ARTS PROGRAMS: POSITIVE ALTERNATIVES for AT-RISK YOUTH

AMERICANS for the ARTS

INSTITUTE FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND THE ARTS

This brochure was made possible by a generous grant from the **Metropolitan Life Foundation.**

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Americans for the Arts is the nation's leading arts information clearinghouse, with a 40-year record of objective arts industry research. As the preeminent arts advocacy organization, Americans for the Arts is dedicated to representing and serving local communities and creating opportunities for every American to participate in and appreciate all the arts. The Institute for Community Development, run by Americans for the Arts, created this pamphlet as part of its ongoing mission to develop a research-based understanding of how the arts are being used to address social, educational, and economic development issues in communities across the country.

"Engaging at-risk youth in the arts can instill self-esteem and confidence and open doors to imagination and discovery. After school arts programs provide a positive alternative for youthful energy that may otherwise not find a creative outlet. Metropolitan Life Foundation applauds Americans for the Arts for its leadership in reaching out to at-risk youth through the arts. We are proud to support Americans for the Arts' national initiative YouthARTS: arts programs for youth at risk: the Tool Kit. This resource will help hundreds of communities bring young people and the arts together for amazing results."

Sibyl Jacobson, President & CEO, Metropolitan Life Foundation

Arts Programs for At-Risk Youth is an important advocacy tool making the case to decision-makers and funders about using the arts to address at-risk youth issues. This pamphlet, first released in 1998 and used by the U.S. Department of Justice to encourage their local juvenile justice officers to consider using arts programming as an effective at-risk youth strategy, provides information on how arts programs are essential to the educational and social development of youth at risk.

- Outlines the powerful impact that arts programs have on individuals and communities
- Highlights programs that have had proven success
- Provides guidelines and resources for developing arts programs in local communities

Funding for this brochure was made possible by a generous grant from the Metropolitan Life Foundation, a foundation dedicated to improving the quality of life and creating opportunities for people. The Metropolitan Life Foundation has provided support to help children and families, strengthen communities, promote inclusion, improve education, and further the arts.

For more information, contact Howard Spector, Vice President of Education and Youth Development, at 202.371.2830 or hspector@artsusa.org, or visit our website at www.artsusa.org.

ART HOLDS PROMISE

Youth today face complex challenges affecting their personal lives and future opportunities. Ever-changing urban demographics, increasing globalization, and rapid-pace advances in new technologies—among others—present youth with often-difficult choices. Recent statistics paint a discouraging picture of trends among America's youth while tragic incidents of youth violence daily grip the nation's attention.

- Juvenile delinquency has risen 600 percent since the 1960's and educational standards have declined.
- 27 percent of American high school students never graduate and generally score lower on standardized tests then their peers in other major industrial countries.
- Youth account for 18 percent of all reported violent crime and 33 percent of all serious property crime.

Given that American students spend only 26 percent of their time in class, attention needs to be placed on what school age children are doing with the other 74 percent of their time. [1]

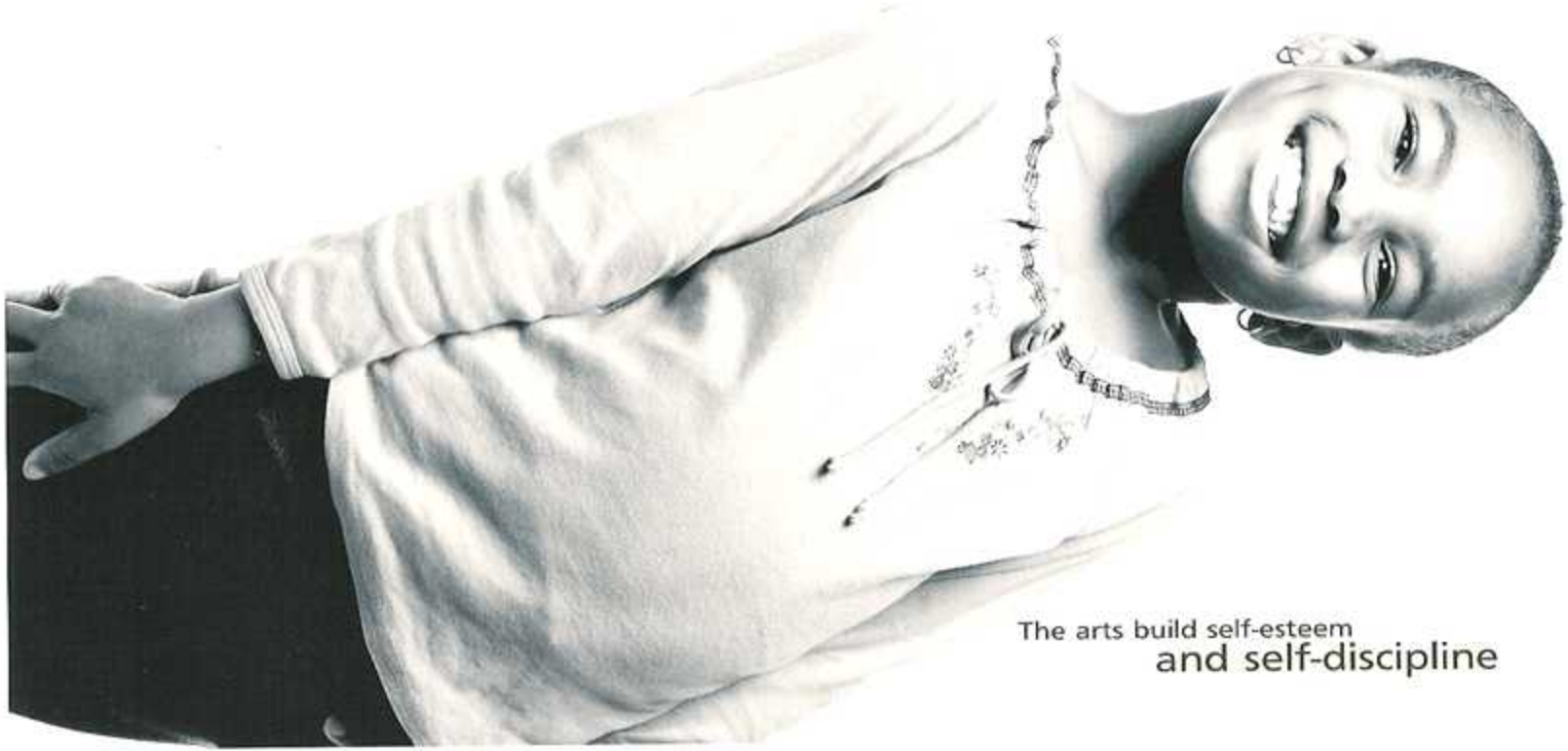
From 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. school age youths are most likely to:

- Become victims of violent crime
- Be in or cause a car crash (the leading cause of death for teens for 16 and 17 year olds)
- Get hooked on cigarettes
- Experiment with other dangerous drugs

With the hope of reversing these ominous trends, an increasing number of the nation's 17,000 community-based organizations such as Boys and Girls Clubs, YMCAs, youth museums, libraries, and parks and recreation departments are using arts programs to:

- Reduce juvenile crime and violence
- Reduce drug use and addiction
- Reduce other risky behaviors
- Reduce truancy and improve academic performance
- Provide more cost effective approaches with better results than traditional programs such as juvenile boot camps and
- Build critical self-discipline, communication, and job skills

The future of this country is being shaped by the development of our youth. U.S. communities should seriously consider the dramatic and promising results gained by establishing arts programs for at-risk youth.



The arts build self-esteem
and self-discipline

BUILDING BETTER COMMUNITIES

Youth arts programs are powerful crime prevention tools. They offer safe, engaging, and constructive environments for youth who lack adult supervision during non-school hours. Americans for the Arts research shows that arts programs, in partnership with community agencies, help build and strengthen communities by:

- Creating safe havens for youth and families in at-risk neighborhoods
- Implementing comprehensive strategies affecting multiple areas of participants' lives (home, school, housing, and health)
- Strengthening participants' inner resources (self-esteem, confidence, and tolerance)

The most effective programs are developed in direct response to a community's needs and the resources of a community. When communities clearly identify local problems and design arts programs accordingly, the fact that they work is undeniable. [2]

Case Study: Community Music School of Springfield

Located in Massachusetts, CMSS offers afterschool classes. The emphasis of this urban arts program is to provide middle-school youth opportunities to develop rudimentary drum skills, and use rap, hip hop (a youthful medium of expression), and free styling (improvisational hip hop) to become engaged in a meaningful and relevant afterschool arts experiences. The youth also record finished products having a purposeful impact in their lives and the lives of their peers and families. Through this positive, educational, and artistic program, CMSS engages youth so their voices are heard and they develop as leaders in their communities. [3]

Case Study: New Voices Ensemble

In Malvern, Pennsylvania, the third most economically depressed city of its size in the nation, the People's Light and Theatre Company worked with eighteen children beginning at age twelve until they graduated from high school. Over that time, the children grew in theater and life skills. They wrote and performed original pieces, collaborated with Swarthmore College students in a playwriting course, and were cast in several productions. Eleven members of that "class" went to college. Most have recently graduated and now focus on their careers. Meanwhile, their tagalong siblings became the core of a new generation of New Voices. [4]

"What these teens have given to me is an inspirational and positive reminder of why I do what I do as an artist. It has been like looking at myself in the mirror, seeing past my own jaded perceptions, and seeing beauty again. What I give to these teens is the emotional strength and self-confidence to begin that long journey to find themselves using this very unique creative process."

Gary San Angel, lead artist,
GenerAsian Next from the Asian Arts Initiative, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

The arts teach
creative problem-solving skills

IMPORTANCE OF THE ARTS

Arts education is central to a youth's individual and social development. Research shows it raises overall academic performance and builds skills necessary for workplace success while decreasing and preventing negative behavior. Arts education nurtures a child's development by:

- Strengthening academic performance and communication
- Teaching cooperation and team-building skills
- Contributing to technological competence
- Fostering an appreciation for cultural and ethnic diversity
- Teaching creative problem-solving skills
- Building self-esteem and self-discipline
- Encouraging the ability to imagine and articulate thoughts
- Teaching responsibility to complete tasks from start to finish
- Increasing literacy skills
- Deterring delinquent behavior and truancy problems [5]

HOW THE ARTS CHANGE THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE

When taught well, the arts provide youth with authentic and meaningful learning experiences. According to a remarkable consensus found by researchers in the recent arts education publication, *Champions of Change*, the arts:

- Reach students otherwise not being reached
- Reach students in ways they are otherwise not being reached
- Connect students to themselves and each other
- Transform the learning environment
- Provide learning opportunities for adults in the lives of youth
- Provide new challenges for students already considered successful
- Connect learning experiences to the world of real work [6]

Participation in the arts encourages participation and interest in many other arenas. Compared to a national sample of youth across the country, arts-involved youth:

- Participate in youth groups nearly four times as frequently
- Read for pleasure nearly twice as often
- 45 percent of arts-involved youth (vs. 28 percent of national sample) believe it is important to help individuals in their community
- 30 percent of arts-involved youth (vs. 17 percent of national sample) see themselves working toward economic equality. [7]

Case Study: TheYouthARTS Development Project

The YouthARTS Development Project was a 1996 public/private study developed collaboratively between the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention; the local arts agencies in Portland, Oregon, Fulton County, Georgia, and San Antonio, Texas; the National Endowment for the Arts; and Americans for the Arts. Through this study, the sites rigorously evaluated their arts programs for at-risk youth and found that when these programs where implemented:

- Truancy was reduced and academic performance improved
- Ability to communicate effectively and resolve conflict was increased
- Ability to work on tasks from start to finish was improved
- Ability to work in teams was improved
- Self-esteem and individuals' attitudes about their futures improved
- Frequency of delinquent behavior decreased [8]

Key Findings of the YouthARTS Development Project

❶ Improved Attitudes and Behavior

A greater proportion of YouthARTS participants showed improvements in their self-esteem, self-efficacy, positive peer associations, attitudes toward school, and resistance to peer pressure than did comparison youth. In San Antonio, 16 percent of the participants had a decrease in delinquent behavior compared with only 3 percent of the non-arts comparison group. In Portland, the participants' attitude toward school improved 32 percent compared with only 8 percent of the comparison group.

❷ Reduced Court Involvement

Fewer YouthARTS participants had new court referrals during the program period than did comparison youth. In Portland, only 22 percent of the participants had a new court referral compared to 47 percent of the comparison youth. Also, the level and type of offense committed during the program period were less severe than prior offenses. In Atlanta, despite the fact that participants had more court referrals than the comparison group at the start of the program (6.9 and 2.2 referrals, respectively), they had fewer court referrals during the program period than the comparison group (1.3 and 2.0, respectively). Moreover, a smaller proportion of the arts participants committed new offenses during the program period than the comparison youth (50 percent vs. 79 percent).

❸ Increased Development of New Skills

By the end of the program, the majority of participants maintained or demonstrated noticeable improvements in their program-related skills. In Atlanta, 86 percent of the youth were communicating effectively with peers at the end of the program, up from 29 percent at the beginning of the program. In Portland, while only 43 percent of the participants demonstrated an ability to cooperate with others at the start of the program, 100 percent did so by the end of the program. In San Antonio, 72 percent of the participants worked on tasks from start to finish; this increased to 85 percent by the end of the program. Additionally, at the start of the program 65 percent demonstrated the skills necessary to produce quality artwork; at the program's end, 82 percent.

HOW THE ARTS DETER YOUTH FROM GANGS, DRUGS, AND VIOLENCE

Police departments, judges, probation officers and other public safety officials use arts programs to help participants learn how to express themselves in an appropriate, non-violent manner. These skills lead to less crime and reduced recidivism.

Case Study: Art Attack

Art Attack, designed by the nonprofit Neal Civic Center in collaboration with the Blountstown Middle School, Calhoun County, Florida, provides free, positive, constructive, and educational opportunities for at-risk youth and their families. The program consists of summer camps, Saturday programs during the school year, and weekly tutoring and mentoring for Saturday and in-school students. The curriculum includes literature, visual arts, music, dance, drumming, architectural interpretation, aesthetics and art criticism, art appreciation, public performance, nutrition education, and a family literacy program. [9]

Case Study: Project Self Discovery: Cleo Parker Robinson Dance

The program, located in Denver, Colorado, engages youth in a three-tiered 36-week intervention program for alcohol, tobacco, and drug involvement that includes arts classes as well as cognitive and behavioral counseling. In the first level, youth participate in personal growth classes in the artistic concentration of their choice. In the second level, they participate in a wilderness-based leadership experience and demonstrate through the arts positive social and personal action. The third level engages the youth in mentoring new participants.

Youth who have completed 80 percent of the initial 100 hours at Project Self Discovery show a significant reduction in scores measuring risk factors for negative peer involvement, sustained use of drugs, and mental health concerns. [10]

Case Study: Heartland Collaborations

Located in central Iowa, Heartland Collaborations is a community approach to achieving personal and social change for high-risk youth and adjudicated youths and adults. The program uses arts programming in dance, music, literature, visual art, and media as a tool for transformation through prevention, intervention, and aftercare. Community organizations in partnership with corrections organizations and sites support residencies through community exhibits, performances, and ongoing aftercare development opportunities.

A pilot evaluation working with prisons and detention facilities demonstrated improvements in disciplinary infractions, anger management issues, productivity, cooperative behavior, mental and physical health, and attitudinal changes. [11]

These programs just scratch the surface of how arts programs are being used effectively to prevent violence, substance abuse, AIDS, and teen pregnancy. Participants learn problem solving and conflict resolution skills and build self-esteem and self-confidence, all of which are critical character traits necessary for resisting negative behavior.

HOW NONSCHOOL-BASED ARTS PROGRAMS BOOST EDUCATION

In *Champions of Change*, research showed that art students could attain higher levels of achievement through their engagement with the arts, specifically: Learning in and through the arts can help "level the playing field" for youth from disadvantaged "circumstances." The arts need not be characterized solely by either their ability to promote learning in specific arts disciplines or by their ability to promote learning in other disciplines. This more dynamic, less either/or model provides greater access to higher levels of learning. Learning in the arts has significant effects on learning in other domains. There is compelling evidence that student achievement is heightened in an environment with high quality arts education offerings and a school climate of active and productive learning. [12]

"Due to the needs identified in the pilot project Heartland Collaborations, a new organization, Partners Unlimited, has been developed. This organization provides long-term artist residencies that create an environment that employs the arts to transform lives and communities. It successfully engages people with disabilities, decreases behavior problems, encompasses all learning styles and improves discipline among participants".

Kelly Boon, Executive Director, Partners Unlimited

FEDERAL FUNDING

The investigation of at-risk youth arts programs reveals an innovative approach to funding that typically involves a mix of local, state, and federal support with private investment and a collaborative effort to identify new or re-direct existing funding. The following are examples of how federal agencies fund these programs. Many of these funds are made available at the state and local levels.

U.S. Department of Justice: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) (www.usdoj.gov/kidspage)

Arts and At-Risk Youth Program
In collaboration with the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), OJJDP, Department of Labor, Department of Education, and the Institute for Civil Society (a private foundation), this initiative supports three pilot sites to develop, implement, and assess an arts program for youth at risk of delinquency and other problem behaviors (e.g., substance abuse, teen pregnancy, truancy and dropping out of school) during afterschool hours and the summer months. The program combines professional arts training with development of pre-employment and interpersonal communication skills, conflict resolution education, and summer jobs or paid internships. Sites work to foster parental involvement and develop linkages to community resources that will help facilitate the youths' transition into the work force as well as increase the number of positive adult role models. Five additional youth arts sites are participating in the information network with these pilot sites to expand the reach of the initiative.

Partnership for Conflict Resolution Education in the Arts
(www.usdoj.gov/kidspage)
Another partnership of the Department of Justice and NEA, this project strengthens youth arts programs by providing professional education and training in conflict resolution skills to the artists, staff, administrators, and youth leaders participating in these afterschool and summer programs. Workshop participants learn to integrate conflict resolution principles and processes into the design of their programs and expand or establish partnerships with schools, the juvenile justice system, parks and recreation programs, and other community-based organizations.

National Endowment for the Arts (www.arts.gov)

Creative Links: Positive Alternatives for Youth
This pilot grant program supports partnerships between arts organizations and other community groups for artists' residencies that provide youth with opportunities to learn about arts disciplines and gain valuable life skills. Funded projects primarily involve youth, grades six through twelve from low-income neighborhoods, that face emotional or physical challenges or have trouble responding to social challenges in afterschool and summer programs.

Arts Programs for Juvenile Offenders in Detention and Corrections (www.arts.gov)
Another collaboration of the NEA and the Department of Justice, this program supports three pilot sites for the establishment of an arts program in juvenile detention or corrections facilities. Three additional sites enhance existing successful arts programs by serving more youth and offering improved continuation of services after the youth is released. Through technical assistance, the sites network and learn innovative best practices and effective partnership strategies.

U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development (www.hud.gov)

Creative Communities
Financed through a collaboration of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the NEA, and the National Guild of Community Schools of the Arts, Creative Communities funds free sequential arts instruction by professional artist-teachers on at least a weekly basis to children and youth residing in public housing. Activities range from early childhood arts programs to intensive instruction for youth who show particular promise and talent.

U.S. Department of Education (www.ed.gov)

21st Century Community Learning Centers
The Centers, authorized under Title X, Part I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and supported by the Department of Education, enable school districts to fund public schools as community education centers, thereby keeping children safe afterschool while learning and building new skills. This program seeks to provide high-quality academic, arts and cultural enrichment, and expanded youth services within a community schools context.

"After a few weeks of GenerAsian, it taught me to not be afraid to stand in the middle of a room and speak my mind. We would do improvisation games to loosen us up, and writing on subjects close to our heart. After these experiences with others who I thought were totally different from me, I now realized how much I am related to them."

Van Tu, GenerAsian Next member from the Asian Arts Initiative, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

ESTABLISH A PROGRAM

At-risk youth art programs are often partnerships between local performing or visual arts organizations and public housing, youth service or crime prevention agencies. They can get started for a variety of reasons such as an artist wishing to give back to their community, citizens jointly addressing an immediate problem, or public officials and community activists focusing on specific issues associated with at-risk youth. No matter how they evolve, the fact is—when instituted properly—they work.

"Communities that support youth-based arts organizations do more than preserve and develop their youth for the future. They engage the creative energies of youth in positive ways that enrich community life and culture today."

Shirley Brice Heath, Senior Scholar, Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and Professor of English and Linguistics, Stanford University

Five Steps to Starting Your Program

❶ Identify your community's most pressing youth problem, i.e., drugs, vandalism, youth-merchant relations, truancy, etc.

❷ Identify an appropriate agency or organization to lead the development of the new arts program.

❸ Convene potential program partners to develop and fund the new program. Partners may include arts agencies, police departments, social service agencies, school departments, departments of parks and recreation, and the department of justice.

❹ Survey existing local arts programs to learn what is working and what needs improvement. Study programs that have some history and examine how these programs are linked to other community youth initiatives.

❺ Call your local arts agency to learn more about your local arts activities. The *2000-2001 Local Arts Field Directory*—listing local, state, regional, and national arts organizations—can be ordered from Americans for the Arts (see page 15).

The arts teach cooperation
and team-building skills

RESOURCES

PROGRAMS

Arts Education Partnership *www.aep-arts.org*

Coming Up Taller Awards Program *www.cominguptaller.org*

National Assembly of State Arts Agencies *www.nasaa-arts.org*

National Endowment for the Arts *www.arts.gov*

Partnership for Family Involvement in Education *www.pfie.ed.gov*

President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities *www.pcah.gov*

21st Century Community Learning Centers *www.ed.gov/21stcclc*

U.S. Department of Education *www.ed.gov*

U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development *www.hud.gov*

U.S. Department of Justice *www.usdoj.gov/kidspage*

PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE FROM AMERICANS FOR THE ARTS

To order Americans for the Arts publications call 1.800.321.4510 or visit our website at www.artsusa.org. Mention this brochure and receive 10 percent off of your Americans for the Arts order!

Artists in the Community: Training Artists to Work in Alternative Settings (I)
This handbook—offering simple strategies and practical advice for anyone designing, conducting, or hosting a community arts program—describes unique needs in six different community settings, profiles quality visual and performing arts programs in each setting, and provides the tools to successfully select, train, and support artists. 51 pp, soft cover (1996) Price: $35. Member price: $25. Order: 100037.

The Arts Build Communities: A Training Handbook and Video on Arts Programming and Public Housing
This handbook and video, prepared by Americans for the Arts' Institute for Community Development for the Arts for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, describe program goals, service deliveries, funding sources, and adaptive characteristics of arts programs in public housing communities. 48 pp, soft cover (1996)
Price: $35/book; $30/video. Member price: $25/book; $20/video. Order: 100025/book; 100043/video.

Building America's Communities II: A Compendium of Arts and Development Programs
This report profiles more than 130 diverse arts programs and covers topics ranging from crime prevention and arts and healing to innovative funding mechanisms. 44 pp, soft cover (1997)
Price: $25. Member price: $20. Order: 100046.

YouthARTS: arts programs for youth at-risk: the Tool Kit
The YouthARTS Tool Kit features a step-by-step handbook, inspirational and "lessons learned" videos, and a diskette with sample forms, e.g., contracts and evaluations.
(1998) Member/Nonmember price: $75. Order: 100054.

2000-2001 Local Arts Field Directory
This directory provides contact information for local and state arts agencies, statewide assemblies, regional organizations, national arts service organizations, and more. Spiral bound (2000)
Price: $50. Member price: $35.

Monograph
Price: $8. Member price: $6.
1. *Allies Arguments and Actions: Making a Case for Arts Education Advocacy* (May 1999). Order: MON045.

2. *Living the Arts Through Language+Learning: A Report on Community-Based Youth Organizations* (November 1998). Order: MON043.

3. *Involvement in the Arts and Success in Secondary School* (January 1998). Order: MON040.

4. *Program Planning and Evaluation: Using Logic Models in Arts Programs for At-Risk Youth* (July 1997). Order: MON038.

"Arts programs give young people the chance to take risks, be creative and learn self-discipline, and build critical self-esteem. In Indianapolis, we are currently working to ensure that our young people have fewer opportunities to spend their time with violent and sexually explicit video games. The arts, on the other hand, can be an excellent way to build communication skills and to learn how to release emotions in positive, non-destructive ways. Through the arts, young people learn not only skills for a lifetime, but they can also explore exciting new worlds."

Mayor Bart Peterson, Indianapolis, Indiana

The arts reduce juvenile crime,
drug addiction and violence

ADDITIONAL PUBLICATIONS

Arts and Performances for Prevention
This issue of the Youth in Action Bulletin teaches youth how to use art programs to draw attention to problems in their communities, provides information on instituting and evaluating programs, and lists additional organizations. Available online at U.S. Department of Justice, www.ojjdp.ncjrs.org/pubs/youthinactionsum.html#178927.

Arts Education and School Improvement Resources for Local and State Leaders
This guide identifies U.S. Department of Education funding for arts education programs (both in-school and after school). Available online at www.ed.gov/pubs/ArtsEd.

Arts Works! Prevention Programs for Youth and Communities
This publication, published by the NEA and the U.S. Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, describes how to use the arts in drug prevention programs. Available from the National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information by calling 1.800.729.6686.

Champions of Change
This report compiles the results of seven major studies providing important new evidence of enhanced learning and achievement when the arts are an integral part of the educational experience, both in and out of America's K-12 schools. Available online at www.artsedge.kennedy-center.org/champions/.

Coming Up Taller: Arts and Humanities Programs for Children and Youth At Risk
Published by the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities and Americans for the Arts, this report describes how the arts and humanities are being used to help at-risk youth and includes profiles of 218 programs. Available online at www.cominguptaller.org.

Eloquent Evidence
A 12-page pamphlet using research findings to demonstrate the impact of arts education. Available online at www.pcah.gov/children_arts.html.

Gaining the Arts Advantage: Lessons from School Districts that Value Arts Education
This publication documents some of the best practices in school districts across the country in promoting competence and literacy in the arts as a fundamental purpose of schooling. Available online at www.pcah.gov/gaa/index.html.

Helping Communities Fight Crime: Comprehensive Planning Techniques, Models, Programs and Resources
This publication of the President's 1997 Crime Prevention Council is available from the Juvenile Justice Clearinghouse at 1.800.638.8736.

How the Arts Can Enhance After-School Programs
Published by the U.S. Department of Education and the NEA, this report summarizes recent research about arts and after school programs and showcases key examples that showcase partnerships between schools and community-based organizations. Available by calling 877.433.7827 or access online at www.ed.gov/pubs/edpubs.html.

Why Your Child Needs the Arts Advantage and How to Gain It
This brochure highlights the findings of the two-year study reported in *Gaining the Arts Advantage: Lessons from School Districts that Value Arts Education*. Available online at www.aep-arts.org/highlights/GAAbrochure.pdf.

PHOTO CREDITS
Program: *"Creative Solutions"*
Agency: Young Audiences of Greater Dallas, Dallas, Texas
Pages: 7 and 8

Program: *"Children of the Future"*
Agency: Greater Columbus Arts Council, Columbus, Ohio
Pages: 11 and 18

"The ability to focus one's energy in a creative manner, to be inspired by the innate beauty of art, is one of the most important lessons we can hope to learn in our lives. If we as a society can use the arts to show children the beauty and possibility which life holds, we will make a difference. I believe that all children have worth and that every child can be saved. It is truly our mandate to inspire those at-risk children and motivate them to move in the right direction. Enlisting the assistance of arts programs will help at-risk youth realize their full potential in the most meaningful of ways."

Jeremiah S. Jeremiah, Jr., Chief Judge, Rhode Island Family Court

ENDNOTES

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10 2000 Coming Up Taller Awards, Op.cit.
11 Boon, Kelly HeARTland Collaborations, (Des Moines, Iowa Arts Council, 2000).
12 Fiske, Edward B. ed. Champions of Change: The Impact of the Arts on Learning, Op.cit.

"I didn't need punishment, I needed transformation. Art saved my life."

Patricia McConnel, poet, ex-convict participant,
Heartland Collaborations, Iowa

"Art for me is like a vent to let my frustrations out and a ray of hope to let me know that everything's OK and anything is possible."

Kathia Diaz, student,
RAW Art Works, Lynn, Massachusetts

"I learned that I am capable of creating beautiful, exquisite pieces of art. Everything is within reach if I try and believe in myself."

Julie Edmunds, student,
RAW Art Works, Lynn, Massachusetts

The arts improve
academic performance