Arts Network for Children & Youth — Réseau des Arts pour la Jeunesse

CASE-MAKING FACT SHEET #4

THE ARTS PLAY A ROLE IN CRIME PREVENTION

The role of art in crime prevention is far reaching. The arts offers opportunities for youth to gain new skills, establish positive peer relationships, and take learning risks in untraditional ways. Community art programming engages at-risk youth who are typically detached from their family, school or community. When delivered by and through quality art programming, issues facing at-risk youth such as low self-esteem, low school success, and substance abuse are considerably reduced. Creative arts are very successful in encouraging youth to become active participants in their own lives.

WHAT DO THE ARTS DO?

Because of the multifaceted way in which the arts engage youth, community art programming can offer untraditional ways in which to address personal, academic, and social issues. What looks like simple avenues for self-expression are in fact processes that work through and address many issues. Take community media arts programming for example.

"Our programming is not just about learning how to express yourself through the arts...There is a lot of bigger things we are trying to accomplish…It's also an opportunity to gain life skills, like problem-solving, working together, creativity...setting goals."

"Effectivity of Popular Arts & Culture as Medium of Youth Engagement" Youth On Youth, , Pg 32, (1)

CHALLENGING YOUTH WITH DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES THROUGH THE ARTS WORKS:

A respected gang interventionists wrote:

"One of the most natural and effective vehicles for gang members is the road of the arts, especially theatre. New values only emerge through new experience, and the arts provide an unique laboratory where truth and possibility can be explored safely. Validating emotional safety is everything."

"Coming UpTaller", J. Weitz, Presidents Committee on the Arts and Humanities, 1996, pg 19, (2)

ARTS PROGRAMS WITH TOP-NOTCH STAFF BECOME MUCH NEEDED MENTORS:

Effective art programs inspire youth through quality staff and programming.

"It is very important for kids to come into contact with adults who are experts, because kids get it on a visceral level that they are dealing with somebody who knows all there is to know about a particular area. Even if you are dealing with kids of very average ability, or below average ability, when you put them in an art activity with a highly trained person who is at the top of their field, that communicates." There is a lot of one-to-one time that is spent with adult role models, people who are respected, who pay attention and who give sensitive guidance to young people"

"*"Coming Up Taller", J. Weitz, Presidents Committee on the Arts And Humanities, 1996, pg 35 (3)*

At Risk –Youth Deal With Many Issues and the arts are an ideal way to address them

Low Self-esteem, self-concept	Learning Disabilities
Limited school success	Low self-control / interpersonal skills
Low Literacy	Mental Health Issues
Substance Abuse	Alcohol, drugs

"Framework for Justice Statistics and Analysis", Statistics Canada, Nov. 2004, pg. 6 (4)

Art Builds Self-Esteem:

"(Art) allows youth to express themselves, to create their own identity instead of having it shaped by the mainstream institutions...There is no expected outcome or no right or wrong…" This is particularly important for at-risk kids who are marginalized to begin with.

"Effectivity of Popular Arts & Culture as Medium of Youth Engagement" Youth On Youth, Pg 34, (5)

Arts Programs Hold Youth Accountable to themselves and to the Community:

Art Programs that allows youth to lead and accept responsibility is part of what makes these programs work. "It's not learning to please some external thing. The kids are in charge of the project. These projects are brought out into the community for viewing and sharing.. The kids are responsible for the success. "We give them the responsibility, and they come through every time."

"Coming Up Taller", J.Weitz, Presidents Committee on the Arts and Humanities, 1996, pg 34, (6)

The Arts Draw Upon a Range of Learning Styles :

Youth rarely process information in one style, and art programs develop opportunities for multiple ways to access learning outside of the traditional methods of school. Learning disabled youth find opportunities to explore kinesthetic learning, and visual/ spatial learning. "Drawing helps writing. Song and poetry make facts memorable. Drama makes history more vivid and real. Creative movement makes processes understandable"

"Coming Up Taller", J. Weitz, Presidents Committee on the Arts And Humanities, 1996, Pg 16 (7)

Keeping Kids Busy through Arts and Recreation Keeps Youth Out of Trouble:

The City of Fort Meyers Police claim a 28% drop in juvenile arrest since the inception of the STARS program which provided recreational and artistic outlets.

"Coming Up Taller", J. Weitz, Presidents Committee on the Arts and Humanities, 1996, Pg,71 (8)

In a study of 300 youth, Dr. Gina Browne, randomly selected youth between the ages of 10-17, in an attempt to determine what characteristics underlies risk behavior. "51% had one or more psychiatric disorders such as hyperactivity, emotional disorders, and oppositional defiant disorder."

"Making the Case for Recreation" Ideas that Matter, Dr. Gina Browne. Volume 2, Number 3, Pg. 3, (9)

"The truism that youths are the product of the communities in which they grow up is repeated so often that it is easy to ignore the role of communities in the development of crime."

"From Enforcement and Prevention to Civic Engagement", Panel On Community Safety, June 25, 2004, Robert Pitter, pg 65, (10)

With So Many Issues, at-risk kids are costly

Aside from the emotional costs of behavioral issues on family, friends, and the community at large, there are dollar costs to society.

"The estimated cost of detaining a young offender is at least $100,000!"

"Safety And Savings: Crime Prevention Through Social Development", National Crime Prevention of Canada, Economic Analysis Committee, 2006, (11)

Data from the Department of Justice indicates that fully 80% of all transfer payment funding to the provinces is directed toward supporting a growth in custody facilities for youth. ***"This over reliance on the formal justice system and imprisonment is an enormous drain on public dollars…moreover; it fails to deter youth crime."***

"Beyond Prisons Symposium" A. Leschied, Correctional Service Canada, www.csc-scc.gc.ca, pg. 2, (12)

Community Commitment Saves Money!

Cultural and recreation programs can reduce the cost of social services and policing. Gina Brownes study clearly indicated that accessible services appeared to pay for itself through reduced use of health and social services, such as child psychology, social work, policing and probation. ***A $500. savings was attributed per family, not including the doubling of the exits from social assistance!***

"Making the Case For Recreation", Ideas Matter, Dr. G. Browne, Volume 2, No. 3, 2003, Pg 7, (13)

Despite the Obvious Benefits the Arts Are Not Reaching At-Risk Youth

Despite the evidence of the multiple benefits of engaging youth in creative arts in their community, it is often overlooked or underutilized. User fees and accessibility to centers means that community cultural development with youth is under served in general and in those areas that need it most.

Percentage of Youth Who Have NOT Participated in the Arts

76.7 %	76.5 %	69.4%	61.9%
Very Poor	Poor	Not Poor	Well Off

"Youth Engagement in Artistic and Creative Expression", First Works, Canadian Heritage, Page 21, (14)

Characteristics of High Quality Arts Programming For At Risk Youth?

- Commitment to stable, long term funding, and continuity in staffing.
- Led by Artists with a history of delivering programming
- Consistent, stable facilities where youth have a sense of ownership, and security

Art Professionals Are Leaders

FOOTNOTES

1. "Effectivity of Popular Arts & Culture as Medium of Youth Engagement" Youth On Youth Grassroots Youth Collaborative on Youth Led Organizing In the City of Toronto, www.sayat.org/-youth_on_youth_gyc-report-final.pdf, Pg 32, (1)

2. "Coming Up Taller", J. Weitz, Presidents Committee on the Arts and Humanities, 1996, Pg 19, (2)

3. "Coming Up Taller", J. Weitz, Presidents Committee on the Arts And Humanities, 1996, pg 35 (3)

4. "Framework for Justice Statistics and Analysis", Statistics Canada, Nov. 2004, pg. 6 (4)

5. "Effectivity of Popular Arts & Culture as Medium of Youth Engagement" Youth On Youth, , Grassroots Youth Collaborative on Youth Led Organizing In the City of Toronto, www.sayat.org/-youth_on_youth_gyc-report-final.pdf, Pg 34, (5)

6. "Coming UpTaller", J. Weitz, Presidents Committee on the Arts and Humanities, 1996, pg 34, (6)

7. "Coming Up Taller", J. Weitz, Presidents Committee on the Arts and Humanities, 1996, Pg,16 (7)

8. "Coming Up Taller", J. Weitz, Presidents Committee on the Arts and Humanities, 1996, Pg,76 (8)

9. "Making the Case for Recreation" Ideas that Matter, Dr. Gina Browne. Volume 2, Number 3, Pg. 3, (9)

10. "From Enforcement and Prevention to Civic Engagement", Panel On Community Safety, June 25, 2004, Robert Pitter, pg 65, (10)

11. "Safety And Savings: Crime Prevention Through Social Development", National Crime Prevention of Canada, Economic Analysis Committee, 2006, (11)

12. "Beyond Prisons Symposium" A. Leschied, Correctional Service Canada, www.csc-scc.gc.ca, pg. 2, (12)

13. "Making the Case For Recreation", Ideas Matter, Dr. G. Browne, Volume 2, No. 3, 2003, Pg 7, (13)

14. "Youth Engagement in Artistic and Creative Expression", First Works Canadian Heritage, Page 21, (14)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. "Beyond Prisons Symposium" A. Leschied, Correctional Service Canada, www.csc-scc.gc.ca

2. "Coming Up Taller", J. Weitz, Presidents Committee on the Arts and Humanities, 1996

3. Correctional Service Canada,, Part 3 Report on Plans and Priorities, http://publications.pwgs. Ca, 2001-2002 Estimates

4. Culture and Recreation: Links to Well Being" S. Torjman, Caledon Institute of Social Policy, www. Caledoninst.org, April 2004

5. "Doing the Arts Justice" J. Hughes, The Unit for the Arts and Offenders Centre for Applied Theatre Research, Arts Council of England

6. "Effectivity of Popular Arts & Culture as Medium of Youth Engagement" Youth On Youth, , Grassroots Youth Collaborative on Youth Led Organizing In the City of Toronto, www.sayat.org/-youth_on_youth_gyc-report-final.pdf,

7. "Framework for Justice Statistics and Analysis", Statistics Canada, Nov. 2004

8. "From Enforcement and Prevention to Civic Engagement", Panel On Community Safety, June 25, Robert Pitter, 2004

9. "Investing In Our Future: The Youth of Ontario" Play Works, Project Report, April 2007

10. "Making the Case for Recreation" Ideas that Matter, Dr. Gina Browne. Volume 2, Number 3

11. Safety and Saving: Crime Prevention through Social Development, Economic Analysis Committee, www. phac-aspc.gc.ca, Nov. 23, 2006

12. "Strategies for a Caring Community: The Local Government Role" , Caledon Institute of Social Policy, September 1999, www.caledoninst.org

WEBSITES

1. www. phac-aspc.gc.ca - Safety and Saving: Crime Prevention through Social Development, Economic Analysis Committee,

2. http://ww2.ps-sp.gc.ca/publications/news/2004 - Archive; "Federal Government Provides Approximately $6.4 million in Crime Prevention Funding, 2004

3. www.csc-scc.gc.ca - "Beyond Prisons Symposium", Correctional Service Canada

4. http://publications.pwgs - Correctional Service Canada, , Part 3 Report on Plans and Priorities, 2001-2002 Estimates

5. www.caledoninst.org - "ANC Begins in Scarborough Village", Caledon Institute of Social Policy,2005

6. www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/cs/sp/sdc/socpol/publications/2002-002483/page00.shtml -"A Canada Fit For Children", Draft Dec 3, 2004

7. www.playworkspartnership.ca - Play Works Partnership "The Cost of Excluding Ontario's Youth From Play"

8. www.playworkspartnership.ca – Play Works Partnership

9. www.search-institute.org/assets - Search Institute's 40 Developmental Assets for Adolescents, U.S.A

10. http://www.cominguptaller.org/report_pp.html - "Coming Up Taller Report"

580 King Street West, 2nd Floor ▪ Toronto, Ontario ▪ M5W 1M3

416.536.6504 ▪ info@artsnetwork.com

www.artsnetwork.ca