



aRTmatters

In Juvenile Justice, Education, and Our Community

OUTCOMES REPORT

**CITY OF LOS ANGELES
CULTURAL AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT**

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I Foreword

The City of Los Angeles Cultural Affairs Department is pleased to present this summary report on the conference "Art Matters in Juvenile Justice, Education, and Our Community," held in Los Angeles, October 2-4, 2003. It documents two stimulating days of interaction among youth and individuals from government, the corporate and business sectors, community centers, mental health organizations, probation camps and juvenile halls, educational institutions, museums, non-profits, the arts, law enforcement, the courts, social agencies, and youth service providers.

The Art Matters initiative demonstrates the Cultural Affairs Department's ongoing commitment to creating collaborations and advocating for an increased awareness of arts programs that make a difference in the lives of youth and their communities. The conference is an initial step in the presentation of key recommendations that will assist the Cultural Affairs Department in furthering its important work in these areas.

Together with its community partners, the Cultural Affairs Department will continue to lead in the development of resources and networking opportunities for youth and arts related initiatives. The Cultural Affairs Department will engage in substantive discussions with decision makers about these issues and encourage new policy recommendations where the arts positively impact Los Angeles youth.

II Background

The Cultural Affairs Department organized the Art Matters conference out of its commitment to the principle that the arts affect and enrich life in Los Angeles. The arts need to be fostered even in times of economic volatility, because the safety, the fiscal viability, and the well-being and quality of life in our city are at stake. The mantle of this responsibility is fully accepted by the Department.

The two-day gathering followed a yearlong series of community planning sessions. Its goal was to identify salient issues, share best practices, explore collaborative ideas, and encourage greater involvement of arts organizations and individual artists, where children and adolescents learn, live, and participate.

The first day of the conference, attended by over 500 arts and youth professionals, was held on October 2, 2003 at the Millennium Biltmore Hotel in downtown Los Angeles. It encompassed a rousing keynote address by youth advocate, the Honorable Glenda Hatchett, Chief Presiding Judge of Atlanta's Fulton County Juvenile Court, and a special morning plenary on the current status of youth crime and incarceration. Fifteen concurrent breakout sessions with topics ranging from private-public partnerships, youth trends, case studies from probation camps, and art by gangs, sparked lively debate. A closing plenary informed participants about ideas discussed in the day's sessions and provided them with an opportunity to prioritize key areas of concern.

"The more that we can have our kids feel that they are doing positive things, particularly in this time of uncertainty, the better off they're going to be."

**Judge Glenda Hatchett,
Keynote Speaker**

“If the truth is told, I would be more bold. I would take a chance to change the globe.”

**Jorge R.,
Youth Participant**

The second day of the conference, a program for youth by youth entitled “Dreaming Our Future: If the Truth is Told,” was held on October 4, 2003 in Griffith Park, Los Angeles. It was attended by approximately 150 youth and over 20 L.A. community organizations. The day fostered dynamic exchange between youth and youth organizations. It presented participatory workshops on social issues, self-awareness, and the arts to encourage critical thinking and interaction. The program served as a forum for youth to express themselves and to clarify from youth perspectives the recommendations from the first conference day.

The program represented a significant milestone in furthering the lives of L.A.’s young people through the arts. Both days demonstrated how the arts mitigate some of the most pressing issues in youth culture today, and how they can be used as a catalyst for creating new and effective community partnerships. Providing a foundation of ideas and resources for future action, the conference highlighted three distinct thematic areas:

- Juvenile Justice, including arts programs in probation camps and detention halls, mental health facilities, court schools, and law enforcement sites;
- Education, including after-school and innovative in-school arts programs; and
- Community, including collaborative arts programs, faith-based organizations, and community improvement initiatives.

III Recommendations

Two days of vigorous and thought-provoking debate yielded suggestions for future action and advocacy. Conference participants emphatically noted the need for:

- Greater awareness of the value and impact of the arts;
- An increased priority of the arts in policy;
- Advocacy for increased funding for after-school and prevention programs;
- More inclusion of youth voices in finding solutions; and
- Deeper understanding of and appreciation for urban youth culture.

Written recommendations submitted to the Cultural Affairs Department during the closing plenary indicated the need to enhance collaboration between arts and social service agencies as a top priority. There was a common recognition that collective action is absolutely essential to affect positive outcomes.

Participants also expressed an overwhelming need to better understand and integrate current forms of youth expression, such as Hip Hop. They commended the Cultural Affairs Department for furthering a positive response to the history, genres, fashion, artistic expression, and communication tools of Hip Hop, providing educators with a much needed context for the issues they face every day in their classrooms and allowing them to explore how to incorporate urban youth culture into their curricula.

“Children and adolescents must have access to the arts at all levels.”

**Recommendation from
Conference Planning
Committee**

Time and again, conference participants stressed the importance of valuing the cultural themes young people care about -- their own gender-specific narratives and traditions that need to be acknowledged and honored. Participants urged civic leaders to be better listeners to youth, and to provide more opportunities aligned with their needs and interests. As youth unanimously affirmed during the second day of the conference, the arts offer a unique and compelling means for self-discovery, for creating better relationships with others, and for meaningful positive activities. Above all, the reminder to be responsive and inclusive of the youth voice was emphasized.

Several other priorities evolved from conference sessions, including the:

- Recognition of the tremendous economic impact of the arts in Los Angeles;
- Importance of communication networks;
- Seminal role of the media, especially in its depiction of youth; and
- Crucial need for parental involvement.

The following recommendations are presented through their alignment within the conference's three areas of investigation: juvenile justice, education, and community.

A. Juvenile Justice

Youth face complex challenges daily, which have an impact on their future opportunities. Ever-changing urban demographics, increasing globalization, and rapid-pace advances in new technologies, among other challenges, present youth with often difficult choices. Tragic incidents of youth violence are ubiquitous in headlines across the country. They grip the nation's attention and exacerbate the public's misperception of teen culture. Mainstream media routinely emphasize negative stereotypes about urban youth, adding to the burden young people have to overcome.

Teens are most likely to become victims of violent crime, be in or cause a car crash, get hooked on cigarettes, and experiment with other dangerous drugs.¹ Youth also face increased incarceration and a dramatic decline in educational opportunities. Consider that in the past ten years California built twenty prisons, but built only one University of California and one California State University campus.²

In 2001, there were 1,300 active gangs with an estimated membership of 96,000 teens and young adults in Los Angeles County.³ This statistic is indicative of the negative influences encountered by L.A.'s young people as they struggle toward adulthood.

Conference participants recognized that teens involved in the criminal justice system are at high-risk for a myriad of dysfunctional and destructive behaviors. They often lack

“Using the arts to teach the message that conflicts can be resolved without violence is exciting and offers many opportunities to bring teachers, parents, and other members of the community into the process.”

**Conflict Resolution
Education, Office of
Juvenile Justice and
Delinquency Prevention,
U.S. Department of
Justice**

“The highest incidence of juvenile crime occurs from 3pm to 6pm, after school when kids are by themselves.”

Judge Glenda Hatchett

the skills, self-respect, motivation, role models, and support systems that will help them become responsible adults. As research has shown, participation in the visual and performing arts is among the most potent forms of violence prevention, working to successfully redirect the energies of at-risk youth.⁴ For a relatively small outlay of funds, youth arts programs have been found to:

- Reduce truancy and improve academic performance;
- Enhance the ability to communicate effectively and resolve conflict;
- Improve the ability to work on tasks from start to finish and to work in teams;
- Improve self-esteem and individuals’ attitudes about their futures; and
- Decrease the frequency of delinquent behavior.⁵

Art Matters participants confirmed these important findings. In dialogue with presenters and session chairs, they issued several key recommendations to strengthen the role of the arts in the juvenile justice system:

- Work for legislation that make arts education a mandatory part of prevention, detention, rehabilitation, and re-entry programs;
- Publish research that demonstrates that the arts stem violence and reduce gang and racial conflict;
- Assist with the prevention of vandalism by funding education, exhibitions, murals, and legal graffiti art walls;

- Disseminate information about model arts programs in the juvenile justice system, and share evaluation tools;
- Mandate that probation staff be trained in the arts by artists that teach in the system;
- Encourage continued interaction of youth with arts programs after they are released from detention and probation camps;
- Advocate more funding for the arts in prevention programs;
- Change entrenched perceptions about youth by encouraging collaborations between arts organizations and social service, juvenile justice, mental health, and other organizations;
- Recognize modes of Hip Hop as a legitimate form of youth communication, and use their lessons as a model for new youth programming ideas;
- Involve youth long-term with arts programs which have proven to be successful in helping young people achieve academically and socially;
- Create sanctioned spaces and a permitting process for artists to redirect graffiti art forms;
- Support the idea of empowering youth to mentor younger peers and to be mediators, developing for example mentor/ apprentice projects with graffiti artists who are successful in the commercial sector; and
- Promote the concept that art is a critical vehicle for social change.

B. Education

Classroom and after-school arts education were key areas of investigation at the Art Matters conference. Panelists discussed issues that plague schools and offered profiles of successful programs. In America, 27% of high school students never graduate, and generally score lower on standardized tests when compared to their peers in other major industrial countries. While the drop out problem is complex, poverty and

poor experiences in schools appear to be contributing factors.⁶

As many conference participants know from first-hand experience, arts education is central to a youth's individual and social development. It raises overall academic performance and builds the skills necessary for success in the workplace and community.

Teachers and arts educators have affirmed that the arts nurture a child's development by teaching cooperation and team-building skills; contributing to technological competence, enhancing the ability to make constructive choices, teaching creative problem-solving skills, fostering an appreciation for cultural and ethnic diversity, and helping develop literacy, as well as convergent and divergent thinking skills.⁷

Conference participants noted that the arts provide youth with authentic and meaningful learning experiences. According to a consensus found by researchers, the arts:

- Engage students not being reached;
- Maximize students' learning abilities;
- Connect students to themselves and each other;
- Transform the learning environment;
- Provide learning opportunities for parents and caretakers;
- Present new challenges for students already considered successful; and
- Connect learning experiences to the world of real work.⁸

“The arts are fundamental resources through which the world is viewed, meaning is created, and the mind developed.”

**Elliot W. Eisner,
Professor of Education
and Art, Stanford
University**

The incorporation of comprehensive arts education as part of public school instruction is crucial. Arts education has demonstrated an impact on the developmental growth of every child, leveling the “learning field” across socio-economic boundaries.⁹ The conference underscored the arts as a powerful mechanism for change and key to ensuring that our children develop into healthy, productive, and informed adults with a strong sense of self and civic responsibility.¹⁰

An assessment by the Los Angeles County Arts Commission revealed that 54% of school districts in the County reported no adopted arts policy, while 37% reported no defined sequential arts education in any discipline, at any level.¹¹ In response to their findings, the County released the Regional Blueprint for Arts Education, which envisions every public school in the County to receive high-quality K-12 arts education.¹²

In Los Angeles, District-level leaders have a strong desire to improve arts education, but few are given real economic tools or other incentives to develop comprehensive sequential systems to teach the arts. Many districts would not have arts programs without support of parents and non-profit organizations.¹³

Some of the most creative connections between art and the classroom are found in non-traditional spaces, such as continuation schools and probation camps. L.A.’s the HeArt Project, for example, offers hard-to-reach teenagers its Art and Civic Dialogue program which explores the intersection of art, social consciousness, and advocacy in

“In Los Angeles County 82.3% of schools use partnerships with non-profit organizations to provide arts education.”

**Los Angeles County
Regional Blueprint
for Arts Education,
2003**

the public realm. Youth detained in the Camp Glenn Rockey Probation facility can join the “Mission Possible Program,” which offers long-term music, theatre, and graphic design educational courses. Although a pilot program, early indications suggest that youth in the program are positively impacted.¹⁴

Art Matters participants developed specific recommendations to address the fundamental need for increased arts in education:

- Advocate for adequate spending on arts education in schools;
- Create formalized structures and opportunities to bring community artists into school and community based programs;
- Publish models of innovative and successful arts programs and share evaluation tools with organizations;
- Integrate the arts into K-12 curriculum in the schools;
- Highlight creative approaches to teaching core subjects using the arts; and
- Require arts training for credentialed teachers as part of their certification.

The arts support academic achievement and success in school. They empower students to develop a sense of accomplishment and craftsmanship, quality task performance, and the goal-setting skills needed to succeed in the classroom and beyond.¹⁵

C. Community

Education and juvenile justice are key elements in the quality of community life. For many youth, they represent defining experiences on their road to adulthood. According to recent data, youth make up 30% of the total population in Los Angeles County.¹⁶ Like teens across America, Los Angeles youth spend only about 26% of their time in school, with 40-50% of the remaining time spent without adult supervision. When parents and teachers cannot be with youth throughout the day to ensure their positive socialization, youth look to other places for their learning and activity.¹⁷

In Los Angeles and elsewhere, many creative youth-based organizations and enterprises have sprung up to close this “institutional gap,” engaging young people in productive activities during non-school hours and helping to keep them safe and out of trouble.

The L.A. education community is making strides despite economic challenges, targeting middle school students through collaborative after-school efforts of educators, business leaders, artists, and local communities. Programs such as the Los Angeles Unified School District’s Beyond the Bell and the City of Los Angeles L.A. Bridges Program build on classroom lessons and keep youth connected to their schools and homes. In addition, L.A.’s BEST (Better Educated Students for Tomorrow) has adopted the arts and created an After School Arts Program for elementary students.

“We recognize that public and private sector partnerships provide meaningful opportunities for young people to participate fully in the creative process.”

**Margie J. Reese
General Manager
Cultural Affairs
Department**

**“Nothing
stops a
bullet
like a job.”**

**Homeboy Industries,
Conference
Presenter**

In a city with world-class theatres, museums, and cultural venues, the Cultural Affairs Department provides access to those spaces for youth citywide.¹⁸ The Cultural Affairs Department also offers after-school and weekend arts programs through its cultural centers located across the City.¹⁹ The Cultural Affairs Department centers are an integral part of the cultural landscape of Los Angeles and a hub for creative activity for tourists, artists, and the community.

Conference participants noted that arts programs in Los Angeles provide an important avenue for parental, community, and business involvement with schools and other cultural institutions, strengthening community life throughout the city. As current indicators suggest, all arts programs carry a strong component of community service, and many have moved, in recent years, toward micro-enterprise in local neighborhoods.²⁰

Many business leaders understand that arts programs build a climate of high expectation, discipline, and academic rigor that attracts businesses to stay in or relocate to the community. Recognizing the economic impact of the arts, the City of Los Angeles Cultural Affairs Department awarded \$3.3 million in contracts for arts programs and services in 2003/04, enhancing the quality of life for Los Angeles’ 3.9 million residents and 25.1 million annual visitors.

The L.A. County Arts Commission awarded over \$2.5 million for performances and exhibitions in 2002/03. The County’s economic impact study of its grantee organizations during this period revealed that organizations provid-

ed an average of 94 events every day, attended by over 9.6 million people. While many charged admission, 37% of funded organizations provided their programming for free. This activity generated over \$58 million of revenue from over 130,000 donors and created jobs for over 12,000 individuals.²¹ Millions of cultural tourists further contribute to the local economy.

Many conference participants, themselves contributors to the economic and cultural well-being of the city, developed recommendations for their communities. They urge city leaders to:

- Redefine entrenched perceptions about youth through collaborations between the arts and community organizations across geographic and demographic boundaries;
- Advocate to business, corporate and foundation leaders, and elected officials the importance of continued funding for youth arts and education programs;
- Conduct and disseminate research findings specific to Los Angeles about the impact of the arts on youth, families, and communities;
- Offer tools, resources, and links to private sector support for children, and artists/teachers, and providers;
- Advocate for adequate spending on the arts and after-school cultural enrichment programs at all levels of government;
- Investigate a small tax (legislation) to support the arts (tickets, entertainment);
- Create formalized structures and opportunities to bring artists and cultural arts professionals into community-based programs;
- Implement new and aggressive outreach strategies for recruiting underserved youth, including youth with physical and/or mental disabilities;
- Encourage parents to actively participate with their children in art programs and develop opportunities for them to celebrate their children's accomplishments in the arts; and
- Continue to provide networking opportunities for people and organizations.

IV Outcomes

Several collaborations were fostered as a direct result of the Art Matters conference, including:

- The City of Los Angeles Cultural Affairs Department's participation in the Mayor's Committee for the "Making Collaboration Work: Linking Law Enforcement with Community Resources for Youth Summit;"
- The participation of local arts organizations in the "Celebration of California's Juvenile Court Centennial Conference;"
- The expansion of the Hollywood Entertainment Museum's video production program in probation camps;
- The integration of the Sir Charles Blues Lab music education program at the Accelerated School in South Los Angeles;
- The discussion to form a partnership between the Community College Foundation's "eBus" Program,²² the University of Southern California Cultural Events Guild, and local artists to bring the digital arts to Los Angeles neighborhoods;
- The implementation of the first Spoken Word Festival in the Los Angeles Unified School District Local District I;
- The formation of the Art Matters Initiative, an on-going advocacy and resource program to serve the arts, education, and local communities;
- A proclamation by the City of Los Angeles making the first week in October "Los Angeles Youth Arts Week;"
- A proclamation by the City of Los Angeles making the first Friday in October "Youth Arts Day in Los Angeles;" and
- A proclamation by the Governor of the State of California, recognizing the City of Los Angeles Cultural Affairs Department's contribution to youth arts and education in Los Angeles.

V Conclusion

“The Art Matters In Juvenile Justice, Education, and Our Community” conference was instrumental in bringing together important segments of the community (many for the first time) to network and inform one another about the role of the arts in enhancing the lives of young people and as a desired resource. Key policy recommendations emerging from the conference affirmed the need for:

- Legislation that redirects graffiti art and funds anti-vandalism education initiatives;
- Legislation that mandates the inclusion of arts in the juvenile justice system;
- Increased funding for engagement and prevention programs utilizing the arts;
- Increased fiscal commitment for arts education in schools, after school, and in the community;
- Integration of the arts in the K-12 curriculum; and
- Tax legislation that supports the arts.

The Cultural Affairs Department is a tremendous resource and catalyst, engaging hundreds of cultural organizations and artists to contribute to the vitality and quality of life in the city. Through its programs and grants, The Cultural Affairs Department continues its leadership in the cultural community, advocating the arts for all Los Angeles neighborhoods.

Throughout the conference there was an inspired dialogue about the influential role of the Cultural Affairs Department in advancing the youth/arts agenda. Discussions included

“The conference gave me a greater understanding of all the challenges and developmental struggles that art within the community faces.”

**Cara Clemmons,
College Student,
Conference Participant**

topics for future action, new and/or expanded funding initiatives, advocacy, networking and collaborative ventures among organizations, model programs, and professional and leadership development programs.

Conference participants stressed the need for the Cultural Affairs Department to continue to be at the center of ongoing activities, to create resources, and to provide the leadership necessary to sustain the momentum and work in this field. Among the specific recommendations were:

- Organize on-going Art Matters events, workshops, publications, online tools and resources, developing action committees to move the agenda forward;
- Develop a job bank for artists and organizations working with youth;
- Disseminate conference findings widely to the youth services, mental health, probation, juvenile justice, law enforcement, and art communities;
- Create a highly visible award, modeled perhaps after the Coming Up Taller Awards, a national program of the President's Committee on The Arts and Humanities, to increase public awareness for artists and grassroots organizations working with youth in the arts;
- Set up an e-group and/or e-community online as a forum for continual communication about resources, best practices, news, funding opportunities, and collaborative initiatives;
- Expand the number of people who strongly support the arts to help change systems and policies, enhancing the lives of young people;
- Develop new evaluation tools for assessing the impact of the arts in community programs;

- Provide access to studio/work space for local community artists to have a neighborhood-based venues to work and display their work;
- Develop a program to provide arts organizations with personal and professional development for boards, staff, and constituents; and
- Continue to provide youth with a portal for communication.

The Cultural Affairs Department, in collaboration with its community partners, will carefully evaluate these recommendations, maintain continuity, and focus on the key issues identified. Through collaborative efforts and services in the field, such as workshops, panel discussions, and forums for interaction, the Cultural Affairs Department will further advocate for policy and funding changes that recognize the importance of the arts as a tool for social change. We strongly believe and affirm that ART MATTERS in juvenile justice, in education, and in our communities.

“Following my participation on the Hip Hop History panel, I was contacted by many agencies interested in inviting my organization to do workshops. Some agencies also requested training for their staff to help them better understand Hip Hop culture and how it can be used as a tool for outreach and personal empowerment.”

**Dome, Foundation for the Study of Hip Hop Consciousness,
Conference Presenter**

Endnotes

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- 4 [Arts Programs for Juvenile Offenders in Detention and Corrections](#), Washington, DC, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and the National Endowment for the Arts, 2001.
- 5 [YouthARTS Development Project](#), Washington, DC, OJJDP, National Endowment for the Arts, Americans for the Arts, 1996.
- 6 [An Urban Ethnography Of Latino Street](#), Report on Gangs in Los Angeles and Ventura Counties, California State University Northridge, nd.
- 7 [Champions of Change, The Impact of the Arts on Learning](#), Edward B. Fiske, Washington, DC, The President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities and the Arts Education Partnership, 1999.
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- 9 [Involvement in the Arts and Success in Secondary School](#), Los Angeles, CA, James S. Catterall, UCLA Imagination Project, Graduate School of Education and Information Studies, Americans for the Arts Monograph, 1998.
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- 11 [Arts in Focus](#), Los Angeles, CA Los Angeles County Arts Commission, 2001.
- 12 The Los Angeles Unified School District is halfway in its implementation of the 10-Year Arts Education Plan, bringing dance, music, theatre, and the visual arts to students.
- 13 [Arts in Focus](#), Los Angeles, CA Los Angeles County Arts Commission, 2001.
- 14 "Mission Possible" is a pilot visual and performing arts program at Probation Camp Glenn Rockey. It is co-sponsored by the Los Angeles County Commissions and Departments of Probation, Mental Health, and Children and Family Services, and the Los Angeles County Office of Education with the support of the Music Center Education Division.
- 15 [Arts at the Core of Learning Initiative](#), Business Circle for Arts Education in Oklahoma, 1999.
- 16 [United States Census Data 2000](#).
- 17 [A Matter of Time: Risk and Opportunity in the Non-School Hours](#), New York, Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, Carnegie Corporation, 1992.
- 18 The Cultural Affairs Department grants to Los Angeles non-profit arts organizations reach approximately 1 million youth annually.
- 19 The Cultural Affairs Department's 18 neighborhood arts and cultural centers offer free or low cost classes, performances, and exhibitions. Each center is guided by the philosophy of offering high quality programs for the participation and appreciation of the arts.
- 20 [Imaginative Actuality: Learning in the Non-School Hours](#), Palo Alto, CA. Shirley Brice Heath with Adelma Roach, Stanford University and Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 2001.
- 21 [Enriching Lives, Grantee Impact Report 2002-2003](#), Los Angeles, CA Los Angeles County Arts Commission, 2004.
- 22 The eBus, a program of the Community College Foundation, is a mobile technology lab. Each eBus is equipped with 12-20 workstations and 2-way satellite Internet connectivity.

In January 1995, the City of Los Angeles Cultural Affairs Department established the Youth Arts and Education Program based on recommendations from the 1992 Los Angeles Cultural Master Plan, the 1993 Youth Arts Advocacy Report, and the LA4KIDS Report from the Mayor's Committee on Children, Youth, and Families. National interest in increased integration of arts education and the need to offer youth positive alternatives and access to the arts contribute to the priorities and services of this on-going program.



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"Art Matters in Juvenile Justice, Education, and Our Community"

Outcomes Report
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