COMING UP TALLER REPORT

INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

Coming Up Taller is a report filled with hope, a narrative about youth learning to paint, sing, write plays and poems, take photographs, make videos and play drums or violins. Here are stories of children who learn to dance, mount exhibitions, explore the history of their neighborhoods and write and print their own books.

This report documents arts and humanities programs in communities across America that offer opportunities for children and youth to learn new skills, expand their horizons and develop a sense of self, well-being and belonging.

Coming Up Taller is also an account of the men and women who share their skills as they help to shape the talents of children and youth and tap their hidden potentials. These dedicated individuals, often working long hours for little pay, are educators, social workers, playwrights, actors, poets, videographers, museum curators, dancers, musicians, muralists, scholars and librarians.

The President's Committee believes strongly in the importance of including the arts and the disciplines of the humanities in the school curriculum. This study looks at what happens to young people when they are not in school and when they need adult supervision, safe places to go and activities that expand their skills and offer them hope.

The individual programs described in this study take place in many locations, some unusual, in their communities. Children, artists and scholars come together at cultural centers, museums, libraries, performing arts centers and arts schools, to be sure. Arts and humanities programs also are based at public radio and television stations, parks and recreation centers, churches, public housing complexes, teen centers, settlement houses and Boys and Girls Clubs. In places unnoticed by mainstream media, acts of commitment and achievement are evident every day.

WHY THIS REPORT

In September 1994, President Clinton announced his appointments to the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities. He and Hillary Rodham Clinton, who serves as Honorary Chair of the President's Committee, charged the Committee to increase the availability of the arts and the humanities to children, especially to those at-risk.

“Too often today, instead of children discovering the joyful rewards of painting, or music, or sculpting, or writing or testing a new idea, they express themselves through acts of frustration, helplessness, hopelessness and even violence” noted Hillary Rhodium Clinton in remarks to the President's Committee. “We see too clearly how an erosion and a breakdown of our most cherished institutions have resulted in a fraying of the whole social fabric. We know that the arts have the potential for obliterating the limits that are too often imposed on our lives. We know that they can take anyone, but particularly a child, and transport that child beyond the bounds that circumstance has prescribed”

The First Lady encouraged the Committee to offer concrete ideas about how we can provide children with safe havens” She noted, “The arts and humanities have the potential for being such safe havens. In communities where programs already exist, they are providing soul-saving and life-enhancing opportunities for young people”

As a first step, the president's Committee produced this report to identify community programs in the arts and the humanities that reach at-risk children and youth and to describe the principles and practices that make these programs effective.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Coming Up Taller calls attention to the variety and vitality of promising arts and humanities programs for children and youth. It also describes common characteristics that these programs share.

A. Perhaps the most distinguishing aspect of these programs is their ability to take full advantage of the capacity of the arts and the humanities to engage students. Beginning with this engagement, programs impart new skills and encourage new perspectives that begin to transform the lives of at-risk children and youth.

B. Community arts and humanities programs provide crucial "building blocks" for children's healthy development. These programs:

- Create safe places for children and youth where they can develop constructive relationships with their peers.
- Offer small classes with opportunities for youth to develop close, interactive relationships with adults.
- Place a premium on giving youth a chance to succeed as a way to build their sense of worth and achievement.
- Use innovative teaching strategies such as hands-on learning, apprenticeships and technology, often giving youth concrete job skills.
- Emphasize excellence and expose children to quality staff and programming.
- Build on what youth value and understand and encourage voluntary participation.
- Establish clear expectations and reward progress.
- Maintain sustained, regular programs upon which children can count and provide youth with opportunities to be valued community members.

A. The programs not only provide youth with experience in the arts and the humanities, but also deliver needed support services. While establishing independent relationships with participants, they include and work with parents.

B. These arts and humanities programs teach youth how to navigate other networks and advocate for youth with other community institutions.

C. No two programs are alike. Each program reflects its creator's mission and its community's specific circumstances. The individuality of each program is testimony to this field's ingenuity.

D. The arts and humanities programs in this report are located primarily in large cities. Many of them were created in the mid-1980s. Most programs operate with diverse but limited staff and on small budgets. Technical assistance efforts, perhaps supported by the corporate sector, community foundations or local arts and humanities councils, are needed to strengthen their administrative and fund-raising capabilities.

E. Most program staff are trained, primarily by more experienced program personnel. Only one-third of the programs provide on-going training. Initiatives should be developed to enhance training and staff opportunities. For example, staff could learn from and train at other programs. Travel grants, paid sabbaticals, staff mentorship programs and performance exchanges could enrich existing programs.

F. Partnerships provide critical support, allowing limited staff to obtain much-needed resources. Most community arts and humanities programs described in this report were initiated by arts or humanities organizations. However, they operate in partnerships with other institutions such as schools, universities, youth organizations, churches, businesses and health, housing and social service agencies. Strategies to improve linkages among cultural programs and other community institutions would enhance coordinated responses to interrelated problems.

G. These arts and humanities programs provide vivid testimony on the difference they make in children's lives. These programs document their activities, assess program strengths and weaknesses, track the progress of individual participants and compare their goals with actual practices. A few programs have documented, with some caveats, the positive correlation between program participation and cognitive development, interest in learning, motivation, organization, self-perception and resiliency.

H. With increased competition for fewer resources, the pressure to demonstrate results is increasing. However, assessment takes time and money: commodities in short supply in these programs. Community arts and humanities programs need financial support and guidance to develop assessment tools that measure impact and improve program practices.

I. Ninety-five percent of the programs report that they have more than one source of funding; most programs report that their donors are local. City government supports 58 percent of the programs; local foundations provide support to 55 percent; local corporations, to 50 percent; and individuals, to 40 percent.

J. Government agencies, city, state and federal, are the most common source of funds, though most programs receive significant private contributions, including foundation grants. While 43 percent of the organizations have received or currently receive support from the National Endowment for the Arts, National Endowment for the Humanities or Institute of Museum Services, many also receive funds from other federal departments, including the U.S. Departments of Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Justice and Labor.

K. These community programs face their greatest challenge as potential government funding cuts make their financial futures more tenuous. While private foundations cannot assume total responsibility, their leadership and decisions are pivotal. Strategies for building support, including sustained general support, as well as identifying and generating new resources are urgently needed.

Coming Up Taller demonstrates the value of supporting these arts and humanities programs and promoting their proliferation. The president's Committee hopes that this report will mark the beginning of a renewed effort by national, state and local leaders in the public and private sectors to support and expand community arts and humanities programs for children and youth at-risk. We urge leaders to tap the creativity and energy of these programs to improve the prospects for the children and youth of this nation.

HOW THE REPORT WAS DONE

The arts and the humanities programs examined in this study were identified by a broad range of organizations and agencies: the Federation of State Humanities Councils, the American Association of Museums, Project CO-Arts at the Harvard University Graduate School of Education, the U.S. Conference of Mayors, the National Recreation and Parks Association, the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Institute of Museum Services and approximately 90 other public and private agencies that work with youth. These agencies include arts organizations; national arts and humanities service groups; national networks of community institutions such as Boys and Girls Clubs, libraries, museums and parks; national youth and social service agencies; foundations and government agencies. Each of the 600 identified programs was screened to select those working primarily with at-risk children, offering sustained arts and humanities programs outside of the school curriculum. In addition, the selected programs focus on youth development through the arts and the humanities as one of their expressed goals.

Staff at the 218 programs that met these criteria were interviewed at length, providing the basis for the program profiles in Chapter Six. The interviews collected the following information:

- Why a program was created
- What arts and humanities activities are offered
- What community conditions and resources exist

- Who the program serves
- How services are delivered
- Whether staff, including artists and scholars, are trained
- Who the program's partners and supporters are
- What the impact is on participants
- How effectiveness is measured

The conclusions about what makes programs effective are based on these interviews and on visits to nine sites:

- The Artists Collective, Inc., Hartford, Connecticut
- Educational Video Center, New York, New York
- Experimental Gallery: Arts Program for Incarcerated Youth, Washington State Historical Society, Capital Museum, Olympia, Washington
- The 52nd Street Project, New York, New York
- Japantown Art and Media Workshop, San Francisco, California
- Kaleidoscope Preschool Arts Enrichment Program, Settlement Music School, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
- Read With Me: Teen Parent Project, Vermont Council on the Humanities, Morrisville, Vermont
- Teen Project, Center for Contemporary Arts of Santa Fe, Santa Fe, New Mexico
- Working Classroom, Inc., Albuquerque, New Mexico

These programs have existed from 2 to 26 years and accumulated 99 years of experience. Seven of the nine have received or currently receive support from the National Endowment for the Arts, National Endowment for the Humanities or the Institute of Museum Services. They operate in both urban and rural areas, serving youth as demographically diverse as the U.S. population. Some focus their programs on specific disciplines, such as graphic design or literature; others offer a variety of disciplines. The humanities represent the core of one program and are integrated into several others, especially those that focus on a specific culture in American society.

Organization of the report

This report is structured in six chapters.

1. **A Changed Environment for Children** describes the context in which these programs operate, presenting both disheartening statistics and the evidence of resiliency that children can display in the face of seemingly insurmountable odds.
2. **Culture Counts** reviews the value of the arts and the humanities for youth. It suggests that arts and humanities programs are crucial components of any community strategy that seeks to improve the lives of children and youth.
3. **Transforming Lives** provides an overview of the highly varied cultural programs surveyed for this report.
4. **A Delicate Balance** summarizes the principles, policies and practices found in promising programs.
5. **Looking Ahead** recommends continued examination of these programs and discusses their need for increased technical and financial support.
6. **Two Hundred Plus** contains the 218 individual profiles of arts and humanities programs for children and youth at-risk.

CHAPTER ONE
A CHANGED ENVIRONMENT FOR CHILDREN
A STATUS REPORT

Children live in a different world today than that of their grandparents. In some ways, it is a better world. More children today are better fed, better educated and free from dangerous childhood diseases. However, this progress is not shared equally by all children. Today's children face new hazards that were not even imagined by previous generations.

Changing family life patterns have greatly affected today's children. Having a parent at home full time, a given 30 years ago, is now the exception to the rule. Studies show that many young people spend 40 percent of their time without responsible adult companionship or supervision.[1] It is ironic that while technology can give America's youth membership in a global community, many are alienated from the communities outside their doors.

The Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development now reports, "The experience of growing up in American communities has changed significantly in recent decades. For most young adolescents, the feeling of belonging to a community that offers mutual aid and a sense of common purpose, whether it is found in their families, schools, neighborhoods, houses of worship, or youth organizations, has been greatly compromised."[2]

Among today's 10th grade students, for example, less than one-third attend religious activities once a week; while only a fifth participate in youth groups or organized recreational programs or take weekly classes outside of school in art, music, language or dance. One in 8 takes weekly sports lessons outside of school, while 1 in 14 volunteers or performs community service.[3]

Child poverty rates are the most widely used indicators of child well-being. In 1993, almost 14 million children in the United States were poor.[4] Their living conditions are reported as worse than those of poor children in 15 of the 18 Western industrialized countries, by the Luxembourg Income Study.[5] These children are the most likely to attend inadequate schools and to face danger in their neighborhoods and communities and the least likely to have access to recreation and support services.

Almost 4 million children are growing up in severely distressed neighborhoods, areas that have high levels of at least four of the following risk factors: poverty, unemployment, high school dropouts, female-headed families and family reliance on welfare.[6] These children are in double-jeopardy for they are surrounded by mirror images of their own vulnerability.

Almost one-third of all households with children report that their neighborhood quality is "poor" or "fair." This negative response rises to just under one-half from households with only one adult present.[7]

For some children, the rise in violence has created a brutal reality. In the United States, a child dies from gunshot wounds every 2 hours,[8] and 3 million children each year are reported abused or neglected.[9] In 1993, over one-third of male high school youth, and nearly 1 in 10 of female students, reported that they had carried a weapon (a knife, razor, club or firearm) at least once during the previous 30 days. One in 7 male high school students reported carrying a gun within the last month.[10]

Other alarming indices show that the teen suicide rate, youth violent crime arrest rate and the unmarried teen birth rate are all rising.[11] Using a cumulative risk index, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services reports that in 1992, only 45 percent of 15-year-olds, 31 percent of 16-year-olds, 24 percent of 17-year-olds and 16 percent of 18-year-olds are "risk free.[12]

For those children who survive and graduate from school, the job market they enter is tighter, more competitive and highly specialized. A high school graduate as well as a high school dropout is unlikely to secure a decent-paying job upon which a family can be supported. Today, one-third of all male workers earn less than it takes to lift a family of four out of poverty.[13]

This generation lives in an increasingly diverse society, one that can provide an enormous opportunity for cultural richness-or for distrust and resentment. In three states and the District of Columbia, "minority" children already make up the majority of the child population.[14] Consider, also, that with the "graying of America" growing numbers of elderly will depend on the productivity of working adults for their economic support. Among those future working adults are today's minority children.[15]

The Roots of Risk

All children and youth face some adversity as they grow up; most adjust and thrive. However, research indicates when problem behaviors occur, they often cluster in the same young people. "Those who drink and smoke in early adolescence are thus more likely to initiate sex earlier than their peers; those who engage in these behavior patterns often have a history of difficulties in school. When young people have a low commitment to school and education, and when teachers or parents have low expectations of the children's performance, trouble lurks. Once educational failure occurs, then other adverse events begin to take hold."[16]

These problem behaviors have common roots and feed on unfortunate circumstances in children's lives: insufficient parental support and guidance; low grades and schools with low expectations; few opportunities and challenges for growth or contribution and poor and overcrowded neighborhoods. Children facing these circumstances show an inability to resist the influence of unhealthy behavior in peers and are drawn to those who already have become risk-takers.[17]

There are ways, however, to prevent such circumstances from mushrooming into damaging behavior. Many experts have identified what children need to grow up healthy, skilled and optimistic. The Carnage Council on Adolescent Development summarizes the basic conditions children need to successfully complete the transition from childhood to adulthood:

"They must have sustained, caring relationships with adults; receive guidance in facing serious challenges; become a valued member of a constructive peer group; feel a sense of worth as a person; become socially competent; know how to use the support systems available to them; achieve a reliable basis for making informed choices; find constructive expression of the curiosity and exploration that strongly characterizes their age; believe in a promising future with real opportunities; and find ways of being useful to others."[18]

In short, children and youth need caring families and communities.

The Resilient Ones

Most of us understand how children in stable families with good schools and safe, enriching neighborhoods are able to succeed. But how does a child who does not have these supports thrive? And why is it that even when the indicators seem to signal "doomed life ahead," some children surmount adverse circumstances, growing and excelling? How do youth find ways within and outside their families to meet some of their basic needs?

A portion of the answer is found in the results of an investigation by child psychologist Emily Werner, of the University of California, and her colleague Ruth Smith, a clinical psychologist. Werner and Smith tested, over a span of more than 30 years, a sample of children born in 1955 in Kauai, Hawaii, into troubled and impoverished families. The researchers discovered that one-third of the high-risk children were vulnerable but resilient throughout the study, becoming successful in school and later at work. The study's authors described them as "Competent, confident, caring adults" The other two-thirds developed emotional and behavioral problems, which included teen pregnancy and mental health problems and delinquency.

Werner and Smith identified three clusters of protective factors separating the resilient group from the other adolescents: certain temperamental characteristics and engaging social skills; strong relationships with parents or parental substitutes, including siblings; and a community support network.

Of those children in the Werner and Smith study who did succumb to their at-risk environment, be-coming problem teenagers, a portion matured to become successful young adults. Key to their ability to pull their lives together were pivotal experiences with supportive people in situations that structured their lives. For example, problem teenagers who joined the military or a church group, went to college or developed a stable and close relationship with a spouse were more likely to become successful young men and women.[19]

While the theory of resiliency is not entirely understood, other studies support the findings of Werner and Smith. The capacity to be resilient challenges the notion that impoverished environments doom a child to a dismal future.

However, as a member of the Youth Committee of the Lilly Endowment asserts, “While children can, and often do, make the best of difficult circumstances, they cannot be sustained and helped to grow by chance arrangements or makeshift events. Some-thing far more intentional is required.”[20]

Community youth organizations now play an increasingly vital role in making “something more intentional” happen. Nationwide, more than 17,000 such organizations offer community programs for youth. These include large, national groups such as the YMCA of the USA and Boys and Girls Clubs of America, as well as local community organizations such as churches, museums, libraries, performing arts, recreation and youth development centers.

Such programs address children's needs for adult support and provide role models, often making an impression on youngsters who might otherwise surrender to hostility and hopelessness. They be-come locations in which youth “hang out” forming friendships with peers and adults while taking an active role in constructive activities and learning new skills.

As noted by the Carnegie Council, “[Y]oung members socialize with their peers and adults and learn to set and achieve goals, compete fairly, win gracefully, recover from defeat, and resolve disputes peaceably. They acquire life skills: the ability to communicate, make decisions, solve problems, make plans, set goals for education and careers. They put their school-learned knowledge to use, for example, by working as an intern in a museum.”[21] Experiences such as these can offset adverse circumstances and lead youth toward productive lives.

CHAPTER TWO
CULTURE COUNTS
THE CASE FOR ARTS AND THE HUMANITIES IN YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Organized youth activities can deter risky behavior in adolescents, according to a recent national study. Students who participate in band, orchestra, chorus or a school play, for example, are significantly less likely than nonparticipants to drop out of school, be arrested, use drugs or engage in binge drinking. Unfortunately, this same study also notes that today's most vulnerable youth spend less time in activities like these and are therefore deprived of their benefits.[22]

Quality youth programs, whether organized around the arts and the humanities, sports, science or outdoor exploration, are a crucial source of supportive relationships and vital experiences. Arts and humanities programs are particularly potent in promoting youth development. We see this most clearly in educational settings when the arts and the humanities are fully integrated into the curriculum.

Several integrated educational models currently exist in the United States. The Duke Ellington School of the Arts in the District of Columbia provides its high school students, most of whom come from disadvantaged backgrounds, with the chance to attend a school where academics and the arts share the school day equally. In Kansas City, 7 public school districts, 11 arts organizations and 35 donors have banded together across state lines to form Arts Partners, an initiative to integrate community arts resources into the school curriculum. Schools benefiting from this approach have seen the transforming effect of the arts and the humanities on the quality of education and on student achievement.

While humanities disciplines such as history, literature and language have long been accepted as part of the standard school curriculum, the enlightened educator who understands the value of the arts has had insufficient educational theory and research upon which to base his or her insight. In the last several years, this gap has begun to close.

Studies are exploring the role of arts education in the development of higher order thinking skills, problem-solving ability and increased motivation to learn. Other studies are finding correlations between arts education and improvements in academic performance and standardized test scores, increases in student attendance and decreases in school drop-out rates.

The following points elaborate on the important ways culture counts in the development of children and youth.

The arts and the humanities draw upon a range of intelligences and learning styles. Experts believe that people do not possess a single general intelligence, but several different kinds: linguistic, musical, logical-mathematical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal and intrapersonal.[23] Schools by and large focus on linguistic and logical-mathematical intelligences. In so doing, America's educational institutions may consign many children to under-achievement and failure. As eminent psychologist Howard Gardner notes, "[S]tudents with strengths in the spatial, musical, or personal spheres may find school far more demanding than students who happen to possess the "text-friendly" blend of linguistic and logical intelligences.[24]

The arts and the humanities provide children with different ways to process cognitive information and express their own knowledge. Using processes different from traditional approaches, the arts and humanities provide children with unique methods for developing skills and organizing knowledge. Each arts and humanities discipline has its own distinct symbol system, whether it is nonverbal, as with music or dance, or uses language in a particular way, as with creative writing or oral history. Exposure to these alternate systems of symbols engages the mind, requiring analysis, synthesis, evaluation and application.[25]

The arts have the potential to enhance academic performance. The arts give youngsters a richer reservoir of information upon which to draw in pursuing other subjects, such as reading, writing, mathematics and history. “Drawing helps writing. Song and poetry make facts memorable. Drama makes history more vivid and real. Creative movement makes processes understandable.[26]

By honing nonverbal skills such as perception, imagination and creativity, the arts also develop vocabulary, metaphorical language, observation and critical thinking skills.[27] The elements of sound, movement, space, line, shape and color are all concepts related to other subject areas such as math and science. The concepts taught in the arts permeate other scholastic disciplines, and a child's comprehension of an artistic concept can extend across the academic curriculum.

Furthermore, the teaching methods used in many arts and humanities programs provide alternative approaches to learning. For example, some children can process and retain information more effectively when they learn by doing, engage in apprentice-like relationships and use technology such as in computer graphics and videography.[28]

The arts and the humanities spur and deepen the development of creativity. By their very nature, the arts and the humanities place a premium on discovery and innovation, originality and imagination. As such, they can be powerful vehicles for stimulating creativity in young people, a valuable trait throughout their lives.

Businesses today increasingly look for workers who can think and create. Clifford V. Smith, Jr., president of the GE Fund, is typical when he says, “Developing business leaders starts in school. Not in assembly-line schooling, but rather through the dynamic processes that the arts-in-education experience provides.”[29]

The arts and the humanities provide critical tools for children and youth as they move through various developmental stages. Preschool children, before they are fluent in language, are powerfully affected by music, visual arts and dance. Preschoolers can paint, color, mold clay, sing songs and dance in order to convey feelings and ideas. These activities encourage young children to express themselves and learn through the use of nonverbal symbols.

Teenagers struggle with issues of identity, independence, competency and social role. The arts help to mediate this confusion. “Creative art activity allows the adolescent to gain mastery over internal and external landscapes by discovering mechanisms for structure and containment that arise from within, rather than being imposed from outside. The artistic experience entails repetition of actions, thoughts or emotions, over which the adolescent gains increased tolerance or mastery. While providing a means to express pain and unfulfilled longings during a distinct maturational phase, the arts simultaneously engage the competent, hopeful and healthy aspects of the adolescents' being.”[30]

Similarly, the humanities encourage youth to read, write and express themselves in a disciplined way.

Changes in body image may be expressed through movement and dance. Drama offers the opportunity to explore identity by integrating childhood roles and experimenting with future possibilities. Music expresses emotional dissonance and volatility. The visual arts provide a vehicle for translating inner experiences to outward visual images.[31] Writing and oral history projects bring a greater understanding of one's family and neighborhood.

The arts and the humanities teach the value of discipline and teamwork and the tangible rewards each can bring. When children's efforts culminate in a performance or exhibition, they have a chance to experience meaningful public affirmation, which provides them with some degree of celebrity. For those few minutes, children are in their own eyes every bit as important as anybody-any TV, sports, music, movie or video idol.[32] This can be an experience of particular potency for youngsters whose lives are primarily characterized by anonymity and failure.

The arts and the humanities provide youth with a different perspective on their own lives, a chance to imagine a different outcome and to develop a critical distance from everyday life. For one adult poet, a well-known children's book allowed her to envision a different world from the abusive one in which she lived as a child. At a conference for adults learning to read, she recalled this experience, held up Smokey and the Cowhorse and said, "This is the book that saved my life" Victor Swenson, executive director of the Vermont Council on the Humanities, elaborates:

"It [the book] represented a world outside of her own circumstances; a world of honor and honesty, love and loyalty and bad luck and good luck. It gave her something outside of her own experience. And she could see that there was a way out."[33]

Developing cultural literacy in children and youth gives them a sense of perspective as they participate in traditions of expression from which they learn and to which they can contribute. As humanist John William Ward wrote in 1985, "[H]umanistic learning is centered on the individual who has important questions about self and society. To learn some of the answers to those questions means the fullest and richest and most imaginative development of every single self.[34]

A respected gang-interventionist writes, "One of the most natural and effective vehicles for gang members is the road of the arts, especially theater. New values only emerge through new experiences, and the arts provide a unique laboratory where truth and possibility can be explored safely. Validating emotional safety is everything."[35]

Because dance, music, photography and other visual arts transcend language, they can bridge barriers among cultural, racial and ethnic groups. The arts also can promote a deeper understanding of similarities and differences among religions, races and cultural traditions. For some children, the exploration of their unique cultural histories can be critical to their sense of themselves and to others' images of them. This knowledge can help bind them more fully to the larger society of which they are a part.

Finally, the arts and the humanities are a critical part of a complete education. The true worth of cultural knowledge transcends any of its specific applications. Exposure to the arts and the humanities and the experience.

CHAPTER THREE
TRANSFORMING LIVES
AN OVERVIEW OF ARTS AND HUMANITIES PROGRAMS

In the spring of 1996, 20 teenagers from a low-income community in Pennsylvania will graduate from high school with 6 years of professional theater experience. Jessie is one of them.

She was in the sixth grade when The People's Light and Theater Company reached out to a group of students and made a commitment to stay involved with them until they graduated from high school. The Theater Company worked with students after school year-round. Staff provided transportation and, during the summer time, provided employment as well. This ensemble of teenagers, called "New Voices Ensemble," created plays together, as they wrote, improvised, rehearsed and performed.

Jessie was moody at first, sometimes walking out of rehearsals. Her family situation was extremely difficult, and she often had to supervise and attend to five younger brothers and sisters. Then, while working on A Midsummer Night's Dream, Jessie seemed instinctively to understand Shakespeare. It was a pivotal time; she gradually evolved from the one who "got involved in confrontations" into the mediator to which everyone turned when disagreements arose among Ensemble members. Over time, the Ensemble became like a family, but one "she didn't have to take care of, one that helped her to take care of herself." Though her own family situation continued to be fraught with stress, Jessie became one of the top students in the 12th grade. She now hopes to become a lawyer.[36]

The participants Stories like Jessie's are common among the programs profiled in this report. The 218 arts and humanities programs described in Chapter Six touch the lives of an estimated 88,600 youth each year. While they reach children of all ages, 92 percent of the programs work with teens. Seventy-two percent of the programs also serve 6- to 12-year-olds, and 24 percent assist preschoolers.

Most youth participating in these programs live in large cities. They come from 36 states and the District of Columbia. These children represent every racial and ethnic group in the country and include school dropouts, teen parents, immigrants, refugees and gang members. Some live in juvenile detention centers, public housing projects, halfway houses or homeless shelters. Others are simultaneously enrolled in prevention programs for substance abuse, teen pregnancy, school dropout or juvenile delinquency.

Mostly, they are "just kids" who were born into economically disadvantaged families and/or resource-poor communities. And being just kids, they long for friendship, approval, protection, security, connectedness and things to do. However, often living in poor communities or stressed families, these youth sometimes grow up with little adult guidance, in fear of physical danger, with few stimulating activities and with considerable uncertainty about their futures.

Program origins

Though by no means reaching all youth in need, community programs devoted to children like Jessie are proliferating. There appear to be more cultural programs now than at any other time in our history. However, many more programs are needed to reach under-served children and youth.

This survey shows that many of the programs were started in the last half of the 1980s, but their antecedents trace their origins to the settlement house movement and community music schools. Henry Street Settlement and the Third Street Music School Settlement, both in New York City, are now over 100 years old. These organizations offered programs in the arts and culture as part of a constellation of services designed to address the needs of poor European immigrants. The same can be said of Hull House in Chicago, started in 1889 by social work pioneer Jane Addams. Hull House continues to provide community cultural activities through its Beacon Street Gallery and Theatre, which became separately incorporated in 1989.

Since the late 1960s, government agencies and private philanthropies have supported community arts and humanities programs. The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), the largest donor to the arts since 1976, has played a major role in decentralizing the arts to ensure broad access. Since the Endowment's creation in 1965, the network of local arts agencies has grown from 500 to 3,800. State and territorial arts councils have increased from 5 to 56. Several of the programs described in this report were created by local councils, including those in Tucson, Arizona; New Orleans, Louisiana; and Toledo and Columbus, Ohio.

In 1971, the NEA established its Expansion Arts program specifically to encourage the development of community cultural organizations. These organizations assumed that improving lives in their neighborhoods was part of their mission. Thus, helping children and youth was a natural extension of their activities. Over one third of the organizations profiled have received NEA support.

In recent years the NEA also has expanded its partnership collaborations with other government agencies such as the Corporation for National and Community Service, the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Justice to encourage greater involvement of arts organizations in federally supported community prevention programs for youth. Projects supported through these federal partnerships often have national impact or serve as models to encourage the expansion of support for programs that utilize the arts to benefit at-risk youth.

State humanities councils, largely supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), also grew during the 1970s, and with their expansion began a flourishing of literacy, oral history and community revitalization programs. These programs encourage scholars to take active roles in their communities, bringing their perspectives into active play and bringing the community together around discussions of important issues. Humanities councils in Kentucky, Louisiana, New Jersey, Vermont and the District of Columbia created programs that are described in Chapter Six.

The Institute of Museum Services (IMS), established in 1976, serves all varieties of museums from art, history, science and children's museums to zoos and botanical gardens. IMS supports museums that have taken an active role in their communities and have reached out to new audiences. Museums in partnership with community leaders, educators and others are creating innovative and effective ways to address a wide range of social concerns. Museum programs for at-risk children range from art activities fostering personal expression to opportunities for exploring cultural heritage and building skills and confidence through inquiries into the world of science. More than a dozen programs created by museums are described in this report, including programs at children's museums in Brooklyn, New York; Holyoke, Massachusetts; Indianapolis, Indiana; Las Vegas, Nevada; and Seattle, Washington; as well as at the Georgia Museum of Art in Athens, New York State Museum in Albany and The Mexican Museum in San Francisco.

Programs that reach youth by engaging them in cultural activities arise under many circumstances. Some are started by artists or teachers concerned about young people; others are begun by mayors or by juvenile justice or youth workers who want to provide positive experiences for children and youth.

When visual artists at City Center Art in Birmingham, Alabama, noticed neighborhood children hanging out at their warehouse, they developed an arts program-Space One Eleven -for youth who live in the nearby housing complex.

In Buffalo, New York, children knocked on the door of a local artist named Molly Bethel asking her to teach them to paint. That was over 35 years ago, and today, MollyOlga Neighbor-hood Art Classes remains a neighborhood sanctuary, available to any young person.

Television director Roberto Arevalo began The Mirror Project at Somerville Community Access Television in 1992 after meeting eight teenagers at a local park in Somerville, Massachusetts. He began to work with them, helping them to explore their neighborhoods with video cameras. Two of the videos won awards, and now, with partial funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the program operates at housing developments, Boys and Girls Clubs and community centers in the area.

Sometimes artists who have retired from their performing careers draw upon their backgrounds to help young people. Former ballerina turned defense attorney Sherry Jason and her public defender husband Bob started the Sentenced to the Stage program for juvenile offenders in Topanga, California. In this program, offenders must participate in acting and dancing workshops as a condition of their probation. Similarly, a former Joffrey and American Ballet Theatre dancer leads classes at OneArt studio's Kids Off Streets program, in Miami, Florida, located in one of the most violent neighborhoods in the country.

Some programs were founded by nationally known artists or organizations. Alvin Ailey Company, for example, initiated AileyCamp for high-risk children, and the dance camp now runs in Frostburg, Maryland, Kansas City and New York City. Since 1966, the Arena Stage in the District of Columbia has run the Living Stage Theatre Company for poor children, teen mothers and incarcerated youth. The Cleo Parker Robinson Dance Theatre is building a positive record with first-time offenders, teen parents and other at-risk youth through its Project Self Discovery in Denver.

For other organizations, the impetus to launch youth outreach programs is more practical. For example, the Settlement Music School in Philadelphia runs an arts-enriched preschool program for children living in a public housing project across the street. Since the School was empty during the morning hours, it seemed logical to use the space for nearby children.

It is impossible to pinpoint exactly what stimulates the personal vision and commitment of the individuals behind these programs. Whatever their reasons, perhaps the most compelling is that the needs of today's children are so profound.

Program Content

These programs provide children with a rich range of opportunities to create and to reflect, from 10-minute skits to Shakespeare, rap music to opera and rites of passage ceremonies to ballet. Children in these programs produce custom-designed T-shirts, ceramics and murals. They play saxophones and violins and transform public spaces into places of beauty. The programs facilitate youth's production of videos to help rival gangs understand each other and to help teens communicate with adults. Teen mothers improve their parenting skills using children's literature. Young people research the history of their communities, sometimes using a video camera and sometimes a pen, in order to gain a perspective on the present. The children learn how to become museum docents and what it takes to become a curator.

There is no one cultural discipline that dominates the field. Taken together, the programs report that they spend 24 percent of their time on theater, 18 percent on music, 16 percent on literature, 15 percent on dance, 8 percent on other humanities and 7 percent on the visual arts. The remaining 12 percent is spent on a variety of other activities, such as folk arts and film.

Even though these are not primarily social service programs, they provide an array of support services for children and youth beyond arts and humanities activities. Because of the difficult circumstances of many participants' lives, it is not uncommon for programs to offer conflict resolution sessions, life skills and job training, job and college counseling, tutoring and sometimes even meals and transportation services.

The Manchester Craftsmen's Guild in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in addition to offering an Arts Apprenticeship Training Program in ceramic arts, computer imaging, drawing and photography, also provides college counseling services. This combination may account for the fact that 74 percent to 80 percent of participants in the Program are accepted into college, compared to 20 percent in the surrounding community.

Tutorial programs in math, reading and computers, as well as dance, heritage arts, poetry and vocal arts are available to the children participating in the STARS Program-Success Through Academic and Recreational Support, sponsored by the City of Fort Myers, Florida. When the Program began, the majority of its students had less than a C average, but now 80 percent maintain a C average or better. The city police point to a 28 percent decline in juvenile arrests since the Program was founded in l989.

Some programs charge a modest fee, but scholarships and waivers generally are available for children who cannot afford it. Most materials are provided free-of-charge. Prime Time Family Reading Time, a project of the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities, gives Children's books to families so parents can read them aloud to their children at home. Children on scholarship participating in Project LIFT, The Dance Ring DBA New York Theatre Ballet program, receive free ballet lessons, dance clothes, transportation money and books. Project LIFT also provides school clothes, winter coats and emergency medical care when needed. The Sarasota Ballet of Florida provides instruction, dancewear and transportation to scholarship participants in Dance-The Next Generation.

These cultural programs serve both large populations and small numbers of youth. Appalshop in Whitesburg, Kentucky, involves 13 youth a year in a program that uses videography as a way to document Appalachian culture. In contrast, 120 teenagers sing in the Oakland Youth Chorus in California, while 2,000
children participate in dance, creative-writing, music, theater and visual arts classes in recreation centers in Columbus, Ohio's Children of the Future program.

The average number of children served annually by these programs is 407; the median number, 100. Sixty percent of the programs report annual increases in attendance since they began.

Program staff

Most programs employ a small number of staff and make additional use of volunteers and consultants. “Consultant” is a category that includes the artists and scholars who work directly with children and youth. Each employee works long hours for modest pay and little job security, using his or her skills and energy to provide youth with new perspectives and new experiences.

Over an average year, programs employ 3.5 permanent staff members, 23 volunteers and 9.2 consultants, primarily artists and scholars. The annual median number of staff is 2, with 5 volunteers and 8 consultants.

Most programs provide some type of training for people who work directly with youth. This training is likely to be provided in-house by more experienced personnel. Only one-third of the programs provide ongoing training, however. A majority of programs prefer staff who have had previous experience working with children and youth.

Who are the individuals working most closely with children in these programs? They are poets, actors, dancers, musicians, painters and museum curators, to be sure. They also are college teachers, historians, recording technicians, commercial artists, mask-makers, muralists, electronic and print media experts, lawyers, public health nurses, youth and social service workers, along with many others.

Young Aspirations/Young Artists (YAYA) program in New Orleans teaches youth the occupational aspects of art by partnering juveniles with commercial artists every day after school and on weekends to work on projects and commissions, which they create and
then sell.

Television Executive Producer Chris Schueler staffs, along with lawyers from the University of New Mexico Institute for Public Law, FENCES, a computer-based interactive television show, produced by teens. Teens are exposed to writing, video production, editing, graphic development, set design and construction.

In Vermont, public health nurses are an integral part of the Read With Me: Teen Parent Project offered by the Vermont Council on the Humanities. Nurses identify interested teenagers and transport them and their infants to the literacy through children's literature program. Professors from local colleges, librarians and independent scholars facilitate these sessions.

Through home visits made by public health nurses, the project is able to extend its programs to teens unable to visit its site and to reinforce the importance of reading to a child among participants.

Partnerships

While this study focuses on programs outside school curricula, schools remain very much involved. Sixty-eight percent of the arts and humanities programs report that they work in partnership with schools. Schools identify children who would benefit from these programs and make their facilities available after hours. Some programs deliberately build on in-school learning, while others run in-school programs in addition to community programs.

Partnerships are an integral part of these programs. In fact, most organizations seek and develop collaborations with other groups, enriching their resources and expanding the opportunities they can provide for children and youth. To a large degree, the impact and sustainability of these programs depends on innovative alliances. Partners can be active participants or providers of support services such as facilities, materials and funding.

The Victory in Peace Program, created by the Charles A. Wustum Museum of Fine Arts in Racine, Wisconsin, is a partnership among the Museum, the Racine Urban League, the Racine Council for the Prevention of Drug and Alcohol Abuse and The Taylor Home and Education Center. In this program, young people create books that are then sold to museums and rare book collections around the country or placed in the local library and the Wustum Museum.

California Lawyers for the Arts in San Francisco collaborates with the San Francisco Unified School District and the Private Industry Council, a nonprofit organization that administers federal Job Training Partnership Act funds, to find employment for youth in local cultural institutions.

The Community Arts Partnership program, run by Plaza de la Raza in Los Angeles, pairs youth with art students from the California Institute for the Arts. These one-on-one mentoring relationships are developed at community centers throughout the city.

Similarly, college students from Brown University, Rhode Island College and Providence College, along with independent music and dance teachers, act as mentors to young people in The Cultural Alternatives Program of The Music School in Providence, Rhode Island. Participating youth also receive training in violence prevention from the University of Rhode Island Teen Crime Prevention Program.

The Cultural Center for the Arts in Canton, Ohio, initiated Children's Art Connection for children ages 8 to 12, in partnership with the Canton Ballet, the Canton Symphony Orchestra, the Canton Museum of Art and The Players Guild. Through this program, children attend artist-led classes and performances held at the participating cultural institutions.

Budgets and Funding

Two-thirds of the programs examined in this report were created by arts education and arts organizations such as theaters, dance companies and symphonies. Some are housed in major mainstream cultural and educational institutions such as Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts in New York City, The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in the District of Columbia and The Wang Center for the Performing Arts in Boston. But many others exist in neighborhoods and inhabit modest accommodations.

The Teen Project of the Center for Contemporary Arts of Santa Fe resides in a converted warehouse near the railroad for which a dollar a year is paid to the City of Santa Fe. Precita Eyes Mural Arts Center in San Francisco rents a two-room space packed with student work. The Artists Collective, Inc., in Hartford, Connecticut, occupies a former Catholic school while it finishes raising the funds needed to break ground on a new building.

While the annual budgets of the community programs surveyed here range from $4,355 to $3,000,000, the average annual budget is $158,537, and the median budget is $84,000. Most piece together their budgets

each year from a variety of sources. Ninety-five percent of the programs report more than one source of funding. Acquiring funding and seed money has proved much easier than attracting long-term support. The majority of donors-individuals, foundations, corporations, government-are local. City governments provide funds to 58 percent of the programs; local foundations, to 55 percent; local corporations, to 50 percent; and individuals, to 40 percent.

State and federal governments are a significant source of financial support for these programs. Almost half receive some support from their state government. The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and/or the Institute of Museum Services (IMS) support or have supported 43 percent of organizations surveyed.

In all, 43 percent of the programs receive funds from federal agencies, including, in addition to NEA, NEH and IMS: U.S. Department of Agriculture (Extension Service); Corporation for National and Community Service (AmeriCorps); Corporation for Public Broadcasting; U.S. Department of Education (Title 1, Compensatory Education); U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (Head Start; Center for Substance Abuse Prevention); U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (Title 1, Community Development Block Grant; Public Housing Drug Elimination); U.S. Department of Justice (Office of Juvenile Justice Prevention); U.S. Department of Labor (Job Training Partnership Act; Summer Youth Employment and Training).

Public funds account for the largest source of support for 40 percent of the programs participating in this study. Seventeen percent of these organizations identified municipal government as their largest donor, while state and federal governments were listed as the largest supporters of 11 percent and 12 percent of these programs, respectively.

CHAPTER FOUR
A DELICATE BALANCE
PRINICIPLES AND PRACTICES OF PROMISING ARTS AND HUMANITIES PROGRAMS

As we have seen in the previous chapter, arts and humanities programs for children and youth vary immensely. Sponsored by different organizations working in partnership with others, these programs offer a range of cultural experiences in a variety of locales.

Are there certain practices, though, that are fundamental to these programs' effectiveness with children? Are there features that cause programs to be captivating rather than merely available?

A substantial body of information exists on the characteristics of successful programs for children and youth.[37] This chapter seeks to describe these attributes from the perspective of artists, scholars and directors of community arts and humanities programs.

This study found that the most effective programs maintain a delicate balance between structure and flexibility, creating opportunities for growth and building on the familiar. Successful programs focus on specific arts and humanities disciplines without ignoring broader child development contexts. These programs work with parents while preserving independent relationships with children. Finally, they capitalize on the unique perspectives possessed by artists and humanists.

The following characteristics were identified through site visits to the nine programs named in the Introduction and Summary.[38] The descriptions below quote liberally from the people directly involved because their voices embody the vision and character of the programs themselves.

Effective programs take full advantage of the capacity of the arts and the humanities to stimulate ways of knowing and learning. These programs teach children new languages: the language of visual images, of movement, of sound. The new skills learned can be exciting; for children and youth whose verbal skills are limited, these new languages are empowering.

Arts skills can be wonderfully liberating. “When I teach kids drawing,” recalls Carlos Uribe, director of programs at the Center for Contemporary Arts of Santa Fe, Teen Project, I say, “The wonderful thing about drawing is you can be anywhere, and you can do it. You can draw anything you want. It's an ultimate freedom for you. It doesn't have to be the greatest piece of artwork. You can throw it away as soon as you do it. But for the moment, you are ultimately free, and there's almost no other place on this planet where you can experience that.”

The Kaleidoscope Preschool Arts Enrichment Program at the Settlement Music School in Philadelphia provides children with alternative techniques for perceiving their world. As Robert Capanna, executive director of the Settlement Music School, explains, “If you sit at a desk and try to understand your environment only through verbal concepts and verbal communication, it obviously has a different impact on you than if you get up and move around the space, or if you try to look at the space and reproduce it on paper, or if you engage in singing and making sounds through instruments. All of those things give you an opportunity to understand your environment differently.”

The Experimental Gallery in the Washington State Historical Society, Capital Museum serves youngsters in juvenile detention centers who have failed in mainstream schools and society. This program encourages them to re-engage, re-define and re-enter their families and communities on new terms. “The youth come to us pretty beaten down and with a pretty low self-image. They start believing, perhaps, what people have said about them. But through their abilities to develop a skill in art or in expressing themselves quite differently, they're able to bring up that self-image,” says Carol Porter, superintendent of Maple Lane School, Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration.

Respecting young people's arts skills is crucial. “We treat everyone as an actor, or an artist or a writer from the minute they walk in,” says Nan Elsasser, executive director of Working Classroom, Inc. Robert Capanna, of the Settlement Music School, agrees. “What is most important to kids is to know that they are in a place that is treating them with respect for their abilities”

Elsasser continues, “What happens a lot of times in education is that your imagination and vision is the last thing that you're exposed to. It's like you can't write a play because you can't write a sentence. When you have a perfect sentence, you're allowed to write a paragraph. When you can write a perfect paragraph, you're allowed to write [a short story]. We do the opposite. We start purely with the imagination and then help youth build the technical skills to finesse their expression of that. I think that's really, really important. These are kids whose ideas and imagination have not been encouraged, not even acknowledged.”

This acknowledgment is often the key to altering positively youth's self-image. “I've seen kids walk in here who have been slumped to the ground because their self-esteem is so low,” says Ana Gallegos y Reinhardt, director of the Teen Project, Center for Contemporary Arts of Santa Fe. “They make bad grades. Their parents beat them, abuse them. They don't feel like they have any skills. They're coming in here, and we see what they have. You give them a little bit of stimulus, and it's like they blossom. It's giving kids permission to have ideas, because they don't even actually acknowledge that they can have an original idea.”

Effective programs emphasize dynamic teaching tactics such as hands-on learning, apprenticeship relationships and the use of technology. Traditional teaching methods can be abstract and remote for many youngsters. “Children don't want to know about things intellectually. They want the experience of doing them,” observes Capanna.

Experiential learning acts as a gateway to other kinds of learning. “We found that through the exhibit process, you can teach all kinds of important social and academic skills,” says Susan Warner, curator of education, Washington State Historical Society, Capital Museum. “Our students have been unsuccessful in mainstream schools. But they were willing to create the art for the exhibit. And then, by helping to plan the exhibit, they learn things like audience identification, what is appropriate in an exhibit. They use basic math skills in determining how you design and lay it all out. Pretty soon, they are improving their reading and writing skills.”

While the goals of the Educational Video Center in New York City do not explicitly include the teaching of math and science, both disciplines are involved when making a video. “There's a lot of science in what we do. You figure out the physics of light and color and distance and motion and time, all the things that are involve[d] in shooting and editing a video,” says Steven Goodman, executive director.

Apprenticeship relationships occur in many of these programs. The 52nd Street Project, for instance, pairs young children one-on-one and two-on-two with professional playwrights and actors to write and produce mini-plays.

The use of computers, video cameras and recording and broadcast studios holds enormous appeal for youth who experience the electronic media everyday. Having access to these expensive means of cultural production is a special opportunity for many of them, and the challenge of mastering the machines can be motivating. The technology allows youth what Uribe of the Teen Project calls “a fast hit,” the experience of success on which the programs can build.

Effective programs provide children and youth with opportunities to succeed. Central tenets of these programs include generating the expectation of success and then providing the means to accomplish defined goals.

For some children, success is completing work, however modest the project. For others, success lies in fulfilling a contract with a community organization, selling works of art or mounting an exhibition or performance.

"We try to guarantee success, because a lot of our kids have not been successful in school," says Robert Sotelo, artist/educator who works in one of the juvenile detention centers in Washington state. "We make sure they finish projects, make sure they finish what they start, no matter how small. They may do 10 percent of their first project, and I may do 90 percent of it as a way of nursing, basically. But I've had kids go from that to wanting to stay when I'm supposed to go home. Then they will call and want to come over and work because they have these great ideas."

These programs dedicate themselves to finding a way for everybody to excel at something. Sometimes it takes a little cleverness. At The 52nd Street Project, actors and playwrights motivate a youngster by writing a play in which he or she will be great, or by performing the child's ideas. The staff also casts according to the unique abilities of the children. "If a kid has a raspy voice, make him or her a pirate. If the kid can't remember long passages, then we're talking a terse pirate. If the kid can't manage to stand still on stage, that terse pirate is tied to the mizzenmast," says Willie Reale, artistic director.[39]

These groups work tirelessly to construct an environment where young people believe that even if a contractor does not pick their design, they are not featured in a performance or their artwork is not picked for an exhibition, it still has value. Dollie McLean, founding executive director of The Artists Collective, Inc., says, "Somebody has to care about what happens to these young people and say, "No, you can do it better," or give them the encouragement to try it again, to try it in another way, and if that doesn't work, try it some other way. If they don't do this well, then you find the thing that they do well and concentrate on that."

These programs, however, put a high premium on excellence. Many of the groups put on performances and exhibitions, or sell items the students make. The response of the public is one criterion for excellence. "If the audience didn't like it, not only would we be unhappy, but the kids wouldn't be successful. So it is about creating good theater...it's not so much about social work for kids," explains Carol Ochs, executive director of The 52nd Street Project.

Public affirmation can be the most powerful motivator of all. "It doesn't matter if people tell you, "Oh, you're wonderful," says Elsasser. Outside recognition from the public can be much more compelling. She goes on to explain: "We opened this gallery last Friday, and there were over 200 people who came and bought commissioned work. Bingo!...The youngsters do need positive reinforcement, but they know when it's real and when it's just part of the curriculum.'

Effective programs begin small and keep their classes small. One of the reasons these programs have an impact on young lives is that the classes are small. Hands-on learning and apprenticeship programs necessitate small classes. Since mentoring, academic, artistic and personal, lies at the heart of the power of these programs, any dilution of the adult-child relationship diminishes their impact.

"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 the young people," says Bernie Lopez, executive director of the Center for Contemporary Arts of Santa Fe. "That's something that's almost totally absent in their lives. They get almost no one-to-one time with an adult anywhere, certainly almost none at school."

There are practical reasons for beginning small, as well. Putting programs such as these in place requires intense labor. Ensuring success is even more challenging. Beginning with a small number of children is important until a step-by-step strategy for expansion can be implemented.

Effective programs build on what young people already value. The experiences that children and youth bring with them are not only valid, but also the core around which the learning process is built. Not all children and youth, however, come to these programs believing that the arts and the humanities are

particularly relevant to their lives. “You cannot throw somebody who has been beaten down most of their life into a drawing class and expect them to understand the beauty of drawing. tHey're not there yet,” recognizes Uribe. “Getting them there' means beginning with what youth value and understand.

For many of the young people in these programs, economic survival is a critical issue. Getting a job relates to this primary concern. “I like to have pragmatic goals for these kids,” says Dennis Taniguchi, executive director of the Japantown Art and Media Workshop, “and something real for them to get into, that they can see how they can make some bucks. That”s a very good way to reach these kids.”

These young people are not rejecting the adult world, but trying to figure out how effectively to play a role in it. “You can't exclude kids from the adult world because that's where they're headed and that's what much of their frustration and longing is about,” says Lopez.

The staff of The Artists Collective, Inc. would agree. Among its offerings is a Summer Youth Employment and Training Program that rewards discipline, appropriate dress, grooming and good behavior with a small stipend. The Artists Collective, Inc., located in one of Hartford, Connecticut's poorest neighborhoods, now is known locally as the “oasis on Clark Street.”

But if learning art for pay “buys a little patience,” so does the use of technology for this media-savvy generation. The Japantown Art and Media Workshop uses computer games to teach design and offers an apprenticeship in computer graphic design. The Educational Video Center recognizes that learning to communicate through a video camera is part of the attraction of their program. Their apprenticeship program in videography capitalizes on young people's interest in media.

Both of these programs apprentice youth to professionals who are completing specific projects under contract. Working on “real-world” projects in a Òreal-worldÓ environment with a client and a contract, deadlines, telephones and fax machines makes the task more compelling. It also addresses a central concern many young people have about their futures: their employability.

Future employment is exactly what is behind the YO-TV program at the Educational Video Center. Designed for a small group of high school graduates, YO-TV provides them with advanced, pre-professional training and allows them to create broadcast-quality documentary videos on issues of concern to the community.

Some programs build on current teen fads. Both the silk-screening classes at the Japantown Art and Media Workshop and the Teen Project focus on T-shirt design as a beginning activity. ÒA lot of kids, don't really care about the design aspect. they'd rather leave that to the artist,” says Uribe. “But the work of it, the result of producing 500 T-shirts, the mini-thrill of possibly seeing them on the street somewhere appeals to them.” For the same reason, the Teen Project is also planning a custom car-painting service to draw at-risk youth to the program.

In a related way, the Vermont Council on the Humanities, which serves teenage mothers, builds on the importance of their babies to them to encourage literacy. The Read With Me program provides a place for isolated teens to talk with others about common concerns, hopes, and dreams.

Effective programs have clear goals and high expectations. “These kids, if put into the right kind of environment, can absolutely flourish,” says Capanna, reflecting the positive expectations the directors of these programs have concerning the children they serve. The “right environment” includes clearly articulated goals with a reliable structure.

Clear goals provide security to children whose lives are often chaotic and overwhelming. Knowing what the expectations are and learning the relationship between effort and results is a potent experience.
For many youth in these programs, it is a new one.

In some programs, contracts with outside businesses and organizations-with defined goals, timetables and standards-provide a structure within which artistry takes place, just as preparing for a performance or exhibit provides it in others.

Some programs have set up specific mechanisms for rewarding positive performance. For instance, the Working Classroom, Inc. has a point system: Teens earn points for keeping up their grades in school and participating in classes. These points can be “cashed in” for special events or related travel, or, for some, financial assistance for college.

While programs emphasize mutual respect and openness to the ideas of the children, they also recognize that it is important for adults to set certain parameters; it's not just “anything goes.” Willie Reale at The 52nd Street Project describes this arrangement as a “benevolent dictatorship.” “The rules are democratic in that everybody gets fair and equal treatment under the law. But the law is the law.”

At The Artists Collective, Inc., youth wanting to receive a check from the Summer Youth Employment and Training Pro-gram must meet certain grooming, dress and behavior standards. “They know that we're strict. But they also know that we care about them,” says Founding Executive Director Dollie McLean.

However, setting expectations for behavior and performance is different from being inflexible or authoritarian. Such rigidity, in part, makes many of these children rebel against school, home and community. As Carlos Uribe points out, “If you come across as an authoritative hard-line, no-flexibility figure, kids are going to turn away from you immediately. That's why the kids turn away from education. That's why they turn away from parents or religious institutions that don't give them the permission to figure it out.”

Effective programs provide youth with an accessible and safe haven and a broader context within which to learn. Creating a site where children are physically safe is a crucial requirement. Programs must be located in safe places, accessible by public transportation. When necessary, entrances to the building should be monitored.

The program directors also speak eloquently about the critical need to create a safe haven for ideas and relationships: a “petri dish” where youth can develop caring and respectful relationships with each other and with adults, a place in which children “come away looking at themselves and society differently.” Humanities programs where the emphasis is on exploring ideas are key
to developing a broader perspective.

Many directors noted that youth are thirsty for information about their racial and ethnic cultures. Part of The Artists Collective, Inc.'s mission is to provide youth with a more complete picture of their cultural heritage and, therefore, of themselves. “You can't just tell a person that you are somebody. You have to learn who that somebody is, who that somebody was, what those accomplishments were. You have to give them faces that they look at, that look back at them, that say, “I'm special. I'm somebody special,” whether it's the face of a Winton Marseilles or a Harriet Tubman,” says McLean.

Effective programs are voluntary and are shaped by youth themselves. All nine arts and humanities programs that were visited are voluntary programs. Even within the juvenile detention center, participation is optional. This voluntary participation comprises an important part of “not being like school.”

It also means that programs must be accountable to children, youth and families; if the program does not “measure up,” the children will not come. For youth, “measuring up” includes giving them the chance to hold themselves accountable for the success of their experience.

Allowing children and youth to 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. We give them the responsibility, and they come through every time,” says Warner, of the Washington State Historical Society, Capital Museum program. “They make the choice to change because they aren't being made to.”

Effective programs provide quality staff and quality programming. Directors stressed the importance of quality programming and top-notch staff. They believe that economically disadvantaged children, like more affluent children, should have access to the best society has to offer. “The system says the good stuff is for Suzi, but the good stuff is not for Nadine. Victor's going to get to read The Odyssey, and Dawn is going to get to read we-don't-even-know-what because we don't read it ourselves. But the theory of our program is that everything good belongs to everyone,” says Victor Swenson, executive director of the Vermont Council on the Humanities.

Capanna concurs, “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 even below average ability, when you put them in an art activity or a music lesson with a highly trained person who is at the top of the field, that communicates.” Effective programs emphasize excellence.

It is also important to put children in frequent, direct contact with artists and scholars themselves. “Artists process their environment differently,” explains Capon. “When you put an artist in a teaching environment, they stay an artist. When you put a teacher in that environment and give them some art skills, they are a teacher with some art skills. And the kids know the difference.”

The talent of children is never an issue in these programs. Effort is. “The kids may not have the ability to become what the teacher is, but when they work at their own level of ability, they do it with the same degree of concentration and commitment that their teacher demonstrates,” confirms Capanna.

Effective programs recognize that positive adult relationships are central to success. Directors stressed the importance of finding people who care about young people and are comfortable around them. Effective adult mentors choose to work in community programs, are honest, respectful and flexible and able to adapt quickly to individual situations.

Directors also discussed the need to locate artists who have a sense of fun, who “put a little wink in the work' and who understand that the program is not about them but about the children. “Ego must be checked at the door before entry,” says Reale.[40] Terms such as “facilitator” and “shepherds” often were used to describe the role of artists and scholars. The directors considered it essential that the process of creation belong to children and youth.

The adults working with youth must understand the dynamics of working with vulnerable children. “Problems, big emotional problems, are not solved on our stage,” declares Reale. 'Leave the therapy to the therapists....The theater is a medium of metaphor, and it is far more beautiful and far more moving when it functions at that level.”[41] On the other hand, artists and teachers do not ignore the pain, anger or frustrations that may emerge through their work with children. It can be a fine line to tread.

Finding people with all these characteristics is not easy. “It is very difficult because we look for somebody who's skilled in his or her craft. But people who are really skilled can make a lot more money in the industry. So they have to have some inner commitment to work with the kids,” says Steven Goodman of the Education-al Video Center.

Keeping quality staff also presents a challenge. The pay is low; the perquisites, few; the burn-out, fast; and in some fields, the competition, stiff. “I wish we had more resources to give staff sabbaticals and professional development so that this is a career and not a side thing,” says Goodman.

But there are benefits for the teachers and volunteers, which help to create a mutually sustaining community. “I think one of the big linchpins in our success has been creating a program that is both satisfying to the people we're serving and the people who are volunteering,” says Reale. “What we're able to do is give people, give our volunteers, a way to use their skills and to serve the community. I think whenever you can do that, people feel good about themselves. And that's it. we're not changing our world.

You can't make a policy out of this. We're just a bunch of people who happen to want to affect a bunch of other people. You can't codify it. It's as individual as any relationship is.”

Effective programs work in partnership with parents, but recognize their different relationship with youngsters. Every program stresses the importance of parents. Acceptance and appreciation by parents is very important to young people, even children living with family difficulties. As Abe, one young person at a juvenile detention center, says, “Kids like to send stuff home. They give it to their parents and say, “Hey, look. I did this.”

“We are desperate to maintain relationships with parents,” acknowledges Carol Otis. “Nothing makes kids feel better than the parents showing up for the show and being there. So we try to be as communicative as possible in terms of everything that we're doing.”

Reale points out, “Most of the kids who we work with have remarkable, hard-working, decent parents-folks trying to do the best for their families and themselves. Getting to know the parents is part of the job. As your relationship with a child deepens, you can work together with a parent to help the child through difficult stretches. When a kid exhibits behavior that is difficult to understand, ask his or her parents to shed light. They usually have the answers....Above all, the parents must be treated with respect.”[42]

Even so, creating an independent relationship is important, particularly with older children. For many adolescents, parents are “part of the problem.” And sometimes youth are more willing to talk about important issues with caring adults outside of their
families.

For some programs, however, the distinction between being a parent and being a child has vanished. Programs for one are often for the other, as exemplified by the Vermont Council on the Humanities' Read With Me program for teen parents.

Many of the parents of the children who attend the Kaleidoscope Preschool Arts Enrichment Program are young themselves. These parents are required to attend five hour-long parenting seminars each semester. “The Program has provided a mentor-type relationship between parents and faculty. It has been very beneficial. We have had a number of parents who have decided to go back to school to get GEDs and to go to community college. We have been very conscious that it's important to pull the families into the whole mix,” says Capanna.

Effective programs exist in institutions committed for the long term. For Robert Capanna, offering sustained programming and a stable community home-away-from-home is not just practical, but moral. It is “cruel” to bring children into a positive environment that cannot be sustained. “You have to commit to being there for kids for all of the time that you've said you are going to be there. So if it is a 3-year program, you have to be funded for 6 years, so that the kids coming in at the beginning and the kids leaving at the end both have the full range of the 3-year experience....If you are going to build a relationship with the community, you have to say, “We are here, we are it, and we are going to keep doing this. We are really committed to doing it.”

Being available means more than providing activities. It means creating a location children can come to over time for a variety of reasons; a place that is a stable element in their lives. For instance, The 52nd Street Project, in looking for new space, made it a priority to move back into the heart of the neighborhood it serves and to find space suitable for youth to just drop in.

The challenges of building and maintaining sustained, long-term programs are considerable. Raising general support and multiyear funds, particularly in the midst of government funding cuts and over-stretched foundation resources, is very difficult. While the hybrid nature of these programs-part arts and humanities and part youth development is one of their strengths, it makes fund-raising efforts more difficult. “The frustration is, some funders can be remarkably and painfully inflexible in their areas of interest,” observes Capanna.

Effective programs are gateways to other services for children. While the directors are clear that they offer arts and humanities programs and not social service programs, they also recognize that the programs can be gateways to other services for their constituents. They can teach children how to navigate other networks. They can advocate on their behalf. “Obviously, part of the kid needs to brush his teeth, and part of him needs to go to the dentist, and part of the kid needs shoes on his feet and the other part of the kid needs a stimulating environment and an opportunity to express himself artistically and to be fed and nurtured. It is all part of the kid,” says Capanna. Recent Head Start funding has allowed his Kaleidoscope Preschool Program to hire a full-time social worker to coordinate services for children and act as a bridge to families.

Because both the Washing-ton State Historical Society, Capital Museum and the Vermont Council on the Humanities programs work in partnership with health, social service or education systems, the artists and scholars are part of a multidisciplinary team.

Nan Elsasser does not have a social worker on staff, but she advocates for the Working Classroom teens herself. “The sad part of it is, there's a real difference when I go to school for someone, and the parents do.

Most programs do not have formal links with other service providers, but like Elsasser, going the “extra mile” for children is part and parcel of the program's work. This commitment to service is the overriding reason these programs can make such a difference in the lives of young people.

CHAPTER FIVE
LOOKING AHEAD
A NEXT STEP AGENDA

This survey paints an enticing picture of the effect community arts and humanities programs have on children and youth. It also suggests the value of supporting these programs, promoting their proliferation and conducting more extensive studies of their effectiveness

The Need for Technical Assistance

Most of these community organizations operate with limited staff and small budgets. Technical assistance programs, perhaps supported by the corporate sector, community foundations or local arts or humanities councils, should be developed to strengthen their administrative and fund-raising capacities.

With increased resources, new areas could be explored to expand the effectiveness of programs and enhance staff opportunities. For example, staff could learn from and train at other centers. Travel grants, paid sabbaticals, staff mentorship programs and performance exchanges would all contribute to creating a network to enrich existing programs. In time, new types of communication could lead to new collaborations and partnerships among centers

Community Links

The needs of families and children are usually multiple, changing and varied. However, in most cases, community services are organized narrowly to respond to specific problems. A common consequence of this segmentation is that children and their families must go to different agencies to receive different but related services. Thus, families receive fragmented and insufficient assistance.

Many of the children and youth in these arts and humanities programs also visit other community institutions. Strategies to link cultural programs with schools, public agencies and other community organizations are greatly needed to develop coordinated responses to interrelated problems. Such a linking of services and providers would reap the added benefit of allowing scarce resources to yield greater returns.

Assessment and Evaluation

Cultural leaders currently are searching for an approach to assessment that enriches understanding of effectiveness and provides programs with an ongoing tool for evaluating and improving their practices. To this end, Project Co-Arts at the Harvard University Graduate School of Education began a study in 1991 of community arts education centers with sustained programs in economically disadvantaged communities. The University published in-depth portraits of five exemplary centers in Safe Havens: Portraits of Educational Effectiveness in Community Arts Centers that Focus on Education in Economically Disadvantaged Communities. Harvard also developed and published in The Co-Arts Assessment Handbook, an assessment technique that uses assessment forums and “process folios” to describe effectiveness.

With increased competition for fewer dollars, however, finding ways to measure results takes on a new urgency. Several nationwide initiatives expect to yield important information.

The GE Fund, both individually and in collaboration with the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation and the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, funds several research projects whose goal is to demonstrate the impact of arts education.

The National Assembly of Local Arts Agencies is collaborating on two studies with local arts agencies to evaluate arts programs that also have social goals. The first study, a partnership among the City of Los Angeles Cultural Affairs Department, the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, will measure the effectiveness of arts programs that are designed to address public safety issues and reduce crime. Evaluation and research methods for this study are being developed and conducted by the Rand Corporation.

The second multiyear study is a collaboration among the Regional Arts and Culture Council in Portland, Oregon; the City of San Antonio, Texas, Department of Arts and Cultural Affairs; and the Fulton County Arts Council in Atlanta, Georgia. The project seeks to develop and test models for evaluating programs designed to improve the lives and reduce criminal activity of at-risk youth. As a portion of the study, the training for artists and social service personnel also will be evaluated. This project will culminate in the development of a handbook to guide additional agencies in community arts program development and artist training. Startup funds for the project were provided by the National Endowment for the Arts, and the U.S. Department of Justice is an active partner in its evaluation component.

Strategies for developing and funding assessments must be an integral component of program planning.

Donors can play an important role in ensuring the evaluation of community arts programs for at-risk youth both by funding this component of projects and by providing technical assistance for developing useful, practical and credible research.

The Issue of Financial Support

Even as these programs for youth make striking advances, their financial future is threatened; many of their sources of support are in jeopardy. Government funding cutbacks will affect these programs severely. The substantial reduction in federal funds for the National Endowments for the Arts and the Humanities and the Institute of Museum Services will mean not only less money for programs like these, but also markedly increased competition with other programs for the reduced number of grants. Other government programs in education, housing, job training and social services also face reductions or elimination at the federal, state and local levels.

In fact, cuts in public support may signal an unprecedented upheaval in the entire nonprofit sector. A recent study by Nina Kressner Cobb for The Rockefeller Foundation, published by the President's Committee, shows that donations by individuals for any charitable purpose are stagnant, even as individual wealth has increased. “For the first time since 1986, total giving has fallen below 2% of Gross Domestic Product; private charitable giving is not growing with a stronger U.S. economy.”[43]

While private foundations alone cannot be expected to “save the day,” their leadership and decisions are pivotal, now more than ever. Some already support community cultural programs with funding and research. But programs will not survive without sustained support and new resources.

The organizations in this survey do not pretend that they have all the answers for at-risk children and youth. The arts and humanities are not “miracle solutions.” At the same time, something very important is being achieved. These programs have a positive impact on the lives of youth. Their fresh, sometimes novel, approaches, implemented by caring, committed artists and scholars, are worthy of a closer look and increased support.

Notes

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[2] Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1995, *Great Transitions: Preparing Adolescents for a New Century*, Carnegie Corporation of New York, New York, NY, p. 105.
[3] Zill, Nicholas, Christine Winquist Nord, and Laura Spencer Loomis, 1995, *Adolescent Time Use, Risky Behavior, and Outcomes: An Analysis*, Westat, Inc., Rockville, MD, p. i
[4] U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, (draft), "Trends in the Well-Being of America's Children and Youth: 1995," Washington, DC pp. 11, 43.
[5] Luxembourg Income Study, as reported in *The New York Times*, August 14, 1995
[6] Annie E. Casey Foundation, 1994, *KIDS COUNT Data Book 1994, State Profiles of Child Well-Being*, Annie E. Casey Foundation, Baltimore, MD pp. 9-11, 158.
[7] U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, op. cit., p 342.
[8] Children's Defense Fund, (pre-publication press edition), 1994, "The State of America's Children, Yearbook 1994," Children's Defense Fund, Washington, DC, Introduction, p. 3.
[9] Ibid., p 19.
[10] U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, op. cit., p. 140.
[11] Ibid., pp. 88, 134, 178; Annie E. Casey Foundation, 1995, *KIDS COUNT Data Book 1995, State Profiles of Child Well-Being*, Annie E. Casey Foundation, Baltimore, MD p. 19.
[12] U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, op. cit., p. 136.
Youth are defined as "risk free" if they are in school or have graduated from high school; have never had sexual intercourse; have never used illegal drugs; have has less than five alcoholic beverages in a row in the last month; have not stayed out all night without permission in the last year.
[13] Ibid., p. 282.
[14] Population reference Bureau, 1992, *The Challenge of Change: What the 1990 Census Tells Us About Children*, Center for the Study of Social Policy, Washington, DC, p. 16.
[15] U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, op. cit., p. 239.
[16] Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, op. cit., p. 50.
[17] Derived from Dryfoos, Joy G. 1990, *Adolescents at Risk: Prevalence and Prevention*, Oxford University Press, New York, NY, p. 95; Pittman, Karen, and Marlene Wright, 1991, "Bridging the Gap: A Rational for Enhancing the Role of Community Organizations in Promoting Youth Development," Center for Youth Development at the Academy for Educational Development, Washington, DC, Table 8.
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[19] Ibid., p. 46.
[20] Wynn, Joan, et. al., 1987, *Communities and Adolescents: An Explanation of Reciprocal Support*, Chapin Hall Center for Children, University of Chicago, Chicago, IL. Comments of the Youth Committee of the Lilly Endowment.
[21] Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, Task force on Youth Development and Community Programs, op. cit., pp. 11-12.
[22] Zill, Nicholas, Christine Winquist Nord, and Laura Spencer Loomis, 1995, *Adolescent Time Use, Risky Behavior, and Outcomes: An Analysis*, Westat, Inc., Rockville, MD, p. iv
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[33] Interview with Victor Swenson, executive director, Vermont Council on the Humanities (Morrisville, VT, September 27, 1995).
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[37] For example:
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- Steven Goodman, executive director, Educational Video Center (New York, NY, October 12, 1995).
- Carol Ochs, executive director; Willie Reale, artistic director, The 52nd Street Project (New York, NY, October 12, 1995).
- Dennis Taniguchi, executive director, Japantown Art and Media Workshop (San Francisco, November 8, 1995).
- Robert Capanna, executive director, Settlement Music School (Philadelphia, PA, October 20, 1995).

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- Dick Barett, deputy director, Washington State Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration; Charlotte Beale, curator, Seattle Children's Museum; Linda Bradley, art educator, Green Hill School; Abe Dean, student, Maple Lane School; William Detmering, principal, Maple Lane School; Rosalie McHale, program coordinator, Governor's Juvenile Justice committee; Carol Porter, superintendant, Maple Lane School; Gary Schalliol, director of education, Washington State Historical Society; Robert Sotelo, artist/educator, Maple Lane School; Derek Valley, director, Washington State Historical Society, Capital Museum; Susan Warner, curator of education, Washington State Historical Society, Capital Museum (Olympia, WA, November 7, 1995).
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