

Meeting Minutes
Peer Networking Meeting
March 19, 2009

Registration & Socialization

Welcome & Introductions

Announcements

- Check out the new **college access initiative**: www.PhillyGoes2College.com
- Centro Nuevo Creacion is presenting a **Photography Exhibit, Goodlands**, on March 31st from 4:30-8pm at 249 S 36th St.
- Come to A House United: **A Workshop for Youth & Adults with African-American heritage**, April 18th from 10am-4:30pm and April 19th from 1-5pm at UPenn. Contact: thishouseunited@gmail.com
- **STEM Girls Collaborative Kick-Off Conference**: May 5, 2009 in Philadelphia
- **After School Activities Partnership (ASAP)** has the most comprehensive directory of local OST programs. To have your program listed please go to www.phillyasap.org/directories
- Check out **the OSTRC Directories** online: www.sp2.upenn.edu/ostrc/directories
- There is a **new PNM blog**, www.ostrc.blogspot.com, where discussions from the PNM can continue!

Panel Discussion, "*Arts in Out-of-School Time*"

Anne Harrison from Mural Arts began by discussing how the arts are missing from school day curricula and "fill-in-the-box skills" are edging out youth's creative thinking. Anne handed out information as to why art is important to youth development, including the impact it has on children's cognitive skills, social skills, critical thinking, etc.

Anne provided a list of methods in which staff can introduce art in their OST program:

1. **Hire an artist** with teaching/OST experience.
2. Hire someone to provide **short term workshops** and curriculum ideas for staff.
3. Connect with **local arts organizations**
4. **Go on a field trip**: museums, studios, theaters
5. The internet is full of resources for buy materials, downloading a curriculum, etc

She also provided the audience a list of low cost and popular projects:

1. found art sculpture
2. collages
3. there are a LOT of free materials out there – leftover paint, found objects, metal trays, etc

Anne noted that there are a lot of local art organizations which would be great partners. She suggested signing up for their newsletters. Some of the places she suggested were the Mural Arts Program (Big Picture and Mural Corp), Art Reach, Buildabridge, Art Sanctuary, Painted Bride, Magic Garen. To find a more

comprehensive list of culture and arts related organization, check out www.independencefoundation.org.

Anna Murphey spoke from her experience working at BuildaBridge, a nonprofit located in Germantown. BuildaBridge runs 3 main programs; an annual one-week training institute held at Bryn Mawr, which integrates the arts into any kind of program, a community programs which serves homeless and low-income populations, and "Artology," a summer program combining art and science. The program goals for the two youth programs are to build artistic, academic, social and character skills. Anna talked about three keys to successful art programs:

1. **Strong partners make strong programs.** Each program ends with a celebratory event, there is an art making event for all partners annually, they stay in close contact with their partners
2. **Relationships make the difference.** Curriculum and planning are important but the student relationship is the most important element of success
3. **Be flexible.** Things happen, remind staff in trainings that it is important to be prepared for the unexpected (e.g. role playing "uh oh moments"), youth from transitional living situations benefit a lot from consistency in OST programming

Robb Rineer from Summit Children's Program focused on **theater** and the importance of play and acting for character development in youth programming. He emphasized the importance of acting to a youth's sense of **empathy**, an essential skill for acting (have to be able to put yourself into another character's mindset). He noted that empathy is often lacking in youth, particularly since they can often only comprehend their issues and cannot see beyond their own reality.

Suggested Activity: Mirrors is an activity where two students stand facing each other, make eye contact, and mirror each other's actions. Robb has used the **mirror activity** as a **conflict resolution** tool.

He also stressed that acting teaches **The concept of future payoff/youth lack of foresight** (e.g. 40% Philadelphia high school dropout rate). Someone will never ignore their director's instruction to learn their lines after being on stage without their lines memorized. Robb also touched upon the value of sacred space and stressed that adults should be playing with kids, and invested in having fun next to kids. He strongly recommends taking kids to see performances in the disciplines they are studying.

In terms of engaging students in the arts, Robb noted the value of the instructor being the most important thing in the room. Removing a child from something they are interested in *means something more*. He also recommends having a "**back pocket game.**" When there are limited or no resources, have some games you can do that don't need any props or supplies.

Suggested Activity: "Monsters," where each kid draws for as long as you want then yell "pass!" and they pass their drawing on to another participant who draws until you yell "pass!"

Suggested Activity: One person says a line and their partner says "yes and..." and continues with the next line of the story. Example, "My friend

went to the zoo yesterday..." "YES! And...he met a talking chimpanzee who asked him to open the cage..."

Robb also talked about his participation in "Yes! And...", a local collaborative arts organization which teaches students improvisational acting. For more information as to how to bring Yes!And to your organization, check out www.yesandcamp.org

Q&A

How do you best to address the tension b/w doing something on site versus bringing in an expert?

If you have the resources, bringing in a teaching artist will enhance your program. If you don't have the resources, you can bring in an expert to help brainstorm a curriculum, for example, even if it's just as a consultant for a few hours. Bring in an artist as a mentor and a role model. It's good to have someone who can show your youth that you can make a living doing art.

Two representatives from **Peacemaking Through the Arts** advertised their traveling service located at Penn as a way to bring arts to OST programs. They also noted that **college students** are a great resource for programs that want to bring in an artist or expert.

How do kids take the skills they learn with arts and apply it to their life/community/etc?

Example: A teaching artist and her students were going to make a mural in a shelter based on patterns. One young girl based her pattern on the first letter of her name (K) repeated 3 times. When the child posted her picture, the shelter residents accused the girl of having malicious intent and the teaching artist stepped in to conduct conflict resolution. The teacher came in and talked about *the power of symbols* and how they vary across cultures. The artist and student rethought the design and the student started her own mural class for younger shelter youth to create a second mural.

Example: Even if a student isn't the "best" actor or singer, they have the experience of public speaking/performance which they can carry with them for the rest of their lives. It teaches them **confidence**.

Example: Visiting the PMA's Friday Kahlo exhibit became an entry point for a conversation (with both boys & girls) about **body image**. Self portraits in general are a great entry point for such a discussion.

Continued Socializing

Conclusion

Thank you for coming! Please join us for the next Peer Networking Meeting!

"Strengthening Your Program Budget"

Monday, April 13

9:30-11:30am

at the United Way of Southeastern PA
7 Ben Franklin Parkway