

IT WORKED IN MY CITY

Trying to address a growing youth-at-risk problem with shrinking resources? Looking for programs that keep kids in your schools and out of trouble?

This pamphlet provides compelling evidence about the efficacy of arts programs for youth and is an excellent primer for developing a program in your community.

In New Orleans, we found that the youth participating in our arts programs are less likely to revisit our legal system, and more likely to achieve academic success and become contributing members of their community. Art is a way for youth to find their hidden talents.

Whether your community is large or small, urban or rural: arts prevention programs are a cost-effective solution to the challenge of youth at risk.

Marc H. Morial
Mayor
City of New Orleans

CREATION, NOT DESTRUCTION

Young people who are involved in making something beautiful today are less likely to turn to acts of violence and destruction tomorrow. The arts — whether they be during or after school — provide opportunities for youth from all backgrounds to do something positive and creative with their talents and their time. We all need to support the arts. In doing so, we are telling America's youth that we believe in them and value what they can be.

Janet Reno
Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice

ART HOLDS A KEY

Children today live in a different world than that of their grandparents. In some ways, it is a better world: a higher percentage of children in the U.S. are better fed, better educated and safe from once-menacing diseases than children of times past. On the other hand, youth now face new hazards, most unimaginable even a generation ago.

Consider the statistics:

- Every day, 2,833 children drop out of school.
- Youth account for 18 percent of all violent crime in the U.S. and 33 percent of all serious property crime.
- Every day 135,000 children carry a gun to school.

Justifiably, America's concern about youth at risk is as prevalent as anxiety over jobs and the economy.

With hopes of reversing this ominous trend, an increasing number of nation's 17,000 community organizations — such as Boys & Girls Clubs, libraries and parks and recreation sites — are using arts programs to:

- divert youth from gangs, drugs and the juvenile justice system;
- provide a more cost-effective approach with better results than traditional programs such as Midnight Basketball or juvenile boot camps;
- reduce truancy and improve academic performance; and
- build critical self-discipline, communication and job skills.

The future of this country is being shaped by the development of our youth. With \$7 billion spent annually to incarcerate young offenders and school dropouts costing taxpayers another \$71 billion each year, U.S. communities should take a long, hard look at the dramatic and promising results gained by establishing arts programs for at-risk youth.

Young people who are involved in making
ARE LESS LIKELY TO TURN TO
and destruction tomorrow.

something beautiful today
ACTS OF VIOLENCE

JANET RENO
ATTORNEY GENERAL
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE



REAL ANSWERS TO TOUGH PROBLEMS

Youth arts programs are powerful crime prevention tools. They offer safe, engaging and constructive environments for young people who lack adult supervision during nonschool hours, a time when they are most vulnerable to community violence and gang recruitment.

An increasing number of communities are realizing that art programs for at-risk youth offer an effective and more affordable alternative to detention and police-centered crime prevention¹:

THE ARTS APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING PROGRAM at the Manchester Craftsmen's Guild in Pittsburgh, located in one of the city's poorest neighborhoods, was established to redirect the lives of youth who may be a step away from violent life on the streets. Participants work with professional artists in the ceramics studio, music hall and photo lab. Counseling and college outreach services are also provided. Results:

- Eighty percent of participants go on to college, compared with only 20 percent of the community's nonparticipating youth.

STARS, a multifaceted arts program for at-risk youth in Ft. Myers, Florida, offers a variety of classes, including modern dance, African Folk dance, poetry, creative writing and vocal arts, as well as tutorials in math, reading, and computers. The cost for each participant is only \$850 per year — compared with as much as \$28,000 per youth in the typical juvenile boot camp. Results:

- In the program's three years, juvenile crime dropped 27 percent.
- For youth aged 11 and 12, the rate of repeat criminal behavior dropped 64 percent.

WHY THE ARTS?

Juvenile justice programs, including probation and detention, may be the only options for some youngsters who are a danger to their community. But the more than 4,000,000 at-risk children growing up in severely distressed neighborhoods surrounded by brutality, violence and despair deserve a chance to engage in positive, constructive activities that have been proven effective in deterring delinquent behavior. Training in the arts can provide such an opportunity.

Arts programs are not about coddling problem or delinquent youth. Learning to play a musical instrument, rehearsing a play or executing a mosaic mural requires long hours of practice, focus and perseverance — all components of self-discipline, a trait that many at-risk youth are desperately lacking.

Positive Results: National Proof Youth Arts Programs Work!

In a national study, three cities have rigorously evaluated their arts programs for at-risk youth and found that these programs decrease involvement in delinquent behavior, increase academic achievement and improve youth's attitudes about themselves and their future.

The YouthARTS Development Project is a collaboration between the local arts agencies in Portland, Oreg., Atlanta and San Antonio; Americans for the Arts; National Endowment for the Arts; and U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention².

According to early findings of researchers provided by the U.S. Department of Justice, participants in

We cannot build enough prisons to support the “three term. The wiser course is to INVEST IN POSITIVE which the arts program for at-risk youth is exemplary.

strikes and you’re out” philosophy over the long INTERVENTION — an approach for

JUDGE GLENDA HATCHETT, CHIEF PRESIDING JUDGE
FULTON COUNTY JUVENILE COURT
PARTNER IN FULTON COUNTY’S ART-AT-WORK PROGRAM



these youth arts programs exhibit the following improvements:

SKILLS

- Increased ability to express anger appropriately, to communicate effectively with adults and their peers and to cooperate with others, among other interpersonal skills.
- Increased ability to work on tasks from start to finish, which is vital for both academic and vocational success.

ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOR

- More likely to report decreased frequency of delinquent behavior than their nonparticipating peers.
- More likely to show improvements in their attitudes toward school, self-esteem and self-efficacy than are nonparticipating youth.

COURT INVOLVEMENT

- Fewer new court referrals during the program period compared with nonparticipating youth.
- New offenses committed during the program period tended to be less severe than those committed prior to the program.

The three programs studied in the YouthARTS Development Project are:

1. The San Antonio Department of Arts and Cultural Affairs developed Urban SMARTS, in partnership with the San Antonio Department of Community Initiatives and the San Antonio School District. The program identifies 11- to 13-year-olds at risk of school failure, drug use or gang participation, and provides daily arts instruction, a safe haven, comprehensive case management and transportation home following participation in this after-school program.

2. The Fulton County (Ga.) Arts Council developed Art-at-Work, an arts education and job-training program, in partnership with the Fulton County Juvenile Court. The program is designed to prevent 14- to 16-year-old youths who have been identified by the court as truant from becoming more deeply involved in the juvenile justice system. Professional artists provide youth with sequential art instruction. Program participants gain job skills and learn about the business and entrepreneurial aspects of the arts and how to market their work. Participants are paid \$5 an hour.
3. The Portland Regional Arts and Culture Council, in partnership with the Multnomah County Division of Juvenile Justice Services, developed Youth Arts Public Art, an ongoing series of classes that serve as intervention strategies for youth on probation. Participants learn art techniques, life skills such as beginning and completing a project and the creative and business aspects of producing an art exhibition or performance.

In addition to a detailed evaluation of the efficacy of these programs, a YouthARTS toolkit is being developed to guide other communities through the creation and evaluation of effective arts programs for youth (to be published Fall 1998).

When children EXPRESS THEMSELVES
they may no longer need a broken window,
a can of spray paint, or a gun to

through dance
or the power of their voices,
make their point.

HARRY THOMAS
DIRECTOR, SEATTLE HOUSING AUTHORITY



CAN THE ARTS REALLY DETER OUR YOUTH FROM GANGS, DRUGS AND VIOLENCE?

Prevention programs are most effective when youth attend and participate regularly. Arts programs are successful at attracting, engaging and retaining even the toughest kids. These youth — including gang members and previously incarcerated teens — join arts programs and return time and again. What draws them?

- The thrill of creative and artistic expression.
- Community recognition for performances, exhibitions or public art works.
- Learning new job skills.
- Learning how to use the arts to communicate difficult thoughts and emotions.

Research confirms that youth vandalize with graffiti and join gangs in search of recognition, achievement and self-expression. The arts provide a different way to address these needs. The following examples demonstrate the success of arts programs in engaging even the hardest to reach youth:

THE JUVENILE GANG PREVENTION PROGRAM in Dallas offers free classes at four recreation centers, where participants create plays and visual works of art based on personal experiences. Results:

- Eighty percent attendance rate.
- Rival gang members working together on projects.

MIDNIGHT SHAKESPEARE participants — a San Francisco-based program for at-risk Hispanic youth — build sets and costumes, rehearse scenes and produce a public performance. Results:

- Ninety percent retention rate, compared with the 60 percent retention rate of other youth programs.
- The program's success has led to its expansion into 16 other cities.

BRIDGING THE GAP: HOW NONSCHOOL- BASED PROGRAMS BOOST EDUCATION

For at-risk youth, truancy and school failure are the two most significant predictors of delinquent behavior, according to U.S. Department of Justice research.

Arts programs reach at-risk youth and help them stay in school. This has a profound effect on both their development and our communities, considering that the unemployment rate of high school dropouts is 70 percent higher than that of high school graduates.

Arts Participation = Improved Academic Performance

A longitudinal study of 25,000 students reveals that involvement in the arts leads to greater success in school, regardless of socioeconomic status³. The study links significant cognitive and developmental benefits to involvement in the arts:

- Higher grades.
- Higher scores in standardized tests.
- Increased community service activity.
- Lower dropout rates.

Arts Programs = Higher Rates of Graduation

At-risk youth participating in arts and prevention programs are staying in school and graduating. Participants in the following programs have higher rates of graduation and college attendance than comparable youth in their community:

- At the New York Alternative School in Tillson — a “last chance” school for truant youth and dropouts — the graduation rate has nearly doubled to 83 percent since the arts partnership with Mill Street Loft was initiated in 1992.
- At the Boys Choir of Harlem, 98 percent of the members graduate from high school and go on to college.

The department position is very clear that we must stop kids from getting
in the juvenile justice door, and the ARTS ARE AN
INEXPENSIVE EFFECTIVE TOOL for doing that.

MANO KHATIBI
BUREAU CHIEF OF PREVENTION SERVICES
FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE



FUNDING FOR YOUTH-AT-RISK ARTS PROGRAMS

A look at 240 youth-at-risk 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 to redirect existing funding. Tucson's ArtWORKS — a summer job training program for at-risk teens — provides an example of how the budgets of various public agencies may be redirected to support an arts program. A recent ArtWORKS project to improve public housing neighborhoods paid youth to design, construct and install 100 mosaics on the exterior of a 34-unit apartment building, permanently replacing the graffiti and vandalism that plagued the complex. The following funding streams support this program:

- Tucson Transportation Department
- Community Development Block Grant
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), housing rehabilitation funds
- HUD, drug prevention funds
- City of Tucson golf tax
- School Title I funding and construction budgets
- Pima County Parks and Recreation
- Highway User Revenue Fund
- Private corporations and foundations

The following are examples of how federal agencies fund arts programs for at-risk youth. Many of these funds are made available at the state and local levels:

National Endowment for the Arts Education and Access Program

YOUTH WORKS/ART WORKS is an arts education program which helps urban teens play a vital role in community revitalization efforts through creative writing, photography and urban design.

U.S. Department of Justice Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP):

In collaboration with the National Endowment for the Arts, OJJDP trained arts organizations in ten cities to integrate a conflict resolution curriculum into their arts programs for youth. A training handbook to guide other arts organizations is an outcome of this project (available Summer 1998).

U.S. Department of Labor Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA):

The City of Chicago's GALLERY 37 offers summer arts education and job training by hiring hundreds of local youth to create art for public spaces. The program transforms a three-acre downtown lot into an outdoor studio where apprentice artists work and train with professionals. The program, which also supports 12 satellite programs across the city and its suburbs, has been replicated in more than a dozen cities across the country. Gallery 37 was recently awarded a Ford Foundation/Kennedy School of Government Innovations in Government Award.

U.S. Department of Agriculture Cooperative Extension Service:

KID KONNECTION in Newport, Oreg., a program for rural at-risk youth and their families, offers after-school sessions with artists and Saturday field trips to cultural institutions.

I know that CRIME PREVENTION PAYS FAR GREATER
I make RICO funds available to after-school
stimulate imagination, develop skills and

DIVIDENDS THAN PROSECUTION. To this end,
arts and social programs for at-risk children that
contribute to character development.

RICHARD M. ROMLEY, MARICOPA COUNTY ATTORNEY
PHOENIX, ARIZONA



**U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
Public Housing Drug Elimination Program:**

CHILDREN OF THE FUTURE in Columbus, Ohio, an arts-oriented crime prevention program that involves dance, creative writing, music, theater and the visual arts, is a partnership among the Metropolitan Housing Authority (financed by HUD), the local arts council and the city's departments of parks and recreation and public safety.

**Department of Health and Human Services
Center for Substance Abuse Prevention:**

PROJECT SELF DISCOVERY in Denver is a 12-week drug prevention program for first-time offenders that incorporates theater, dance and visual arts with daily therapy sessions to help youth at risk.

**Department of Education
Safe and Drug Free Schools and Community
State Grants:**

LIVING LITERATURE/COLORS UNITED in Los Angeles incorporates education in literature and history and the social sciences with artistic performance and related visual arts instruction. High schools with this program have seen decreases in truancy and violence and participating students have a 100 percent graduation rate and 90 percent go on to college.

**HOW TO ESTABLISH A PROGRAM
IN YOUR COMMUNITY**

Arts-based youth-at-risk programs are often partnerships between local performing or visual arts organizations and public housing, youth service or crime prevention agencies. Some are launched by successful artists who wish to give something back to their communities; others evolve to address immediate concerns. Still others are carefully designed by public officials and community activists to focus on specific issues associated with at-risk youth, such as job training, school dropout prevention and community service.

5 steps to get your program off the ground:

1. Identify your community's most pressing youth problem, i.e., drugs, vandalism, youth-merchant relations, truancy.
2. Identify an appropriate agency or organization to lead the development of the new arts program.
3. Convene potential program partners — arts agencies, police departments, social services agencies, school departments, departments of recreation and justice — to develop and fund new programs.
4. Survey existing local arts programs. Learn what is working and what needs improvement. Look hard at programs that have some history — a sure measure of success. Examine how these programs are linked to other community youth initiatives.
5. Call your local arts agency — Americans for the Arts can refer you to one in your community — to learn more about your local arts activities.

If we don't utilize this available strategy, we will most certainly lose, and our children will lose.

FRED W. GARCIA
FORMER DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR DEMAND REDUCTION
OFFICE OF NATIONAL DRUG CONTROL POLICY
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT



RESOURCES

Coming Up Taller 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 on-line at <http://www.cominguptaller.org>.

Arts Education & School Improvement Resources for Local & State Leaders A guide to identifying and securing U.S. Department of Education funding for arts education programs (both in-school and after-school). Available on-line at <http://www.ed.gov/pubs/ArtsEd>.

Eloquent Evidence: Arts at the Core of Learning A 12-page pamphlet using research findings to demonstrate the impact of arts education. Available on-line at <http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/db/af/evid/eloq-evid.html>

Artists in the Community: Training Artists to work in Alternative Settings How to select, train and sustain artists to work in community settings. Available from Americans for the Arts by calling 1.800.321.4510.

The Arts Build Communities: A Training Handbook on Arts Programming and Public Housing Includes case studies, characteristics of successful programs and action plan (training video also available). Available from Americans for the Arts by calling 1.800.321.4510.

Arts Works! Prevention Programs for Youth and Communities How to use the arts in drug prevention programs. Published by the National Endowment for the Arts and U.S. Center for Substance Abuse Prevention. Available from National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information by calling 1.800.729.6686.

Helping Communities Fight Crime: Comprehensive Planning Techniques, Models, Programs and Resources A publication of the President's 1997 Crime Prevention Council. Available from Juvenile Justice Clearinghouse by calling 1.800.638.8736.

YouthARTS Development Project Toolkit A multimedia toolkit to help communities develop and evaluate sustainable arts programs for youth. Available (October 1998) from Americans for the Arts by calling 1.800.321.4510.

Through painting, I find that I HAVE CHOICES
IN MY LIFE AND THAT I CAN CHANGE.

I can do things about my life.

NELSON SAVION, YOUTH PARTICIPANT
KIDS OF SURVIVAL
NEW YORK, NY



ENDNOTES

1. The number of local arts agencies in the 50 largest U.S. cities with arts programs for youth at risk increased from approximately 20 percent in 1986 to 82 percent in 1997 (United States Urban Arts Federation 1997, Americans for the Arts).
2. The YouthARTS Development Project is funded by the National Endowment for the Arts, the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the Nathan Cummings Foundation, Emily Hall Tremaine Foundation and the four project partners. Final results of the study will be released October 1998. The Arts and Public Safety Impact Study is another multi-year research study on arts programs for at-risk youth. Partners for this project include the Departments of Cultural Affairs in Los Angeles, Chicago and New York City, and Americans for the Arts. Evaluation for this project is being developed and led by researchers at the RAND Corporation. Results are expected by the year 2000.
3. Americans for the Arts *Monographs*, Vol. 1, Num. 9; "Involvement in the Arts and Success in Secondary School." Study conducted by Dr. James Catterall, Professor and Assistant Dean, UCLA Graduate School of Education and Information Studies.

ABOUT AMERICANS FOR THE ARTS

Americans for the Arts is the national organization that supports the arts and culture through private and public resource development, leadership development, public policy development, information services, public awareness and education.

American for the Arts is dedicated to the following six goals:

- Increasing private and public resources for the arts
- Strengthening the effectiveness of local, state, regional and national systems of support and development for the arts
- Developing new leaders for the cultural community
- Furthering the role of arts education in schools and communities
- Heightening understanding of the role and value of the arts
- Increasing access to and participation in the arts and culture for all people

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**ABOUT THE INSTITUTE FOR
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
AND THE ARTS**

The purpose of the Institute for Community Development and the Arts is to promote local public and private funding for the arts. This will be accomplished by educating local arts agencies, elected and appointed municipal officials and the arts funders about the important role of the arts as community change agents for economic, social and educational problems. The Institute will also identify innovative community arts programs and nontraditional funding sources to enable local arts agencies, arts organizations and local civic officials to replicate or adapt these programs in their communities.

The Institute for Community Development and the Arts will:

- Examine innovative arts programs and nontraditional funding sources that address community development problems
- Strengthen the leadership roles of local arts agencies
- Build partnerships with local government leaders
- Stabilize and promote local public and private funding for artists and arts organizations

*Photo credits:
page 2, Roger Farrington/Wang Center; page 7, Ron Ateman; and
page 13, Balboa High School Mural Project, San Francisco, Calif.*

Institute Partners Include:

United States Conference of Mayors



International City/County
Management Association



National Association of Counties



National League of Cities



National Conference of
State Legislatures



National Association of
Towns and Townships



President's Committee on
the Arts and the Humanities



National Endowment for the Arts



BRAVO, the Film and Arts Network



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