



Community Assistance Guide

Arts, Culture and Youth



Arts, Culture and Youth Fees

\$2,500 - \$50,000

“I can’t wait to fill you in on all you have inspired us to do. You really must plan to come to a concert so you can see it all live and be proud of what you have helped to create.”

—Anne Long, Executive Director,
Plymouth Christian Youth Center in
Minneapolis,
April 2009



The Plymouth Christian Youth Center strategic plan, which credits Robert McNulty for his technical assistance.

Three-phase Technical Assistance Program

In 1998, Partners for Livable Communities began working on how culture can serve as a tool for youth development. Today, Partners has developed a set of action steps for achieving a dynamic and effective arts-based youth development program.

✓ Phase One: Getting Started (\$2,500)

Robert McNulty will work with the community to create a constituency (city council, school boards, nonprofits, etc.) interested in using arts and youth as a community-building tool. The ArtShow book and video and results from research will be highlighted at this state.

✓ Phase Two: Developing Community Alliances (\$15,000 / 2-6 months)

Partners will assist community foundations in convening a broad scope of stakeholders. This round table discussion will help to develop strategies for the creation of a collaborative youth program that uses arts and culture as effective tools. This stage includes project brainstorming and community input, and interaction with Partners and youth will be available to community representatives. Partners and youth will also be available as a sounding board to help communities think about the feasibility of a youth development project as well as economic, transportation, and location issues. At this stage, communities will develop a strategy guide or a set of model steps for a program plan that would allow them to further fundraise for project implementation. This stage will consist of a series of visits to culminate into a full-day weekend workshop.

✓ Phase Three: Getting Underway (\$40,000-\$50,000 / 6-9 months)

At this level, communities will implement a plan for a youth and community development program particular to their community. Partners’ staff will be available for: working site visits to the communities; responding to local needs and queries; and helping to ensure ongoing evaluation and assessment of the process. Local staff is the primary component at this stage; however, a national network of professionals working with youth and community development through the arts will be created for additional support.



Partners for Livable Communities

For further information on Technical Assistance Programs that can improve the livability of your community, contact bmcnulty@livable.org or call 202-887-5990 x 108.

Art and Culture: Tools for Youth Development

Culture Builds Communities can be tailored with a focus on arts and youth. Partners' Arts and Culture:Tools for Youth Development service lasts up to nine months. Studies estimate that between 40% and 50% of students' waking hours are not committed to school. Statistics across the country bear evidence that this time is not spent productively, reporting that youth are most likely to commit a crime in the hours immediately following school.

It is therefore understandable that many communities view youth as a problem that needs to be remedied, rather than as a resource. Based on this premise, community leaders and youth workers often try to plan activities to keep youth occupied. One of the faults in this method is that activities are planned for youth not by youth.

But the problem is not simply that youth are unoccupied. Recreational programs that strive only to fill these crucial hours with activity, or that fail to view youth as resources, miss a vital opportunity to teach job skills, responsibility, and community participation.

Arts Emerge As Distinct

One of the more effective means of grafting non-school, youth-development programs is to incorporate the arts into non-school programming. A team of researchers from Stanford University led by Shirley Brice Heath completed a decade of research (1987-1997) on youth development in the non-school hours.

The Stanford study in its initial seven years gave no particular attention to those organizations that featured the arts. Only when analysis of the data indicated unique patterns among the youth did the study turn special attention to the ways that the arts worked for learning.

Is it possible, they asked, that environments organized around the arts are uniquely suited to draw youth through key cognitive, linguistic and socio-relational opportunities for development?

Their research found that youth in arts programs are:

- 25% more likely to report feeling satisfied with themselves.
- 31% more likely to say they plan to continue education after high school.
- 8 times more likely to receive a community service award.
- 3 times more likely to win an award for school attendance.
- 23% more likely to feel they can make plans and successfully work from them.



In comparison with other activities, the arts intensified the characteristics of effective learning environments.

The arts:

- Expose young people to a greater range, degree and frequency of risk.
- Provide an opportunity for the development of individual identity within a group.
- Ask members to suspend doubt, deal with intense emotions, and explore vulnerabilities.
- Demand that young people take a high level of responsibility for risks and consequences taken in performances because an audience will see their work.
- Require motivation, commitment, persistence, planning, rule setting and discipline together with perpetual self-monitoring and flexibility.
- Keep minds attentive to the present activity while looking forward to future problems, responses and possibilities .