength, resiliency, and self-image that allow them to participate in society on healthy terms.*

The above findings form the basis for a set of conclusions and recommendations listed at the end of the executive summary. Among the conclusions is the potential of youth arts to become a major portal for young people seeking healthy lives, commitment to school, and support services. The report recommends a range of next steps for The California Endowment including planning and hosting a statewide convening of stakeholders, developing a California Youth Arts and Health discussion group, and providing resources for select youth arts organizations to partner with health service providers and conduct evaluations.

Findings in each of the five categories are summarized below.

Arts In Juvenile Justice: Intervention and Aftercare

Should I run back & forth into steel cages?

Should I give up my heart when the pain becomes outrageous?
Will I get taken out the game?
The answer to these questions
Could fill a million pages
So I'm a start writing now
Until my faith becomes contagious

*Justin (Age 17)
DreamYard/LA participant*



Across the nation, officials in the juvenile justice system are recognizing and implementing arts programs as an effective strategy for transforming the lives of young inmates and those on probation. As a reflection of this development, the City of Los Angeles Cultural Affairs Department hosted a 2003 conference, “Art Matters in Juvenile Justice, Education, and Our Community,” that attracted national and local participants interested in arts programs for at-risk youth. Tellingly, the morning keynote was delivered by the Honorable Judge Glenda Hatchett, Chief Presiding Judge of the Fulton County Juvenile Court in Atlanta, known for her involvement in pioneering Atlanta-area arts programs that focus on prevention and intervention for youth at risk.

Arts programs for incarcerated youth have been shown to reduce violations, and result in less violence and fewer injuries for offenders and staff, allowing more time for constructive activities. When compared with control populations, arts programs for incarcerated youth and youth on probation have resulted in lower recidivism rates and fewer court referrals. Youth in the juvenile justice system who have participated in art programs display important pro-social and mental health characteristics, including greater self-efficacy, the ability to express themselves, improved attitudes toward school, and appropriate behavior and communication with adults and peers.

The research team discovered a range of studies, programs, and activities in the area of juvenile justice. Of note is the leading role played by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Programs (OJJDP) – during the Clinton Administration - in funding partnerships between arts organizations, social service agencies, and probation and corrections officials to develop and support model youth arts programs, many of which are still flourishing.

The YouthARTS Development Project, for example, was a collaboration between the U.S. Department of Justice, OJJDP; local arts agencies in Portland, Atlanta, and San Antonio; the National Endowment for the Arts; and Americans for the Arts. The goal of the project was to develop, test, and disseminate best practice models of arts programs for at-risk youth. Youth who participated in the YouthARTS program showed improvement in their ability to express anger appropriately and communicate effectively with adults and their peers. They gained an increased ability to work on tasks from start to finish, engaged in less delinquent behavior, had fewer court referrals, showed an improved attitude toward school, improved self-esteem, greater self-efficacy, and had a greater resistance to peer pressure than their nonparticipating peers during the program. [Source: YouthARTS Handbook: Arts Programs for Youth at Risk, p. 1999, and Americans for the Arts website.]

Also of note is a 1994 hearing before the California Legislature Joint Committee, chaired by Senator Henry O. Mello. *The Art Of Prevention: Arts Serving Youth At Risk In Human Service And Correctional Settings* featured testimony from agency heads, educators, and distinguished figures in the field of youth arts. It helped establish the efficacy of the arts in the State correctional system, both juvenile and adult, and led to an expansion of funds for juvenile and adult arts programming in the California Arts Council, Department of Mental Health, Department of Corrections, Department of Education, and the California State Summer School for the Arts.

Programs profiled in this section take place inside institutions such as juvenile halls, detention centers, and probation camps. They also support youth transitioning into home, school, and communities after their sentences are completed. The Beat Within, in San Francisco, and Broad St. Studio, in Providence, Rhode Island, publish magazines of the writings and poetry of incarcerated youth. The Drumming for Your Life Institute in Santa Monica uses drumming and rhythm to teach youth in juvenile justice facilities how to cope with their emotions and improve their social skills. Homeboy Industries in East Los Angeles helps former gang members develop employable skills through its companies, which include Homegirl Café and Catering, and Homeboy Silkscreen.

Arts In Foster Care: Stability And Expression

I had so much stuff pent up inside of me and then I got the opportunity to express myself. Art-Start opened me up to learn more to be more. Luckily, some force guided me to where I am right now. It kind of saved my life.

Chris Rolle, former student, current project director, Art-Start
Interviewed on The Oprah Winfrey Show, 2000

We're special and unique. We are foster kids...intelligent...human beings...not the people who become outcasts of the world, hoodlums or drug dealers...people with a deeper understanding of the world because we've been through things many people haven't.

Mission statement, Fostering Arts exhibition
Zeum, San Francisco

Children in foster care have the worst physical and mental health in the nation. Nearly 600,000 young people are assigned by the courts to



temporary foster care facilities or families because they have suffered abuse and neglect at the hands of their own parents. Once in foster care these youth then face problems generated by the foster care system itself – the lack of a permanent home, the challenges of potential addiction, the threat of violence and homelessness. Even those youth placed in permanent homes suffer from the effects of parental abuse and addiction, and the stigma of growing up in the foster care system.

The inadequacy of the system is reflected in studies of young adults who grew up in foster care. Only 54 percent of young adults who grew up in foster care complete high school, 40 percent receive public assistance, are incarcerated, or receive Medicaid, and 25 percent have been homeless for some period.

Los Angeles County has the largest population of children in foster care. As of January 1, 2000, 48,455 children were in the Los Angeles County foster care system - 45 percent of California's overall foster youth population. According to a Shelter Partnership study, each year, 1000 youth emancipate from the foster care system in Los Angeles County. Of those 1000, 45 percent will emancipate

either directly onto the streets or will end up on the streets within six weeks of emancipation.

The arts are part of a continuum of caring necessary for conducting effective interventions with foster care youth. They provide an essential outlet for foster care youth to express themselves and establish a sense of stability. While the researchers for this study were unable to locate research regarding the practices and outcomes of arts programs provided for youth in foster care, a number of arts programs were identified.

Fostering Art is a photography program of the San Francisco-based A Home Within, an organization that offers innovative mental health programs for current and former foster children and youth. Free Arts For Abused Children, with headquarters in Los Angeles and affiliates in five states, brings arts programs to foster family agencies, residential care facilities and outpatient treatment centers. The Rowell Foster Children's Positive Plan in Los Angeles provides full sponsorships for foster children to receive instruction at performing arts institutions in Boston, Los Angeles, and New York. The organization also supports emancipated youth through a job bank program and assistance with housing, health care, and transportation. Represent, located in New York City, is a bi-monthly magazine written by and for young people in foster care.

Arts In After-School Programs: Safe And Creative Havens

Every once in a while I wonder where I would be without United Action for Youth. Would I be going to parties every night and getting drunk and smoking pot, or would I be sitting in front of the TV all the time? I'm 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

Participant United Action for Youth Synthesis Arts Workshop (Iowa City)

Coming from an environment that couldn't really afford art, MCG allowed me to find myself creatively. Art wasn't just a hobby there, or a weekend thing, it was a lifestyle. After school, I would religiously make my way to MCG to do what I otherwise couldn't any other time or place.

Samuel Massey, MCG (Pittsburgh) Alumnus

Industrial Design student at the Rhode Island School of Design



Young people spend only about one-fourth of their time in school. The after-school hours, between 3:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m., are the highest risk time for youth. It is when they are most likely to commit crimes, be victims of violent crimes, be killed in accidents, experiment with drugs and tobacco, engage in sex, and become pregnant.

In the past twenty years, a growing field of the practice and study of after-school programs has developed. National and local initiatives are responding

to the knowledge - presented in the seminal report, *A Matter of Time: Risk and Opportunity in the Nonschool Hours* (Carnegie Commission, 1992) - that the unsupervised time spent by juveniles outside of school holds the possibility of either the greatest risk or the greatest opportunity to save lives, tax dollars, and achieve positive outcomes for youth, especially in underserved communities. Numerous studies provide data showing that well-run after-school programs help reduce juvenile delinquency, lower levels of drug use, help youth develop social skills, and increase self-esteem and school success.

Nonschool and community-based arts programs are especially effective at engaging youth in ways that other programs simply do not. They build on what young people already value, provide safe havens for self-expression, and support complex learning strategies, self-efficacy, confidence, and beneficial peer and community relations.

[Source: America's After-School Choice: The Prime Time for Juvenile Crime, Or Youth Enrichment and Achievement, A Report from *Fight Crime: Invest in Kids*, Washington, D.C., 2000; Fact Sheet on After-School Programs, The Children's Aid Society; After School Resources, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health; *Community Programs to Promote Youth Development*, Jacquelyne Eccles and Jennifer A. Gootman, eds. Board on Children, Youth and Families, Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education, Washington, D.C., National Academy Press, 2001].

Key to making this case is the research of Shirley Brice Heath, a Stanford University professor. Heath led a team of researchers in a decade long effort to understand the characteristics of "high quality and high-stakes learning environments that recognize the creative capacities of youth." Seven years into examining the data, researchers unexpectedly discovered that out of all types of programs studied - athletic-academic, community service, and arts based - that arts-based after-school programs were among the most "effective learning sites that young people chose for themselves." Comparison data showed that youth in arts programs expressed greater self-esteem. Observation demonstrated mastery of complex learning "strategies," ample and challenging interaction with adults, high-level communications skills, and creative risk taking not found in other programs.

[Source: Youth Development and the Nonschool Hours, Shirley Brice Heath and Elisabeth Soep, *Grantmakers in the Arts*, 1998]

The research team found numerous youth arts programs in this category. Most well known is Manchester Craftsmen's Guild (MCG), an award-winning arts and learning center with a 35-year track record of successfully serving at-risk youth in Pittsburgh. Evaluations of after-school and in-school programs demonstrate that this model facility and programming are providing at-risk

surroundings. The cornerstone of all MCG resources, the Apprenticeship Training Program, has sent 88 percent of its graduates to college.

[Source: Interview with Bill Strickland, 2/26/04, and 2/2/04, MCG program materials, "Genius at Work, Sara Terry, *Fast Company* magazine, September 1998; "Art in Context: Industrial Pittsburgh Catching up with Bill Strickland Gil Ott, *High Performance* magazine, Fall 1994; *Safe Havens, Portraits of Educational Effectiveness in Community Art Centers that Focus on Education in Economically Disadvantaged Communities*, Project Co-Arts, Harvard Graduate School of Education, 1993].

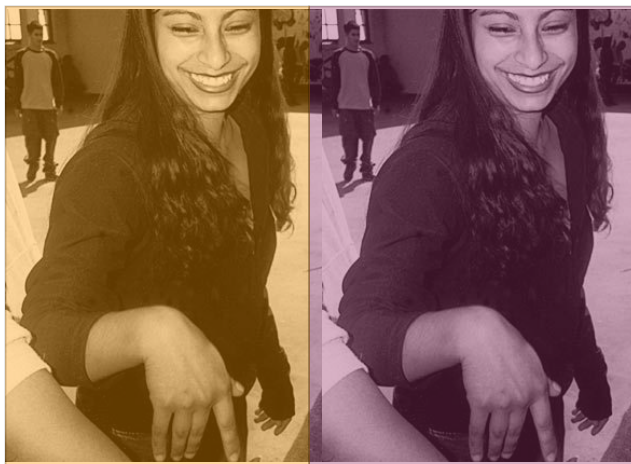
Arts In Education – Fostering Achievement

I wouldn't be in college. Honestly, I wouldn't be in college if I didn't have The HeArt Project in my life. I would probably be working at some minimum wage job. Growing up, college wasn't an option, plain and simple. The HeArt Project gave me encouragement to pursue higher education be it a vocational school or a four-year university.

Continuation High School Graduate
The HeArt Project

Things that have emerged from my work with the arts and at risk young people are that engagement in learning and sense of oneself as a learner are very connected to health, and living with a sense of the future.

[Source: Interview with Steve Seidel, director, Harvard's Project Zero, 11/29/03]



Poor school performance, alienation from school, truancy and dropping out are key indicators of risk in young people. Studies show that a disassociation from

school is one of the first steps toward additional risks and dangerous behavior. When the arts are integrated into a school's curriculum, and are taught well, particularly through sustained interaction between pupils and professional artists, studies reveal that students develop an attachment to school and regular attendance. The arts as a core part of instruction are also shown to improve academic achievement and test scores while contributing to improved work and life skills demonstrated by youth. The arts can enhance the climate on a school campus and in the classroom, and contribute to a creative energy in students that carries beyond school hours. Importantly, research shows that these results are even more dramatic for low-income students than for high-income students.

Our analysis found substantial and significant differences in achievement and in important attitudes and behaviors between youth highly involved in the arts on the one hand, and those with little or no arts engagement on the other. In addition – and more significant from a policy standpoint – the achievement differences between high- and low-arts youth were also significant for economically disadvantaged students...the arts do matter – not only as worthwhile experiences in their own right...but also as instruments of cognitive growth and development and as agents of motivation for school success.

[Source: "Involvement in the Arts and Human Development: General Involvement and Intensive Involvement in Music and Theater Arts," James S. Caterall, Richard Chapleau, John Iwanaga, *Champions of Change*, Arts Education Partnership, President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, 1999, pp. 3, 17].

The publication of the report, *Champions of Change*, marked a signal event in the national discussion concerning the role of the arts in contributing to the development and academic achievement of young people. This study was released in 1999 under the auspices of the Arts Education Partnership, a private, non-profit coalition of more than 100 partners representing arts, education, business, philanthropy, and government, and the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities. *Champions of Change* compiled the results of seven major studies by research scholars, and revealed the framework of a "remarkable consensus" across their findings. Some of the most important conclusions include:

- *The arts reach students who are not otherwise being reached.*
- *The arts reach students in ways that they are not otherwise being reached.*
- *The arts connect students to themselves and each other.*

A range of other research supports the conclusions in this study, including a qualitative investigation of reasons given by at-risk students for choosing to stay in school. A Florida investigation found that 83 percent of students who

were at risk of dropping out of school stated that “participation in an arts course affected their decision to remain in school.” [Source: “The Role of the Fine and Performing Arts in High School Dropout Prevention,” N. Barry, J. Taylor, K. Walls, Center for Music Research, Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL., 1990, Critical Links, op.cit., p. 74].

Additional studies of interest include evaluations of Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education (CAPE), a major arts curriculum integration partnership in the Chicago public schools. Multiple evaluations - one of which is included in the *Champions of Change* report - have shown that students in CAPE schools, compared with demographically similar students in control schools, outperformed other students on reading and math tests - and that the CAPE students show improved behaviors and attitudes, and long-term effects of their arts involvement. At the same time, teachers and principals noted better campus environments at CAPE schools.

Research on the favorable, measurable impacts of arts education - particularly for at-risk youth - is a primary engine for continued support for school arts programs and the interest in further studies. Reflecting research on the efficacy of after-school arts programs, the National Endowment for the Arts has added an emphasis on funding after-school projects as well as providing support for underserved populations in local areas through Challenge America: Positive Alternatives For Youth. To add to the store of data and knowledge about the impact of the arts, in 2002, the NEA “began a pilot program using outcome-based evaluation” for the agency’s Arts Learning grants. These measurements will provide important information to the field.

Programs profiled in this section include Richmond, California’s East Bay Performing Arts Center, a nationally recognized arts training and producing center founded in 1968. The Chicago-based Urban Gateways for Education, founded in 1961, which offers artists residencies, touring performances, and professional development for teachers. Two Southern California programs that run artist-led workshops as part of the school curriculum are Inside Out Community Arts, in Venice, and The HeArt Project, in Los Angeles. Inside Out Community Arts focuses on middle schools while The HeArt Project works exclusively with continuation high schools.

Arts In Workforce Development: Building A Skilled Future

Being involved here has enabled me to rediscover the parts of myself I thought I had lost forever! When I realized that the mural we were painting would be permanent and forever, I decided I’d do anything to ensure that it became a reality! I still can’t believe that you guys hired me while I was in the hospital. JAMS is now a part of me. I am not sure I would even be here to speak to you today if I had not been involved in this program.

Speech by Anna at mural dedication

JAMS (Jobs in the Arts Make Sense), a program of Van Go Mobile Arts, Inc.,
Lawrence, Kansas

Nothing stops a bullet like a job.

Father Gregory J. Boyle

Jobs For A Future/Homeboy Industries



A major threat to youth is the disadvantage that accompanies unemployment, underemployment, and exclusion from the productive economy. According to the Department of Labor, high school dropouts face a 25 percent unemployment rate, in stark contrast with the national average of four to six percent. For minority youth, the unemployment rate is even higher, in some areas rising to 40 percent. Research shows that unemployed youth face dramatically higher rates of depression than those who are adequately employed, are more subject to aggressive behavior, and are at a greater risk of violence and mortality. Involvement in the arts helps young people generate a sense of competence and stay in school, thereby making them more employable, and adding to their earnings. Research shows that the skills developed by participating in the arts are the occupational skills required by employers. Helping youth become employable, and develop career skills in an evolving market, contributes to an increased life span and the ability to make independent choices, including increased education and training.

In the information age, media participation is an important form of art production that teaches workplace and other skills. Youth media represents a significant aspect of the growth of youth arts organizations, combining production and technology skills and applications with creative expression and connections to social issues. The scope of youth media is revealed by

organizations such as Listen Up!, a national network of more than 60 youth media organizations.

As a part of the nonprofit, community-based infrastructure of arts organizations that emerged following massive cuts in arts education, youth media is filling a significant gap. According to *A Closer Look, Media Arts 2003, Case Studies from NAMAC's Youth Media Initiative*, "Although students are sophisticated users and viewers of video, multimedia computing, interactive gaming, and text messaging... definitions of school success require young people to park their media skills and cultures at the schoolhouse door. Youth media programs bridge the gap between students' use of advanced technologies at home and in social settings and their dismal integration into the formal school curriculum."

[Source: "Youth Media Spotlight, Youth Channel," and "On the Best of Term: Youth Media Defines Itself and Its Problems," Youth Media Reports, Cliff Hahn; a closer look, *Media Arts 2003, Case Studies from NAMAC's Youth Media Initiative*, National Alliance for Media Arts and Culture; *The Creative Community, Forging The Links Between Art Culture Commerce & Community*, John M. Eger, Van Deerlin Professor of Communication and Public Policy, Executive Director, The California Institute for Smart Communities, California State University San Diego].

There is a great deal of literature exploring the connections between arts education and workplace readiness. *Creativity, Culture, Education and The Workforce*, a Center for Arts and Culture, Art, Culture & the National Agenda Issue Paper by Ann Galligan, demonstrates that arts education can help achieve several national objectives: Achieving School Standards, Reaching All Learners, and Helping Youth Develop Positively. The paper recommends that the nation require a "comprehensive" education-workforce development strategy" that includes "education in the arts and humanities as a principal cornerstone for strengthening America's cultural capital and for developing the skills necessary for Americans to remain competitive in the 21st century."

The Creative Community, Forging the Links between Art Culture Commerce & Community, by John M. Eger (The California Institute for Smart Communities, 2003) examines steps taken by "smart cities" to attract economic development, employers, and bright employees and looks at how the arts in education contribute to smart cities. Examples include LA County's "Arts for All - a regional blueprint for arts education - and The St. Augustine School model in the South Bronx, which "built its entire curriculum around dance, music, creative writing and visual art...The discipline and structure resulted in increasingly higher achievement on mastery tests, as well as increased self-esteem"

Dr. Arnold Packer, former Director of the SCANS 2000 Center, Johns Hopkins University and former Assistant Secretary of Labor for Policy, Evaluation, and Research created a template for viewing documented skills acquired through arts education and their overlap with federally defined occupational skills known as SCANS (Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills). He makes the argument that the arts are central to "productive employment."

Packer identifies four trends in the 21st century world of work *and ways in which the arts are essential to mastering them. For example, Mass production is giving way to a demand for quality. Continuous improvement is the hallmark of successful companies. Experience in the arts is one of the best ways to learn how to strive for quality and continuous improvement. Every dancer, painter, playwright, and musician wants his or her next work to be better than the last.*

[Source: Arts and Earning A Living, Dr. Arnold Packer]

Of special interest in California is the report *One Out of Five: A Report on Out-of-School and Out-of-Work Youth in Los Angeles and Long Beach*, published by the Workforce Investment Boards, City of Los Angeles, City of Long Beach. The report describes and analyzes "disconnected" youth in two Los Angeles County cities and states, "The changes that have occurred in the labor markets make it imperative that young adults engage in acquiring skills and human capital through formal education and labor market work experience. In today's labor markets, what workers "reap" over their working lives is even more strongly determined by what they "sow" during the young adult years of their lives."

Several nationally known organizations are profiled in this category. Artists for Humanity, in Boston, employs over 100 youth in its City Teens Design Company. Youth work with professional artists to design, create, and sell products in painting, photography, sculpture, silk screen, graphic design. Internal tracking and documents show that over 90 percent of alumni go on to higher education and work opportunities. AFH alumni attend schools including Boston University, New York University; Northeastern University, and Rhode Island School of Design.

Participants in the New-Orleans-based YA/YA (Young Artists, Young Aspirations) have created art for clients including Swatch Ltd., United Nations, New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival, and Burger King. The organization, which has become a model for similar groups around the U.S., operates on a guild system in which youth apprentice with professional artists and advance to higher levels of responsibility and leadership.

California organizations in this category include Reach LA, in Los Angeles, which provides training in health education, media arts and technology to educate and mobilize youth to maintain healthy lifestyles and to help fight the

spread of HIV/AIDS. Will Power to Youth, a program of Shakespeare Festival/LA in Los Angeles, is a seven-week, full-time employment program in which youth adapt and create a full production of Shakespeare play. Berkeley's Youth Radio offers training in media and digital arts; participants produce shows for local and national media including NPR.

RECOMMENDATIONS

We've learned that you can't teach kids algebra if they don't want to live. And the arts does that. It appeals to life. It appeals to the part of the brain where the imagination lives.

William Strickland, Founding Director
Manchester Craftsmen's Guild
Speaking at the Inner City Arts Center
Los Angeles, 2/26/04



As described above, this investigation yielded several findings that point toward opportunities for the youth arts field to provide access to health for at-risk youth. From these conclusions the study team is offering recommendations to The California Endowment and others in the field.

The publication and distribution of this report can afford The California Endowment with opportunities for positioning itself in an emerging field that holds great potential for recognition and growth.

Our research and discussions show that there is a readiness around California within major systems – schools, juvenile courts, foster care - to consider the evidence of the arts as an effective intervention strategy for their youth populations.

The refinement of the material in this report, its readiness for publication, and deployment of its findings would assist the foundation in several ways. First, in its role as a major convener, putting together decision-makers to discuss these findings and recommendations. Second, as an agent of systems change, transforming the approach to health access and youth health and development. Third, providing an opportunity to increase the effectiveness of service delivery by helping providers link to arts organizations as health access entry points to youth already experiencing favorable shifts because of their involvement in the arts. Finally, this research provides a starting point for a policy platform focused on healthy outcomes for youth.

I. Host a statewide convening to discuss the findings of this report.

- A. Include health services providers, youth arts agencies, officials from juvenile justice, education, foster care and other youth systems.
- B. Announce the release of this report at the convening. Invite the coverage of community, arts, youth and health media.
- C. Following the report's release, disseminate it to The Endowment constituency via www.calendow.org, listserve,.
- D. Make content from the convening and the report available via www.calendow.org.

II. Develop a California Youth Arts and Health Access discussion group

- A. Explore systems change – ways to plug service providers, mental health, prevention specialists into youth arts field.
- B. Facilitate dialogues between select model youth arts organizations and health service providers regarding paths and obstacles to partnership.
- C. Explore policy platform focusing on evidence of health and recovery for youth in arts programs.

III. Provide resources for select youth arts organizations to partner with health service providers and conduct evaluations.

- A. Choose effective model organizations representing California's geographic and cultural diversity to partner with appropriate health service providers on well-defined projects of treatment and evaluation.

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- B. Work with these partnerships to conduct short and long-term program, organizational, and outcome assessments.
 - C. Develop recommendations to the field from those reports.

IV. Develop a California Youth Arts and Health discussion group

- D. Explore systems change – ways to plug service providers, mental health, prevention specialists into youth arts field.
- E. Facilitate dialogues between select model youth arts organizations and health service providers regarding paths and obstacles to partnership.
- F. Explore policy platform focusing on evidence of health and recovery for youth in arts programs.

V. Provide resources for select youth arts organizations to partner with health service providers and conduct evaluations.

- D. Choose effective model organizations representing California's geographic and cultural diversity to partner with appropriate health service providers on well-defined projects of treatment and evaluation.
- E. Work with these partnerships to conduct short and long-term program, organizational, and outcome assessments.
- F. Develop recommendations to the field from those reports.