

**EVALUATION REPORT**

***CREATIVE TRANSITIONS  
INITIATIVE***

A project of the  
**Hampshire Educational Collaborative**  
in partnership with the  
**Massachusetts Department of Youth Services**  
and the  
**Massachusetts Cultural Council**



**Center for Youth and Communities  
Heller School for Social Policy and Management  
Brandeis University**

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## ABOUT THE RESEARCHERS

The Center for Youth and Communities (CYC) is an integral part of the Heller School for Social Policy and Management at Brandeis University. Since its inception in 1983, CYC has established a national reputation as one of the nation's leading evaluation, research and capacity-building centers aimed at preparing young people for college, work and life. Within the Heller School's mission of "Knowledge Advancing Social Justice", CYC's goal is to "make knowledge productive." The Center does this by connecting the knowledge gained from scholarly research with practical experience in ways that resonate with and help policy makers and practitioners. This blend of theory and practice provides CYC with a unique perspective and capacity. Practitioners and policy makers are partners in a practical knowledge development effort in which the community and the academy bring critical strengths, and in which practical solutions to real-world issues are developed through a collaborative, mutually respectful approach.

The evaluators and authors of this report were Christopher Kingsley and Tracy Cutter, with Della Hughes as Principal Investigator.

## ABOUT THE PARTNERS



The Hampshire Educational Collaborative is an educational service agency situated in western Massachusetts, with educational programming that is both regional and statewide. The Collaborative has almost 40 years of experience in preK-12 professional development, the education of at-risk youth, special education, educator licensure, and early childhood. Our hallmark is to foster educational excellence for all learners and through collaboration, to identify and develop resources for educators, schools and communities.



The Massachusetts Department of Youth Services is the juvenile justice agency of the Commonwealth. Our mission is to protect the public and prevent crime by promoting positive change in the lives of youth committed to our custody, and by partnering with communities, families, government and provider agencies toward this end. We accomplish this mission through interventions that build knowledge, develop skills and change the behavior of the youth in our care.



The Massachusetts Cultural Council (MCC) is a state agency that promotes excellence, access, education and diversity in the arts, humanities, and interpretive sciences to improve the quality of life for all Massachusetts residents and contribute to the economic vitality of our communities. The MCC is committed to building a central place for the arts, sciences and humanities in the everyday lives of communities across the Commonwealth. The Council pursues this mission through a combination of grant programs, partnerships and services for nonprofit cultural organizations, schools, communities and individual artists.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

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<b>OVERVIEW</b>	<b>5</b>
BACKGROUND	7
METHODOLOGY	8
<b>THE FINDINGS</b>	<b>9</b>
IMPACT ON YOUTH	9
THE PEOPLE	12
PROGRAMS AND APPROACHES	16
A WORD OF CAUTION	28
<b>CONCLUSIONS</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>APPENDICES</b>	<b>31</b>



# OVERVIEW

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**Is it worthwhile to invest in arts initiatives such as *Creative Transitions*, and/or arts programs in general, for youth involved in the Massachusetts Department of Youth Services (DYS) system?**

In 2005, a statewide “*ArtsInFusion*” coalition was formed in Massachusetts to integrate the arts throughout the Commonwealth’s juvenile justice system. In the spring and summer of 2008, the *ArtsInFusion* Task Force ran the *Creative Transitions* demonstration project which was designed to develop and test tools, protocols, approaches, and relationships that could support integrating arts and cultural opportunities within a number of DYS programs across the state. The *Center for Youth and Communities (CYC)* at Brandeis University conducted an evaluation of the *Creative Transitions* initiative over a six-month period during the summer and fall of 2008.

Upon review of an array of *Creative Transitions* programs, Brandeis evaluators have concluded:

*Creative Transitions* demonstrated that arts programs, although very brief, can be valued by young people and DYS youth workers, and have the potential to produce an array of positive experiences and outcomes for young people in DYS facilities.

*The most successful programs:*

- are collaboratively planned and coordinated with DYS staff and managers from pre-program through finish;
- are highly-engaging for youth at their start, and flexible as they progress;
- are staffed by well-oriented, skilled artist-educators;
- are offered in environments conducive to confidentiality and safety;
- offer curricula and activities based upon realistic expectations for youth attendance;
- showcase the young people’s work in a culminating event that includes facility staff, community workers, friends, and family whenever possible
- engage young people who have become interested in the arts in additional, subsequent arts-oriented opportunities beyond what they experienced in the DYS facility.

On the whole, the *Creative Transitions* initiative was a successful endeavor that has made positive contributions to the lives of many young people who participated. However, aspects of those programs could certainly have been improved and the lessons learned will contribute to successful future arts programs with young people in the DYS system.

Cross-site sharing of experiences and approaches among artists as they implement their initiatives improves artists' morale and contributes to the quality of arts programming. This sharing may be enhanced if DYS staff and youth contribute to the conversation.

DYS program staff hunger for programs that will engage their young people in interesting activities that broaden youths' horizons and expose them to opportunities beyond their experiences.

This report, although focused on *Creative Transitions*, contains significant information beyond *Creative Transitions*, and even beyond the arts themselves. Many of the concepts contained herein are readily transferable to other types of initiatives that might be offered to DYS youth.

*Universally, DYS youth workers and young people stated that they would like more arts activities like these. In addition, across all interviewees, it was clearly stated that there were no parts of the *Creative Transitions* arts programs that were considered to be "not valuable" or "unnecessary".*

## **BACKGROUND**

In 2005, a statewide “*ArtsInFusion*” coalition was formed in Massachusetts to integrate the arts as an intervention strategy throughout the Commonwealth’s juvenile justice system. In 2006, the coalition was successful in securing its first major grant. The U.S. Department of Education awarded \$1,050,000 over three years to establish *Unlocking the Light*, a statewide program using artist residencies to provide job-embedded professional development through which classroom teachers working in DYS secure residential facilities explored how to use the arts to teach academic subjects. In 2007, the Task Force was invited to present two separate workshops at the first national Art and Criminal Justice Conference in Philadelphia.

In the spring and summer of 2008, the *ArtsInFusion* Task Force ran a demonstration project, *Creative Transitions*, with a total budget of \$100,000, derived equally from two sources: the Massachusetts Cultural Council and the Massachusetts Department of Youth Services. Hampshire Educational Collaborative served as the initiative’s fiscal agent.

*The Creative Transitions* project was designed to develop tools, protocols, approaches, and most importantly, relationships necessary to move toward the *ArtsInFusion* Task Force’s larger goal of integrating arts and cultural opportunities within the juvenile justice systems across the state. Specifically, *Creative Transitions* focused on artist residencies in Department of Youth Services (DYS) residential treatment facilities and Community Re-Entry Centers, along with opportunities for young people to continue with programs in the community once their court-mandated involvement had been completed.

*Creative Transitions* introduced arts programming to young people in multiple DYS facilities and community settings. Each program followed its own timing, with all ending by September 2008. The types of art addressed varied by program and location, with some focusing on a single type of art and others combining music and poetry, visual arts, and/or theatre. The programs were located in Boston, Holyoke, Pittsfield and Springfield.

All of the artist-educators and/or arts organizations conducting this work were already working within “the system,” many of them longtime YouthReach grantees:

- Actors’ Shakespeare Project brought their well established program to the Chrysalis House detention center in Framingham.
- Barrington Stage hired graduates of their court-mandated Playwright Mentoring Project as interns at the theatre, assisting in production and arts management.
- Community Music School of Springfield’s hip hop and drumming programs, developed in treatment facilities, was introduced to community reentry centers in Springfield and Holyoke.
- HUMAN hired several past participants of their treatment and community programs to develop two public art installations.
- Medicine Wheel Productions hired several young people to serve as teaching assistants and artists in their studio and gallery.
- Trinity Boston Foundation’s *Street Potential* provided stipended positions to alums and current participants of their program, supporting court-mandated young people who had shown leadership in the program.
- Teaching artist Evan Gentler led a residency in creative writing and sound recording at the Dorchester CRC.

At the request of the *ArtsInFusion Task Force*, the *Center for Youth and Communities (CYC)* at Brandeis University conducted an evaluation of *Creative Transitions* over a six-month period during the summer and fall of 2008.

We at Brandeis have attempted through this *Creative Transitions* evaluation report to:

- document the possible benefits of arts programming with DYS youth;
- identify common challenges to operating arts initiatives with DYS youth;
- describe what various arts projects did to offset those challenges;
- capture and summarize advice from youth, youth workers, managers, and artist-educators about how the existing *Creative Transitions* arts programs might be improved;
- explore and understand issues that might enable program planners to be more fully prepared to design and implement future, higher quality “arts in the DYS system” initiatives that would have potential to provide stronger benefits to young people.

## **METHODOLOGY**

Brandeis’ evaluation gathered the reflections and ideas of those most connected to *Creative Transitions* – the artists who operated the program, the DYS and contracted youth workers who operated the facilities at which the artists conducted their sessions and worked with young people, the youth who participated in an array of arts programs, and the members of the *ArtsInFusion Task Force*.

Included in the evaluation were programs that focused on visual arts, painting, music, beats, rap, poetry, and theatre arts.

The evaluation approach utilized a multiple-phase process:

***An Artists’ Retreat*** – On September 4, 2008, Brandeis evaluators facilitated a one-day retreat at Brandeis University during which artist-educators from the various *Creative Transitions* sites across the state came together to talk about their work with DYS youth and share wisdom and strategies for success (see Appendix A and B).

***Facility-based Interviews and Focus Groups*** – During October and November 2008, the evaluators visited five DYS facilities during which they interviewed and/or conducted focus groups with youth as well managers and youth workers who had been connected with the *Creative Transitions* initiative (see Appendices C and D). Information about a sixth site was garnered through a telephone interview. A list of interviewees is provided in Appendix E. Interview questions focused on both program implementation and youth outcomes.

***An ArtsInFusion Task Force Planning Meeting***: On November 24, 2008, Brandeis evaluators facilitated a one-day meeting of key stakeholders, primarily from the *ArtsInFusion Task Force* (see Appendix F) during which participants learned about the evaluation’s initial key findings, and discussed possible next steps to be taken in the future with arts initiatives such as *Creative Transitions*. Such future programs might eventually be modeled upon the lessons learned from the *Creative Transitions* initiative.

# THE FINDINGS

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In this report, we focus upon three overarching categories/sections of discussion that emerged from our site visits, interviews, focus groups, and facilitated sessions: (1) the **Impact on Youth**, (2) the **People**, and (3) the **Programs and Approaches**.

- The **Impact on Youth** section explores an array of themes focusing on youth outcomes resulting from *Creative Transitions* program participation.
- The **People** section explores themes relating to the individuals for whom the program was designed (the youth), the staff who work with them, their characteristics, and their relationships.
- The **Programs and Approaches** section contains themes that relate to program operations -- the activities and strategies that make up the program, as well as the timing, structure and other features of the program are considered in this section.

Although themes are organized according to these three overarching categories, there are some cross-cutting themes that could fall across more than one category.

## IMPACT ON YOUTH

The *Creative Transitions* initiative shows that well-planned and designed, flexible arts programs operated by skilled artist-educators and coordinated from start to finish with DYS staff have the potential to produce an array of positive experiences and outcomes for young people in DYS facilities (see Appendix J).

*"Many kids have artistic skills and interests, the expression of which is crucial for their growth and development."*

## POSITIVE OUTCOMES

### **NEW SKILLS GAINED AND HORIZONS EXPANDED**

Depending upon the particular emphasis of a *Creative Transitions* site that Brandeis reviewed, it was found that multiple youth at any given site learned new skills and knowledge including, but not limited to aspects of:

- music
- video recording
- drawing
- painting
- poetry writing
- beats/drumming
- working with computers and technology
- theatre
- community history, political issues, and service.

*Creative Transitions* programs introduced young people to positive aspects of the arts that they would not otherwise have had. Quotes from several DYS youth workers included:

"The artists and the art experience sometimes provided experiences that the kids otherwise would not have had. The art piece has been critical in providing for their needs."

"Music/arts help kids learn about and express themselves, and gain positive recognition and self esteem."

"Some of them don't even know they can draw or paint. They enjoyed working with the artists. This was voluntary and they still generally participated."

"If a kid walked away with a better knowledge of mixing equipment, how to create and record beats or even to come away saying 'I want to do this', then this is a success."

"Success for this type of program would be that one, two, or three young people might fall in love with an instrument."

"Art is something young people can touch and feel."

## **EMOTIONS BETTER MANAGED**

Brandeis heard from numerous DYS youth workers that arts programs helped to take parts of young people's lives away from negative activities (at least temporarily). As stated by one youth worker, "Art gives youth a chance to have fun again and be young."

Art lets young people be themselves and express themselves in ways that are different from other DYS programs and services. As one DYS staff member put it, "It's important to show them that there is something different than what they've done before."

Multiple DYS youth workers remarked that arts programs helped youth to better manage their emotions.

Youth workers saw reductions in anger and stress from some youth. Talent often starts coming out when something bad happens. For example, when a young person knows someone who is killed, the emotions, drama, and grief come out among kids in many ways. Art is a vehicle for expression – poems, songs, paintings, etc.-- that youth need to tap into. It is good for anger reduction. Quotes from DYS youth workers and artists included:

"Arts may slow down or reduce chances that a kid will get in trouble. Art fills time positively."

"Producing music at times can reduce anger -- takes kids' minds off what has been going on."

"Arts are an outlet, like sports is an outlet."

"Art should be part of a broader treatment."

"Art is like medication."

"Art can be described as a clinical intervention. Art activities can be private and non-verbal. They can defuse anger and stress, and support mental health."

Arts programs offered opportunities for youth to become engaged in something other than the typical treatment-oriented sessions that DYS offers/requires. While sessions on anger management, drug treatment, and other courses are critical aspects of youths' overall required experiences in DYS facilities, the arts is something different.

A DYS staff-person noted that one youth who was generally very hyperactive seemed more in control when he was in the art class. It relaxed him, and this staff person noticed this effect on some of the other participants as well.

One young person reported that since he likes listening to music, it made the time go by quickly and "took his mind off a lot of things."

One DYS worker observed that "When girls come in [to the arts activity], they become youth again."

### **ARTS-RELATED CAREERS CONSIDERED**

While the potential for greater numbers of youth to apply their *Career Transitions* experiences to a career path was there, youth interviews indicated that this had not generally happened. Although a few youth were interested in continuing their artwork as a hobby, most were not thinking of it as a job or income-producing opportunity. Of the youth interviewed, only one suggested that he was thinking of the arts as a career as a direct result of their *Creative Transitions* experience. Those few youth who did mention wanting to work in the arts field had already had this goal prior to *Creative Transitions*. For most of the youth, it was seen either as a hobby that they would continue on their own or as a positive program experience that they enjoyed at the time but would most likely not continue. As one youth put it, "The program opened [my] eyes, but not about a career."

This is not to suggest that there is not career-development potential in *Creative Transitions* approaches, but rather, that connecting arts with careers was not a formal goal of the *Creative Transitions* initiative during its brief summer iteration, and is probably unrealistic given the short-term nature of these pilot projects.

Brandeis evaluators note that this issue represents a missed opportunity. What if arts programs merge "arts futures" into their program designs?

### **LIFE COURSES CONSIDERED**

While the gains described above do seem to be real benefits of arts programs, no one is suggesting that any arts program is a panacea or cure-all. For example, a few youth did mention that they had to leave the community-based program to go to a secure facility. Similarly, DYS staff occasionally mentioned youth who had been very successful in an arts program but retained their ties to negative/criminal activities. While the very brief *Creative Transitions* summer program did not appear to significantly alter the life courses of the young people who participated, they did seem to give many youth some new skills, interests, and alternative ways to regulate their emotions and express their feelings. Additionally, youth returning to their communities may continue to engage with the arts as part of a re-entry strategy.

As stated by a DYS youth worker:

*"Don't stop doing these arts programs. If it doesn't work at first, try again and tinker with it until you get it right."*

Noticeable behavioral improvements were seen among some *Creative Transitions* participants. DYS staff working with those young people suggested, however, that while the arts participation may have been an important factor, it was only one aspect of an overall intervention program at the facility.

Given the short-term nature of *Creative Transitions*, a change of life course among participating youth was not really expected; however, longer-term, more profound outcomes might be feasible in a longer-term program connected with post-program opportunities.

## **THE PEOPLE**

### ***SPEND TIME AND THOUGHT RECRUITING YOUNG PEOPLE FOR AN ARTS PROGRAM***

An examination of program service delivery often begins with **who** a program should be serving. Brandeis investigated what it might take for young people to be interested in participating in an arts program. Youth workers and youth at multiple *Creative Transitions* sites suggested that the recruitment process for an arts program plays a significant role in the long-term participation and engagement of young people.

The extent to which large numbers of youth were interested in the arts program offered varied by DYS site. All DYS sites Brandeis visited were able to engage at least some youth, and almost all of the youth we spoke to at each site had enjoyed the experience. However, some programs were particularly good at capturing the interest of many youth.

Interviewees often stated that there were young people who entered the arts initiatives with various degrees of interest. Some young people were mandated to attend, and may or may not have participated with enthusiasm. Some participated for a very limited time, and then dropped out. Some young people who participated considered these arts programs special to them and continued their involvement until the end. Others were at first unsure about or reluctant to participate in an arts program, but joined in later, often because their peers pulled them in. Some warmed to arts activities over time.

On the other hand, some young people already possessed relevant experiences, and felt that the curriculum was too basic. Youth workers stated that a better recruitment and orientation process for young people would have helped, as would consideration of youths' pre-existing interests and skills.

From this input, Brandeis deduced that multiple factors contributed to increased chances for youth retention and success, and therefore recommend:

- Devise an attractive orientation process that will enable youth to know what the arts program is about.
- Have artists provide personal presentations, reading material, video presentation, etc. to show young people what the artists and their programs are about. Make sure these "introductory session" are engaging.
- Informally assess potential participants so that approaches can address an array of youth skills, interests, prior experiences, talents, etc.

- Get a few interested young people to volunteer to participate. If those young people like the program, encourage them to recruit other youth.
- Once youth are in an arts program, make sure that the artist builds on assets, skills, experiences, and talents that youth already possess, then encourage participants to tell other young people about the program. (This may or may not be effective depending upon individual DYS sites.)
- Assure that arts programs are intense and meaningful to young people and that they focus on issues youth deal with regularly.

## **CONSIDER THE CHARACTERISTICS OF TARGETED YOUTH AND THEIR CONTEXTS**

Interviewees repeatedly stated that for an arts program to optimally succeed with DYS youth, artists must have an understanding of the young people that the program seeks to serve (i.e., backgrounds of the youth, the community/neighborhood in which they reside, the assets they possess, family situations, learning disabilities such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, resiliency, and other considerations.

Geography is important. Youth populations may vary by neighborhood or even streets within a neighborhood. Neighborhood “insulation” can occur. Racial and ethnic culture and language play important roles.

Resiliency must always be taken into account. Youth growing up in challenging circumstances tend to develop an impressive array of personal strengths that if marshaled and directed in positive ways, can be very powerful. Further, it is important that artists working in programs educate themselves about the communities that they will be working with and recognize not only the challenges, but also the diverse strengths and assets that each member of the community brings with him/her.

Of particular note, artists should be aware of a community’s gang structure and potential turf conflicts. While not every young person committed to DYS is gang-affiliated, many either are themselves involved in a gang or live in neighborhoods with a strong gang presence. Teaching artists need to be attuned to potential interpersonal conflicts this might cause within a work group, and they must be savvy enough to recognize “tagging” activities camouflaged within artwork such as the inclusion of gang symbols and colors.

Recommendations:

- Consider the general demographics of the youth and their families/parents/caregivers; and the effects those demographics have on their active participation.
- Know the community; and its geography, demographics, history, and culture, including gang influences.
- Manage activities to prevent conflict.
- Seek ways to draw upon young people’s talents, interests, and resiliency.

## **ENABLE YOUTH AND ARTIST BONDING AND CONNECTIONS**

Brandeis sought information from young people about their experiences working with Creative Transitions artists-educators. Youth said that the characteristics of artists (particularly personalities, behaviors and actions) were important.

Personality counts. Did the young people like and respect the artist, did the artist like and respect them, and did they both recognize the “liking” and respect of each other? Nearly universally, the young people interviewed remarked that they genuinely liked and respected the artists with whom they worked. Regardless of program site, youth had almost no criticisms of the artists as people.

Among the most often repeated statements across multiple interviews regarding what young people particularly appreciated and valued in artists’ behaviors and actions were that the artist-educators:

- cared about us,
- strived to meet our needs,
- were respectful,
- were helpful,
- were very patient,
- were responsible, and
- were consistent.

In interviews with youth workers, it was clear that the personalities, behaviors, and actions of the artist-educators were considered crucial for the potential success of the program. Youth workers suggested that artists should:

- possess personality, bravery, humor, appreciation of youths’ talents.
- have the capacity to develop a good understanding of the young people with whom they are working and the issues those youth face.
- be consistent; understand the importance of consistency in messages sent to youth. What messages are the staff trying to convey to youth? What reinforcing messages should artists send to youth through arts activities? How will these messages be identified?
- have a lot of patience and have empathy that will enable them to identify with and accept the youth they are serving.
- possess a solid knowledge of the subject matter.
- respect the young people with whom they are working.
- always consider safety and security.
- care about each young person.
- care about whether each young person is learning.
- be flexible.
- not be viewed as “above” the youth.
- be willing to talk and be open-minded.
- be a good listener!! “It’s almost like therapy.”
- do less talking and more listening.
- demonstrate patience while the young person is learning “as you get aggravated.”
- be organized.
- be reliable and on-time.
- come prepared with the right equipment.

Supplementing and congruent with what youth and youth workers said above, the artists themselves had considerable, and sometimes more detailed feedback to offer about the characteristics they thought that artist-educators should have in order to be effective in their work with DYS youth. For example, artist-educators emphasized the need for artists to have humility, commitment, and understanding of the many sides of the self. They noted the need for humility and the ability to “be real.” Artists need to bring not only passion; but also the ability to handle emotionally or physically intense situations. Artists need to be non-judgmental and culturally competent. They need caring and compassion, humor and curiosity about the human condition, and the ability to relate to the youth and to really “hear” them. They need to be flexible, yet have a deep faith in the artistic process.

Appendix G of this report details many more of these artist-generated characteristics of an effective artist-educator.

Perhaps the only criticism that occurred regarding *Creative Transitions* artists-educators among youth and youth workers pertained to a few, rare incidents when artists did not show up for, or had to reschedule, a planned activity with young people. It should be noted that this applied only to one or two sites, is easily correctible, and serves as a future guideline about the importance of integrity.

Brandeis notes that among adult professionals, a missed appointment is often considered an annoyance, and rescheduling is commonplace. This is not the case among young people. Artists should be aware that their commitment to the project, as evidenced by their consistent attendance in the program, is a vital component in terms of building trust with youth who have often been disappointed by adults in their lives. As one DYS youth worker commented, "These boys don't want to hear that you (the artist) have a crisis at home and this is why you didn't come in." This can present a problem for the DYS worker as it gives the youth an opportunity to say, "Here's another example where no one cares about me."

Artists need to be there every planned date, on time, and for the full time. Not having this occur may lead youth to decide that the artists don't care.

## **ASSURE THAT YOUTH WORKERS AND ARTISTS PLAY SEPARATE ROLES**

Contributing to the capacity for young people to establish relationships with, and then cooperate with artist-educators, was the division of “philosophical labor” between artists and DYS youth workers.

For example, as a routine part of their job, DYS youth workers often had to be judgmental and call upon young people to meet an array of requirements. Those youth workers established rules, used sanctions, and had to be enforcers. In contrast, artists could “play outside many requirements.”

Artists come in without many of the rules and behavioral expectations that youth workers have for young people. The artists are not DYS staff; therefore, they are freer and not restrained by many institutional rules. Hence, young people were more inclined toward the artists. With the artists, young people could express themselves more freely, could speak their minds, could relax more, and could convey their thoughts and feelings through their artwork even though their thoughts and feelings might be non-traditional or upsetting.

Recommendations:

- Enable and maintain a separation between artist-educators and youth worker roles so that artists can operate differently from youth workers and their requirements. This enables artists to have the freedom to facilitate young people's expressions and feelings through art.

- Create or continue reasonably confidential and safe processes through which artists and youth workers might communicate about young people's experiences in arts programs for the benefit of the young people.

## **SET UP PROCESSES THAT FACILITATE ONGOING ARTIST/YOUTH WORKER COMMUNICATION**

Multiple DYS youth workers suggested that communication could be improved across artists and youth workers. Among the connection vehicles suggested were:

- The best communication is through regular face-to-face "sit downs together"
- Staff/artist communication could have been enhanced through regular emails.
- It would have been great to have newsletters and updates about how youth are doing.

In multiple cases, youth workers suggested that they would have appreciated input from artists about how each young person was doing in the arts program, and how they might help out.

Multiple youth workers suggested that artists could benefit from an elementary level of training around how to work with this target population when a crisis occurs. What might the artist do when young people act out severely and/or experience disagreements that escalate (when youth "fly off the handle")? When this happened during *Creative Transitions*, artists typically called upon a youth worker to diffuse the situation. However, it was suggested in several interviews that it might be better if artists had been trained to handle such situations.

Recommendations:

- From its early inception, an arts program should develop a system of ongoing communication designed to support artists as they implement their program/curriculum over time.
- Investigate whether, as part of artists' preparation, basic training might be provided in how to handle youth crises or acting out during an arts session – artists handling it versus having to call upon youth workers.

## **PROGRAMS AND APPROACHES**

### **WORK FROM WHERE YOUNG PEOPLE ARE AND WANT TO GO**

Brandeis' evaluation found that some *Creative Transitions* arts programs were relatively flexible and adjusted to the young people with whom they were working; however, some initiatives and their curricula, at times, were a bit too rigid; having been designed in advance of working with actual participants.

Artists typically were flexible. They offered good basic approaches for many youth who were interested in the subject at hand and were typically given at an entry level. Nevertheless, some young people already

possessed relevant experiences, and felt that the curriculum was too basic. Youth workers stated that a better recruitment and orientation process for young people would have helped, as would consideration of youths' pre-existing interests and skills.

One youth worker stated that he would tell young people to let the artists know if there was something that they wanted to change about the program so that the artists could modify it if possible. He did not know, however, if they ever did make suggestions.

*One young person did try to make suggestions to expand the scope of a program and had a perspectives clash with the artists. The young person, an accomplished guitar player, was impressed with the artist/DJ's skills and mixing ability, and that the artist could mix up Metallica with R&B. "He made Metallica sound Hip Hoppy." The youth was also impressed with the piano/keyboard/synthesizer player – "excellent musician, spectacular, skilled...the guy blew us away." But this young musician was disappointed that Hip Hop was the only music genre focused upon. He would say "Why don't we throw in some guitars here?" and they "would just look at me." It was a clash of musical perspectives, and guitar doesn't fit hip-hop. He tried to suggest that they try some rock-and-roll; but the artists were not receptive. This was "hip-hop group; not music group."*

Recommendations:

- Choose artists with multi-faceted experience and a flexible approach.
- Learn and acknowledge where each youth is already and build, customizing to the extent possible, activities around where s/he is and where s/he wants to go.
- Have youth workers check in with artists between sessions to find out whether they should encourage young people to let the artist know if there is something they would like to change about the program so that the artist can make modifications.

## **ORIENT ARTIST-EDUCATORS**

Youth workers, managers and youth were asked for their ideas on how artists might be prepared for their jobs as artist-educators with youth in the DYS system. They suggested that artist-educators should be made aware in advance about what they might expect. Comments included:

- "Know what you're getting into."
- "It's not going to be normal."
- "One will see and hear things that one isn't used to."
- "Artists will be dealing with lots of ignorance, mental health issues, punitive behavior, poverty issues, and even bizarre behaviors."
- "Many youth in DYS facilities trust nobody."
- "Artists need to know that youth in DYS have been told day after day by numerous adults, 'Do this! Do that!' [Arts] sessions may be the only time during the day that they may get to express themselves with some degree of freedom."
- "Artists may need to work program approaches around the concept that it may take time to get youth to get started, develop trust, and start producing."

- “It takes 2-3 months to get youth to trust the artist.”
- “Youth expect respect from you but they don’t give respect.”
- “Youth test the waters a lot.”
- People running the arts program should be given a guidebook detailing the rules and operations of the facility, and have conversations about DYS/arts connections.

Recommendations:

- In advance of having an arts program operating in their facility, DYS managers and youth workers should consider, “What will artists need to know about the young people we serve, how artists might approach ways that youth behave/operate, how our facility operates, how the arts program might connect with what we do, what we’re excited and concerned about regarding an arts program, how we can work together, what our various roles might be, and what else we ought to talk about.”
- Artists should consider similar questions.
- DYS staff, youth, and artists would benefit from a meeting regarding how to proceed together as partners.
- Artists considering working in DYS facilities should participate in a “getting to know you” session that brings them together with youth workers and youth to provide artists with an advance picture of the realities of working in DYS facilities.
- Artists should be provided with information or a guidebook about DYS facility goals, rules, operations, and procedures.
- Artists, youth workers, and youth should work together to start talking about an initial arts curriculum and approach that will attract youth to participate.

## **CHOOSE ATTRACTIVE ARTS GENRES AND BE FLEXIBLE**

Do the adults always get right what types of art will attract some or all young people?

Typically, *Creative Transitions* arts projects were designed to attract young people to participate – drawing upon arts genres that adults thought youth would gravitate to. Most projects sought to draw youth in by presenting opportunities for them to address issues that they, their families, and/or their community were experiencing regularly. Youth brought experiences that were central to their lives into their artwork -- often focusing on their own neighborhood.

From among the *Creative Transitions* sites investigated, Brandeis found that, in general, youth and youth workers agreed that “Arts activities are good!” However, there were occasional issues regarding flexibility and curriculum that cropped up within the music programs.

For example, there was an assumption (and general agreement) among artists and youth workers that the music genre of hip-hop/rap/poetry/drumming would fit what many youth in DYS facilities are interested in and want to be involved with; and hence serve as a driving force to attract youth participation.

This assumption proved true across numerous, but not all, interviews with youth and youth workers. Although most youth liked the hip-hop/rap/poetry art, and would like to work developing beats as their teachers helped them do, there were youth who would have preferred different types of music.

In addition, several young people raised the question about whether one should assume that hip-hop/rap/poetry was the music they were interested in. As one youth asked, "Am I being stereotyped and viewed as unsophisticated and limited in my music interests and knowledge?"

Recommendations for music programs:

- Investigate using hip-hop/rap/poetry/drumming as an attractive genre to bring youth in to music programs; but, strive to help youth explore other musical and verbal genres.

## **CONSIDER HOW TO ADDRESS SOCIETAL NORMS**

One site sought to have young people ban "bad language" from their general ways of talking because they cannot use those words in the broader world. Since hip-hop/rap/poetry is typically very street-oriented, and many aspects of it are violent or sexist, questions were raised by several adults who worked with youth regarding whether this should be the total focus of, or even acceptable in, a music program.

*"There are other aspects of life. Perhaps not just hip-hop, which kids already and always have; but also, an expansion to other genres of life and with it music and poetry."*

*"If you bring people in to work with the youth, make sure their thought process brings in a broader array of points of reference. Right now youth just have rap. There are some variations, but they are generally viewing arts through one lens. Try to broaden their horizons. There is a lot more than guns, violence, profanity, sex, and drugs. These kids need to go beyond that."*

Recommendations for arts programs:

- Set up a culture in which youth will not use or accept swear words.
- Help youth explore hip-hop/rap/poetry messages that can be sent that do not glorify violence, guns, sex, drugs, etc.
- Help youth with musical skills outside of hip-hop/rap/drumming to join in to musical creation.
- Connect words in poetry and music to conversations among youth and adults.

## **CONSIDER THAT HOW AND WHERE YOUTH ARE SERVED AFFECTS ARTS PROGRAMS**

DYS residential settings generally enabled ongoing arts activities to occur with consistent youth attendance, and with that, good arts exposure. Participation and regular attendance can be mandated

and controlled. Arts program curricula can assume ongoing attendance and can build from session to session. Artists can coordinate activities more strongly and smoothly if they are in residential/secure programs. One can operate a “closed program” in a secure treatment facility where youth are scheduled heavily.

In contrast to secure, residential settings, arts programs working in CRCs cannot rely upon regular attendance and participation among young people. Artists needed to realize that young people would be constantly in and out, and they cannot assume that any young person will be present for any given session. Artists should expect to have fluctuating numbers attending any given session. A youth might get arrested next week, and indeed, we did hear youth say that they enjoyed the program until they were re-committed to a secure treatment facility. For this reason, artists in CRCs have to consider developing “open-enrollment” sessions and being very flexible.

CRCs currently vary widely in terms of space and staffing, and this should be taken into account when planning an arts program that will run out of a CRC. Artists working in these re-entry centers should take the time to acquaint themselves with the center and the neighborhood as well as with the youth who will be attending programming there.

## **CONNECTING DYS FACILITIES WITH THE OUTSIDE**

Brandeis heard numerous comments from interviewees about the need for youth in DYS facilities to have access to resources outside those facilities -- opportunities for young people to learn about new things beyond DYS-dictated activities. – to expand their horizons, have positive experiences, break away from their neighborhood and street culture, etc.

One program had a strong focus on active community participation. Young people in this program mentioned that through their arts program experience they really enjoyed learning about their community and about avenues for change such as the election process.

One youth at another program mentioned that s/he particularly liked talking about the community to the other participants when they were given an opportunity to do so. This youth enjoyed thinking and talking about what young people might do to improve their neighborhoods.

Recommendations for enabling youth to make community connections:

- To the extent feasible, intentionally incorporate community service activities into the arts program by developing arts programs that enable youth to learn about and possibly “give back” to their communities, thus acknowledging this important part of positive youth development.

Similarly, there was a question, raised most often by youth; but also by youth workers, about whether all arts program activities actually had to occur at the DYS facility – Could some take place in facilities outside the DYS facility?

*“Why can’t we put them in a van and take them to another place?”*

*“Running the program at an off-site, central (non-DYS) facility within the community is an excellent idea. A really cool studio centrally located in this area. Not at a DYS facility. Also need programs or services in secure area.”*

Recommendations:

- Recognize that arts programs must either be designed based upon a constant audience (in secure facilities) and/or on a fluctuating audience (in CRCs).
- Acknowledge that young people are often averse to being in DYS facilities.
- Investigate spaces where arts activities might take place outside of DYS facilities.
- Investigate transportation for youth to and from DYS facilities and outside arts locations.

## **PROGRAM FACILITY ISSUES**

Most DYS youth workers and managers interviewed stated that they would want an arts program such as *Creative Transitions* brought back to their facilities in the future, especially if it were an improved program based upon lessons learned from previous efforts. It was noted repeatedly by youth and youth workers that the rooms and environments in which arts activities took place played a role in the effectiveness and success of the arts program.

*Creative Transitions* programs often found themselves constrained by the spaces and layouts of the rooms they were called upon to operate within at DYS facilities. Some rooms worked acceptably while others were unacceptable or even hindered program operations.

Numerous young people and youth workers remarked that the DYS rooms/environments in which their arts program took place were not ideal:

*“You need the right (adequate/safe) place/environment, the right people, and a secure facility.”*

*“There was no privacy in the room the youth met in. It was one large room with case workers trying to do their work while the program was operating in the same space.” They had a secretary sitting right there making phone calls and working.”*

*“When someone is trying to express their feelings through art, it is very personal and you need private space to do that.”*

Recommendations: Artists and youth need spaces in DYS facilities that:

- provide a private setting separate from DYS staff;
- enable no interference from the day to day office work of DYS staff;
- are designed for the arts program that will take place;
- enable and support artists to bring in and use materials/tools/technology supporting the arts program.

## **WORK TOWARD A CULMINATING PERFORMANCE OR EVENT WHENEVER POSSIBLE**

Across multiple youth, youth workers, and artists, there was general agreement that for any sort of project-based arts experience (such as those provided by *Creative Transitions*), some sort of culminating and possibly public performance or presentation that highlighted youth artwork would be valued and considered very important by all involved.

Youth workers, young people, and artists agreed that the benefits associated with these kinds of public capstone experiences might, depending upon the arts program, include:

- providing documentation of and recognition for young peoples' work and successes;
- enabling youth to experience and overcome stage fright;
- exposing youth to audiences made up of people different from themselves;
- showing off youths' arts work;
- enabling parents and family members to see what youth have created, and see their children in a different light;
- showing youth associated with DYS differently to the community than they are generally portrayed in the news media;
- enabling each youth, their family, and others to be proud of what they produced, achieved, and accomplished.

For example, one youth who participated in a *Creative Transitions* public presentation was interested in the audience members, commenting that she liked "watching the rich people." Having the opportunity to mingle with a group of people who were so different from her seemed to provide a level of exposure to the world that would not have taken place without some kind of public presentation.

Another potential benefit that one DYS staff person noted was that "you never know who might be in that room," meaning that there could be someone connected to someone who notices their work and is in a position to offer an opportunity to the young person.

Similar to the public presentation is the creation of a final piece of art or product. Many of the programs, particularly the music ones which often concluded with the production of a CD, had this experience.

"Kids love CDs of their music from studio work. Love to walk away with a CD and completed one."

However, enabling such a culminating event may prove difficult within the DYS system. In addition to the extra work and resources needed for any event planning, DYS must protect the confidentiality of the young people under their care and safeguard the dignity of the youth and their families, who are too often the victims of negative assumptions and stereotypes among the general public and the media.

Several DYS staff stated opinions such as:

- "I wish that our program would have had a presentation or concert. We would like to have seen a concert, production or some kind of big experience. But we just couldn't pull it together to have a presentation. We needed some creativity to make a presentation happen."
- "If we were to create a public culminating performance, who might we invite and how might we orient them?"
- "DYS never gets good media. We need to publicize more and build a good reputation."
- "... Public displays and concerts provide people an opportunity to see DYS and its clients in a different and positive light . . . These kids are creating art, and music. They are looking at kids in a different way."

On the other hand, producing a culminating performance is possible if it is planned as part of the initiative.<sup>1</sup>

- One DYS person whose site did not do so said it would have been nice to put on a show at a local school. Both youth and staff mentioned that they would have liked to participate in some kind of show.
- One DYS CRC held a concert at a church which included poetry recitals and musical/art presentations done by the young people. They had several well-known people attend, including someone from the DYS Commissioner's office, people from several major newspapers, and church heads. The youth each presented something. There were about 12-15 youth involved in the concert. Parents attended. Major stakeholders attended.
- Another DYS staff person suggested that the timing of a presentation might be important – suggesting that sites should be “very picky” about when to do the presentation/concert. Planning presentations around specific holidays or other occasions might enhance their impact and give youth something to look forward to.

Recommendations:

- Arts programs should plan from the start to have young people produce products that can be shown in some sort of culminating event or exhibition.
- As young people develop their art work, they should keep in mind that their work will ultimately be viewed publicly and by people in their lives they care about.
- Audiences should include, at least, the people in youths' lives that are important to them and that they would like to have in attendance.
- Public exposure of youth's art products must try to give youth the most positive expose possible while working within DYS policy, confidentiality issues, and the knowledge of media interpretation of DYS youths' work in general.

## ***CONTINUE TO EXPLORE VOLUNTARY VERSUS MANDATORY and INCENTIVES AND STIPENDS***

Brandeis evaluators were unable to determine whether youth incentives made a difference in the effectiveness of arts programs. Information from the array of adults and youth we spoke with was inconclusive, and often contradictory. Further investigation of the value of incentives is called for.

Incentives were allocated in varying ways across sites, with some programs providing monetary rewards, and others providing non-monetary incentives such as movie passes, privileges, etc. When considering mandatory participation in arts programs, some youth workers and managers stated, “If you force the kids

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<sup>1</sup> Project partners' note to this evaluation report: After the completion of the research teams' field work, several of the Creative Transitions projects participated in a group exhibition at the New England Institute of Art organized by Hampshire Educational Collaborative through Unlocking the Light. Reportedly, the show was very well received. The young artists who were able to attend the opening event were able to see their work praised by family and friends along with the Secretary of Health and Human Services, the DYS Commissioner, the directors of the MCC and HEC, and their family and friends. The event was a rare opportunity for DYS staff, teaching artists, and other stakeholders to gather in celebration of the young people's talents and accomplishments.

to do art, it won't work in positive ways. Participation in arts work must be voluntary." When considering to implement a system of incentives and stipends in an arts program, are incentives important, and if so, what types of incentives?

While there was no definitive answer to this question, interestingly, most DYS staff and artists seemed to view incentives as positive vehicles for recruiting and encouraging participation, while most youth interviewed reported that they would have attended the program regardless of incentives.

Some youth workers and managers stated that stipends were positive for this type of program: "They get kids 'in the door' for exposure to the arts." At one program, it was stated, "Money gave them an excuse to come to the program."

- In one center, youth have weekly treatment reviews. If they move up a level they get incentives, such as movie passes or other rewards. "Any time you reward them, it's good."
- Another DYS interviewee considered stipends to be a positive incentive if they were given according to the quality of the product and the consistency of attendance. A stipend could be a good motivator if used in this way.
- According to one DYS staff person, "Money is always going to peak youth interest. It can draw them in."

These sentiments were echoed by other DYS staff, but not always and not necessarily by the youth themselves.

- On a couple of occasions, youth mentioned non-monetary rewards just as simply preferring the arts program to other programs available at their location.
- For one youth, it was her opportunity to leave the facility while she participated.
- Several youth stated that they would have participated with or without the stipend. Youth, although valuing stipends, were sometimes more attracted by the arts program itself.
- One youth stated, "We get movie passes from the CRC. If you go to a group (any group – not just the artists group), you get a movie pass. The movie passes in themselves are not what I'm interested in coming for. I would have participated in a "music group" without incentives."
- Some youth spent much more time at the CRC because of the art activities than they otherwise might have.

Recommendations:

- Consider that monetary incentives might be helpful, given youths' financial situations, but don't assume that they will only participate with financial incentives.
- Be aware that non-monetary incentives may work to attract youth to participate.

## **CONSIDER WHETHER TO OFFER SINGLE-SEX VERSUS COED PROGRAMS**

As a general rule, DYS has often tended to keep boys and girls separate, and this approach generally played out in the *Creative Transitions* initiative as well.

DYS' evolution to single-sex programming is based upon considerable past experience with co-educational programs. "Flirting and show-off issues" were major distractions that detracted from the intended task when both genders were together in one group. Boys and girls, when together, were inhibited from opening up and expressing themselves honestly. Since the arts programs in *Creative Transitions* were not mixed, it is difficult to assess whether it would have been appropriate to have both boys and girls together. But based on interviewees past experience, it seems that a single-sex program may be most effective.

Recommendations:

- Arts programs may wish to separate boys and girls to avoid distraction.
- Artists seeking to operate co-educational programs should be aware of dynamics that might make their initiative difficult and should work closely with DYS youth workers to minimize the difficulties stemming from these dynamics.
- However, this should not prevent pilot programs from exploring co-educational arts programs in the future.

## **PLAN ARTS PROGRAMS COLLABORATIVELY**

From its experiences with inter-institutional partnership development, Brandeis evaluators recognize that before an arts initiative (or indeed any program) stimulated from the outside is introduced into a DYS facility, establishment of a culture of respect and cooperation must be established across key players.

In the case of *Creative Transitions*, these key players included artists and DYS (and contractor) youth workers and managers, case workers, youth, and others. Open communication, acceptance of constructive feedback and criticism, and willingness to change are crucial facets of working together.

As would be normally expected in a pilot initiative such as *Creative Transitions*, these characteristics of an effective inter-institutional partnership were relatively strong at some sites, and weaker or even problematic at others. DYS managers and youth workers remarked about this issue in revealing ways. Some suggestions were drawn from success while others were derived from difficulties.

- As *Creative Transitions* was rolled out across several locales, a contrast in approaches appeared: In a few cases, artists, DYS youth workers, and to some extent youth participated in processes through which they were given adequate time to develop trust, get together to know each other, convey understanding about what their particular *Creative Transitions* initiative was about.
- In other cases, the arts program was "dropped into" a DYS facility without important earlier development work that would have introduced or enabled negotiation of its purposes and approaches to occur across multiple players. DYS staff were then suspicious and resistant regarding having artists entering their facility and working with "their youth". They lacked understanding about the initiative, were not excited about it, lacked motivation to cooperate with it, and did not convey its importance/relevance to youth. It should be noted that this kind of relationship was the exception.

In this vein, it was suggested by numerous youth workers and artists that, before starting an arts initiative, artists who are sincerely interested (indeed excited) about working in a DYS facility work on-site with youth workers and youth in advance of arts program implementation to pull together a program approach that is attractive to all.

Recommendations:

On the micro level, artists committed to working in a DYS facility should visit it to:

- talk informally and meet with staff and the young people who might participate in the arts program. In other words, have the artist become part of the recruitment process.
- present and discuss possible arts offerings, program design, curriculum, rules and expectations to young people who might attend the class.
- given this input, revise what they had originally considered doing.
- provide youth with a demonstration of a class they might offer to give youth a chance to determine whether it is an activity they want to continue with, if possible.
- orient all players so that they know what's going to happen and their role in conducting or supporting it.
- test out the program and make adjustments.
- draw additional youth into the program.

On the macro level, broader connections between DYS facilities/staff must be set up acknowledging the following input from DYS youth workers. The quotes that follow convey these concepts:

- “Artist-Educators, DYS youth workers, and young people need to connect and collaborate to design and set up the arts program.”
- “DYS staff/youth workers at least need a presentation/training in advance of an arts initiative so that they are familiar with the artists, can develop interpersonal relationships and sense of team, and can learn about and negotiate the artists’ goals and approaches.”
- “Levels of interest should be identified and matched to activities. Perhaps have a three-phase program, and at the end of each phase they should take the learning experience and move it to another setting like a radio station, etc. so youth can get experience that way.”

“There must be a process through which artists, youth workers, and young people collaborate to assure that a proposed arts program will be satisfactory to all.”

## **SUSTAINABLE EFFORTS ARE ENCOURAGED**

A message sent by numerous DYS managers and youth workers was that a key element for arts programs to make an impact is that they should have the potential to be maintained and sustained. Interviewees emphasized that a long-standing program will work better than a short one.

*“It is important to avoid having programs feel like ‘teasers’ where the kids feel like ‘you’re here today, gone tomorrow.’”*

DYS staff pointed out that youth have often had people in their lives that have walked out on them. For this reason, continuity of programming is important.

Furthermore, DYS staff suggest that it is also important to connect young people who find an interest in art with mentors who continue to support them after the arts program or even their time in DYS ends. In interviews with young people, Brandeis found almost no examples of youth who planned to connect with artists after their *Creative Transitions* experience ended. Only one youth stated, “I’d like to talk with him [the artist], but I don’t know how [to get in touch with him].”

Several managers of DYS facilities noted that they could see potential for arts programs in their facilities to improve results with youth who found themselves engaged in an art form if the program had developed ways that the arts might be used in their future as a potential income source (e.g., selling C.D.’s), vehicles for further exploring the art form (e.g., recreational enjoyment of the art), and routes to further education around the art form (e.g., college classes). In this way, the arts can serve as a hook that engages youth in academic and occupational endeavors beyond that for which they might have aimed. *Creative Transitions* was not designed to do this, but future initiatives could be.

### Recommendations:

- Support long-term arts programs serving DYS youth.
- From the outset, emphasize formal links between youth and artist over time – beyond the duration of the program.
- Connect arts programs with “ways to go in the future” – connections to arts classes, arts schools, post-secondary education, commercial arts opportunities, etc.

## **A WORD OF CAUTION**

When asked in multiple interviews across sites whether they had encountered any negative outcomes from youth participation in the arts programs, DYS staff reported generally that they were not aware of any.

As one DYS staff person put it, “Youth were having fun and expressing their experiences.” There was no negative side to it.

Another stated, “No negative outcomes, unless they use the artwork to hurt others or do harm [This has not occurred.]”

Another DYS youth worker did not see any negative outcomes; however, s/he stated, “Of course, some kids are not really interested in expressing themselves through art. They may choose instead sports or other activities that they are more interested in.”

However, artists were more illustrative of possible negative outcomes they perceived among youth in arts programs that weren’t designed well. Artists suggested possible damaging concepts such as:

- If a program lacks context in the facility, it can cause tension among the staff.
- If teachers/artist-educators don’t know themselves deeply, activities can implode and hurt students emotionally.
- If youth are forced to participate in activities or be dictated their “choices” this can turn some students off – don’t want to force them to do anything.
- Arts programs lacking follow-up can be perceived as dead-end activities. Sell youth a dream of success/stardom – then let them down.
- Youth want and need next steps after their *Creative Transitions* experience – Where to go from here? “So I spent this time with the artist, and now what?”

There is the potential for frustration with not being able to continue the work after it is over. If not managed appropriately, programs can be a breeding ground for negativity, and it can be harder to go back to strict rules of institutional structure.

Artists furthermore suggested that youth might experience, depending upon the focus of their art project: post-program/event depression, danger of reliving trauma from the past, and too much focus on death in art memorials, which could lead to depression. Artists added that arts projects might be best accompanied by counseling.

It should be noted, however, that almost all of the negative outcomes we heard about were mentioned in the context of “potential” negative outcomes for an arts program in the DYS system. These were mentioned by the artists as they were reflecting on outcomes that could be negative, not ones that they actually did observe. Interviews with youth workers and the youth themselves did not report these concerns.

## CONCLUSIONS

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The *Creative Transitions* initiative demonstrated that arts programs are valued by young people and DYS youth workers, and that these programs have the potential to produce an array of positive experiences and outcomes for young people in DYS facilities. This report, although focused on *Creative Transitions*, contains significant information beyond the arts that is readily transferable to other types of initiatives that might be offered to DYS youth.

Our perception is that youth engagement stems from the ways that youth were linked with the arts programs. These include the artist/youth relationships, the flexibility of artists as they worked with youth, the relevance of arts activities to youths' lives, and DYS youth workers' and managers' support of artists and their programs. When considering whether it is worthwhile to provide arts programming for young people, it was about visioning, planning, and then implementing and adjusting programs with youth input.

Our various data collection processes left us very impressed with the skills, passion and commitment that the adults demonstrated; indeed, the youth spoke respectfully and quite positively about both the artists and their DYS youth workers. Furthermore, for the most part, youth were enthusiastic about the skills they had learned.

The artists were very reflective and thoughtful about the work that they were doing. It was clear that these were people who were not only committed to what they were doing, but who were eager to stretch themselves in terms of learning and adopting new techniques to better reach youth and bring art into their lives as a positive force.

The DYS youth workers were also committed to making the program work, and primarily saw *Creative Transitions* as an effective way that youth could manage their emotions and expand their horizons. They were open and forthcoming with their thoughts about its impact on youth and ways in which future arts programs of high quality could be developed.

Brandeis has concluded that, on the whole, the *Creative Transitions* initiative was a successful endeavor that has enhanced the lives of many young people who participated. However, aspects of those programs could certainly have been improved and the lessons learned will contribute to successful future arts programs with young people in the DYS system.



# APPENDICES

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A: Artist Retreat agenda	32
B: Artist Retreat participants	34
C: Interview Protocol—DYS staff	35
D: Interview Protocol—youth	37
E: Interview participants	38
F: ArtsInFusion Task Force Logic Model Meeting participants	39
G: Artist Retreat notes: Characteristics of Ideal Artist/Instructor	40
H: Artist Retreat notes: How partners can better support work	43
I: Artist Retreat notes: Lessons Learned	44
J: Artist Retreat note—Positive outcomes, potential risks	45
K: ArtsInFusion Task Force meeting notes	48

## **APPENDIX A**

### **CREATIVE TRANSITIONS**

### **ARTISTS' DAY RETREAT**

**Location:** Brandeis University, Zinner Forum in Schneider Building/Heller School for Social Policy & Management

**Date:** September 4, 2008

**Time:** 9:30 AM through 4:00 PM

#### **PURPOSES OF THE RETREAT**

- Enable artists to share day-to-day-experiences working with youth in an arts program within “the system”
- From artists’ sharing, identify “best practices” when working with youth in an arts program within “the system”
- Gather information that will address research questions supporting Brandeis’ evaluation of the *Creative Transitions* initiative

#### **9:30 AM – 10:30 AM - Schneider Building, Zinner Forum**

- **WELCOME and INTRODUCTIONS**  
Continental breakfast

#### **10:30 AM – 12:30 PM - Heller Building, Room 163**

- **DESIGNS/APPROACHES USED IN CURRENT ARTISTS’ INITIATIVES**  
Artists share descriptions of and discuss their current arts programs
- **DEFINING POTENTIAL OUTCOMES OF THE *CREATIVE TRANSITIONS* INITIATIVE**  
Youth gains or negative consequences from experiences in *Creative Transitions* programs  
  
*Creative Transitions* initiative successes and how to enhance them  
  
Key elements for defining “success” of the initiative  
  
Aspects of *Creative Transitions* programs that can be improved

#### **12:30 PM – 1:15 PM - Lunch - Heller Building, Room 163**

#### **1:15 PM – 4:00 PM - Heller Building, Room 163**

▪ **FURTHER EXPLORATION OF WHAT MAKES ARTS PROGRAMS WORK**

Regarding artists/instructors:

- What should artists/instructors have/do that will enable them to do their jobs well re: characteristics, knowledge and skills? experiences? approaches? mindsets?
- What should artists consider before embarking upon this type of work?
- What lessons might we draw from this analysis?

Regarding institutions providing *Creative Transitions* arts programs:

- What should institutions do that contribute to program effectiveness around -- types of facility/settings? resources? knowledge and skills? experiences? mindsets? organizational culture?
- What should institutions consider before embarking upon this type of work?
- What lessons might we draw from this analysis?

Regarding program directors and other institutional staff:

- What might/should program directors do to support Artist Instructors and their programs?
- What should program planners need to know when considering a wider, more sustained integration of the arts into the juvenile justice system?
- What lessons might we draw from this analysis?

Regarding inter-institutional partnerships:

- Why collaborate/partner with other organizations and/or individuals?
- What are the characteristics of successful partnerships?
- In what ways have current programs succeeded in creating positive partnerships?
- What lessons might we draw from this analysis?

▪ **CONSIDERING THE FUTURE**

Discussion of worthwhileness to incorporate the arts into the juvenile justice system

Discussion of what it will take for scaling and sustainability to be achieved

▪ **END OF SESSION CLOSE OUT**

Description of what will happen with input from the retreat

Pass out Heller mugs

Evaluations

Farewells

**APPENDIX B**

**Artists' Retreat – Participation List**

<b>Artist</b>	<b>Program</b>
Lori Taylor	Actors Shakespeare Project
Cynthia Saunders	Barrington Stage
Frank La Frazia	Barrington Stage
Nancy Abdalla	Community Music School of Springfield
Nick Caudle	Community Music School of Springfield
Greg Brown	Community Music School of Springfield
Rick Marshall	Community Music School of Springfield
Kate Jellinghaus	HUMAN
Minotte Romulus	HUMAN
H. Mark Smith	Massachusetts Cultural Council
Mina Wright	Massachusetts Cultural Council
Nancy Kilburn	Medicine Wheel Productions
Ingrid Schatz	Medicine Wheel Productions
Kevin Coleman	Shakespeare & Co
Jessica Leffler	Trinity Boston Foundation
Derek Fenner	Unlocking the Light/Hampshire Educational Collaborative

## **APPENDIX C**

### **Interview Protocol – Staff**

#### **Interview Questions for DYS and other staff supporting *Creative Transitions* artists**

1. Talk about your experiences working with the artists from [name the particular Arts group].
2. Talk about your perceptions of young people's experiences working with those artists.
3. What might you consider "success" for an individual youth who was involved in the arts experiences that you observed?
4. What might be reasonable positive outcomes to expect for youth who were involved in those arts experiences?
5. What might you consider to be negative outcomes of youth who were involved in those arts experiences?
6. What might be key elements of success for an arts-driven experience for the young people you work with?
7. Were there any parts of the arts program you worked with that were not useful or necessary?
8. What might program planners need to know when considering a wider, more sustained integration of the arts into the juvenile justice system?
9. What should people consider before embarking on this work?
10. What skills, characteristics, experiences, and/or mindsets do the teaching artists need?
11. What communication and/or connection processes are needed between the artists and the staff who work with youth?
12. What makes a successful partnership between the DYS system and an arts program such as *Creative Transitions*? Who should be the partners? What should be their roles?
13. For treatment and CRC programs: what resources, experiences, and/or contexts do the facilities need to offer that would help arts programs to be successful?

14. How and to what extent does the public presentation of youths' art products help achieve the outcomes of this program?
15. For the community programs, what are the relative merits and/or drawbacks of hourly vs. per project stipends of varying rates of pay? [asked of those in programs where stipends were offered].
16. What other advice can you offer us that might improve arts-based programs for young people?

## **APPENDIX D**

### **Interview Protocol – Youth**

#### **Interview Questions for Youth Participants**

1. What did you like best about your program?
2. What did you like least about your program?
3. What were some of the things you liked best about the teaching artists?
4. Do you think you will keep in touch with any of the artists or other participants now that the program has ended? Why?
5. How was the program similar to or different from what you expected?
6. Did the program make you think differently about your life and future? If so, how?
7. What advice would you give to people planning similar programs?
8. Are there any parts of this program that were not important or needed? Are there parts of the program that were essential?
9. What do you feel you have gained, if anything, from your experiences in the program?
10. How useful was the public presentation as a learning experience for you? [Question asked only for those youth in programs that included presentations].
11. How important was the stipend in getting you interested and maintaining your interest in this program? Would you have participated if no stipend had been available? [Question asked only for those youth in programs where stipends were offered].

## **APPENDIX E**

### **Interviews were conducted during Fall 2008**

#### **Interviews with DYS Staff**

Green O'Laye, Roxbury CRC

Reverend, Roxbury CRC

Juan Rivera, Holyoke CRC

Karen Tracana, Springfield CRC

Frank Cabral, Dorchester CRC

Shonda Dale, Dorchester CRC

Jim Hunt, Berkshire County Juvenile Court

#### **Youth Interviews**

Roxbury CRC

Dorchester CRC

Holyoke CRC

Springfield CRC

Spectrum Treatment

**APPENDIX F**

**Logic Model Meeting – Participation List**

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Program</b>
Christine Kenney	Director of Educational Services, Department of Youth Services
Sara Lewis	Assistant Director of Educational Services, Department of Youth Services
Katie Cohn	Intern, Department of Youth Services
Derek Fenner	Unlocking the Light Program Director, Hampshire Educational Collaborative
Rachel Porter	Unlocking the Light Artist Coordinator, Hampshire Educational Collaborative
Jeffrey W. Eiseman	Associate Professor, School of Education-Dept of Educational Policy, Research and Administration, University of Massachusetts Amherst
Barbara Schaffer Bacon	Independent consultant, cultural community development and strategic planning
Eric Bachrach	Executive Director, Community Music School of Springfield
H. Mark Smith	YouthReach Program Manager, Mass Cultural Council

## **APPENDIX G**

### NOTES FROM *CREATIVE TRANSITIONS* ARTISTS RETREAT

#### **CHARACTERISTICS OF AN IDEAL ARTIST/INSTRUCTOR**

In September 2008, a day-long retreat was conducted for artists working in the *Creative Transitions* Initiative. During that retreat, the artists reflected upon their work through group facilitation exercises. Below is the “driving question” that directed a discussion on what the artists themselves need to bring to their work with young people. This is followed by a categorized grouping of the characteristics that emerged from that conversation.

#### **DRIVING QUESTIONS:**

WHAT SHOULD AN ARTIST/INSTRUCTOR HAVE AND/OR DO THAT WILL ENABLE HIM/HER TO CARRY OUT HIS/HER JOB WELL WITH THIS YOUTH TARGET POPULATION?

WHAT SKILLS, CHARACTERISTICS, KNOWLEDGE, BEHAVIORS, ACTIONS, EXPERIENCES, APPROACHES, MINDSETS, and/or PHILOSOPHIES SHOULD EFFECTIVE ARTIST/INSTRUCTORS POSSESS?

#### **PERSONAL SELF AWARENESS:**

Artist/instructors should possess and demonstrate:

- self-understanding.
- humility.
- passion for working with young people.
- awareness of self and comfort with new self-discovery.
- ability to be real.
- some detachment; no sense of trying to save youth.
- ability to handle emotionally and/or physically intense situations.
- commitment and strong-mindedness to the task at hand.
- understanding of the many sides of the self.

#### **RADICAL OPENNESS:**

Artist/instructors should possess and demonstrate:

- extreme non-judgmentalness.
- ability to present in a broad multicultural context.
- knowledge of different cultures.

#### **SUPPORTIVE PERSONALITY:**

Artist/instructors should demonstrate:

- passion for work with youth.

- that young people are “always right” when it comes to young people’s artwork [If youth think it’s pretty, agree!].
- the ability to love all the individuals.
- the capacity to establish good relationships with girls and staff.
- the ability to show youth that you care about them and their vision(s).
- a sense of humor.
- enthusiasm, silliness, and joy.
- a caring nature and heart-connection with the youth.
- a positive, encouraging nature.
- compassion on all levels.
- capacity to “pay close attention to everything”.

### **“HEAR MY SOUL SPEAK:”**

Artist/instructors should:

- give praise and mean it!
- give girls time to prevail and express themselves.
- sit down and talk to the girls.
- have the ability to relate to the youth – really hearing them.
- have the ability to listen deeply.
- recognize who the youth are.
- curiosity about the human condition.

### **EXPRESSES AUTHENTICITY:**

Artist/instructors should:

- have/develop an artistic vision.
- be inspirational.
- demonstrate a deep faith in the artistic process.
- believe in the quote: “*We do the best we can. And when we know better, we do better*” Maya Angelou (Our job is to help youth know better.)
- offer lots of examples of effective youth work.
- demonstrate creativity.
- possess artistic talent.
- have a general knowledge of reading and writing skills.
- possess problem-solving skills.

### **DEMONSTRATES FLEXIBILITY:**

Artist/instructors should regularly:

- show the capacity to shift gears.
- let go of their personal creative visions to further that of the (student) group’s.
- collaborate with others.
- demonstrate willingness to think way outside the box while recognizing the constraints of the system.

- demonstrate tolerance and patience.
- weave life skills into any discussion.
- have connections with external social supports that enable youth to pursue artistry while addressing personal issues.

## **APPENDIX H**

### NOTES FROM *CREATIVE TRANSITIONS* ARTISTS RETREAT

#### **How might MCC, DYS, and/or other host/partner institutions better support *Creative Transitions* initiatives?**

During the Artists' Retreat in September 2008, the artists reflected upon their work through group facilitation exercises. One of the discussions focused on how MCC, DYS, and/or other host/partner institutions could better support *Creative Transitions*. This is followed by a categorized grouping of suggestions from artists that emerged from that conversation. The type of arts program that the individual making the comment had been working in is noted in parentheses (VA = visual arts; T = theatre; P = public art).

##### ***Getting the Word Out***

- MCC could create a straight-forward website of programming available to youth.
- More info on DYS youth to improve recruitment in the community.
- Cultural partners could publicize programs/artwork more.
- Program site is very open to communication.
- DYS partners to help contact youth after leaving.

##### ***Expectations***

- From MCC: any guidelines/expectations clearly expressed.
- Program sites should provide site supervisors that are consistent with their expectations.
- Meeting with CRC staff to agree on group guidelines and expectations.

##### ***Internships***

- Network of groups available to send youth for mentorships/internships (i.e., I have some way to get kid from Springfield to CMS.)
- Create some sort of job/internship program across the state (based on the Big Picture of Met).
- Possible to have alternative arts/internship pilot school that is a DYS partner.

##### ***Program Operations***

- Staff participate in program.
- CRC staff could work to have the group ready to go when teachers arrive.
- DSS and DYS work together with artists to create individual learning plans.

##### ***Funding***

- Continued financial support from MCC and DYS.

## **APPENDIX I**

### **LESSONS LEARNED**

During the Artists' Retreat, the artists reflected upon their work through group facilitation exercises. The artists reflected on the lessons they have learned through their work in the *Creative Transitions* Initiative. Below is a categorized grouping of the characteristics that emerged from that conversation.

- Art has to be intense to be meaningful to youth.
- Awareness of judgmental language. They are surrounded by judgments, not by rules.
- That they know we like them (cultivate an awareness that we like them, and are interested in them).
- Giving them problems to solve themselves (problems that are increasingly difficult).
- Getting rapport.
- Need good ratio of kids to adults.
- Treat youth as professionals, expect them to treat you as professionals.
- Work with DYS staff effectively.
- Opportunities for them to take initiative.
- Explain why they were doing what they were doing and how job fit into larger whole.
- Treat youth as professionals.
- Set up guidelines about what program will entail. Give them a chance to talk about expectations.
- Praise them.
- Getting better environment – a designated space for activity.
- Want to meet kids where they are at.
- Think about time after program ends – how can youth keep doing art activity?
- Must be flexible with changing cast of characters or get consistent group of youth.
- Each youth would make a meal on community service day and donate extra. Eat in community.
- Money gave them an excuse to come to program.
- Give them a voice through art/music.
- They love being in art shows and displaying their work.
- Art allows them to tell a story in a safe way – don't over-direct.
- Allow things to unfold and take a more central role.
- Building trust and relationships over time.
- The more stages you have for a project, it starts to pick up momentum.
- Working with other social service agencies – transition them to next level.
- Helping them learn how to go out in the world – selling advertisements helps them to “pierce the veil”.
- Get them involved - ensure that every process is collaborative.
- Always striving for inclusiveness – even if it's difficult (i.e., racism, etc.).
- Philosophical underpinning – wheel, spokes represents that everything matters and is connected.

## **APPENDIX J**

### **POSITIVE OUTCOMES**

During the Artists' Retreat, the artists were asked to think about outcomes for youth that would be appropriate to consider in an evaluation of the *Creative Transitions* Initiative. Below is a categorized grouping of the positive outcomes and the negative outcomes that emerged from that conversation..

- Respect.
- Identify something that she is passionate about.
- Work in a group.
- Surprise at the joy they've created.
- Increase self-esteem.
- Newfound pleasure in just each other.
- Newfound pleasure in other people's work.
- Surprise of wanting to continue... do more!
- Surprise of pride at completion.
- Reflect about their experience.
- Respond genuinely to someone else's idea.
- Contribute genuinely to a discussion.
- Long-range thinking.
- Problem-solving skills.
- Self-awareness.
- Listen.
- Understand the power of language.
- Make eye contact with someone else.
- Have an experience of language in which they discover something new.
- Sense of achievement/mastery.
- Marketing and public relations.
- Less time spent on street, in non-productive activities.
- A sense that they are actually being heard and have a voice.
- Discovered passion for creating music.
- Time management.
- Computer skills.
- Respect.
- Cultural history.
- Listening skills.
- Teamwork/cooperation.
- Self-esteem, self-empowerment.
- Communication skills.
- Ways to make money in positive job area.
- Self-love
- Changing ways of acting – more positive behavior.
- Belief in their ability to positively impact the world.
- Making a name for themselves.
- Develop art skills in community (collaboration).
- Relaxation – an opportunity to put guard down.
- Feeling cared for, even loved and respected and worthy.
- Begin to value art and the artistic process.
- Responsible behaviors: timeliness, task completion.
- Broader awareness of differences, appreciation of differences.

- Teamwork – improved ability to work with others – particularly those with different situations (e.g., rival gangs).
- Increased awareness of artistic potential.
- Emotional relief.
- Experience of authentic creative process.
- Come to see: art-making = enjoyment.
- Able to tell meaningful stories about themselves.
- Great self-esteem/self-confidence.
- Listening skills.
- Ability to see tasks through to completion.
- Become more trusting – healing.
- Safety in groups.
- Sense of accomplishment.
- Begin to understand what collaboration means.
- Engaging with some part of the artistic process.
- Accessing and sharing previously undiscovered parts of their selves.
- Appreciation of each others' talents/work
- Improved sense of self.
- Begin to trust their own artistic vision/voice.

## POTENTIAL NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES

- Participation is used as an excuse. Makes outside enemies.
- Participation is occasion of shaming by outsiders.
- Loss/sadness/remorse/anger when it's over.
- Good cop/bad cop scenarios with students and guest/artists and DYS staff.
- If program lacks context in the facility can cause tension with staff.
- If with teachers/artists who don't know themselves deeply can implode/hurt students emotionally.
- Participation/choice issue can turn some students off – I don't want to force them to do anything.
- Lack of follow-up.
- If not managed appropriately, can be a breeding ground for negativity.
- Sell them dream of success/stardom – letdown.
- Frustration with inability to continue the work after it's over.
- Harder to go back to strict rules of institutional structure.
- Overwhelming thoughts.
- Post-program/event depression.
- Danger of reliving trauma in past.
- Too much focus on death in art memorials – depression.
- Co-dependence among youth.
- Negative/damaging sexual interactions.
- Negative impact of youth in various stages of addiction and recovery on one another.
- Sense of loss when program is over.

## **APPENDIX K**

<b>NOTES FROM ARTS INFUSION TASK FORCE MEETING</b>
<b>November 24, 2008 at Brandeis University</b>

**BACKGROUND:** On November 24<sup>th</sup>, 2008, the evaluation team [Tracy Cutter and Chris Kingsley from the Center for Youth and Communities at Brandeis] facilitated a session of the **Arts InFusion Task Force** in which participants:

- ❖ reviewed and organized assumptions/findings from Brandeis interviews and focus groups conducted with DYS [and DYS sub-contractor] staff and youth.
- ❖ learned about outcomes produced by the arts programs Brandeis reviewed.
- ❖ identified what they considered to be the most important themes and concepts that might drive and permeate future arts programs in DYS facilities.
- ❖ generated/brainstormed a series of strategies, and activities that might lead to an action plan.

### **ASSUMPTIONS/FINDINGS ABOUT REVIEWED DYS ARTS PROGRAMS**

#### **Context:**

During the November 24<sup>th</sup> meeting, the Brandeis evaluation team presented an array of its findings from interviews and focus groups conducted with DYS [and DYS sub-contractor] staff and youth.

Brandeis defines “assumptions” as what we know, think, and/or believe given the discovered data.

*Numbers in parentheses (#) following entries indicate the number of sites from which we heard similar comments in response to open-ended questions. The lack of a (#) indicates that we heard the comment at only one site; however, it may also apply to other sites but was not volunteered during interviews.*

**Arts InFusion Task Force** participants then organized Brandeis’ findings into the categories that follow.

#### **WORKING ENVIRONMENTS AND CONDITIONS:**

- DYS facilities have often not been conducive to maximum effectiveness of arts activities.(2)
- Youth “hate” to go to and be in DYS facilities.(2)
- DYS staff may be resistant to “outsiders” providing programs.
- Whether or not DYS staff should participate with youth in arts activities is a site-specific issue to be considered.
- A residential setting enables good attendance – exposure contributes to success.

**CRC ISSUES AND CONDITIONS:**

- Most youth want to check into and then leave the CRC as soon as possible. (3)
- Youths in CRCs may not demonstrate ongoing, scheduled attendance for a variety of reasons. (2)
- Arts provide a variety of activities at a CRC (where activities are typically more counseling focused). (2)
- A controlled environment enables more comprehensive/sequential programs than is possible in a drop-in center.
- Kids will stay more willingly for an arts session than other CRC services.
- Many CRC kids at first turned off to arts program participation because they would have to stay longer at CRC to participate.
- CRCs are not yet the “re-entry” centers they need to be – they need arts and other programs.

**BAGGAGE – INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL:**

- Society doesn’t like these [DYS] kids and doesn’t want them. (2)
- Youth expect adults to let them down. (2)
- Youth are often from dysfunctional homes.
- Youth often view themselves as victims (and often have been or know people who have been).
- Some youth do not regularly attend school.
- It is difficult to attract and involve parents in being involved in their child’s art work.

**IN A PUBLIC LIGHT:**

- In the media, and to the general public, “DYS kids are ‘damaged goods’”- hard to get positive public relations. (3)
- Displayable art products should be put in public locations without identifiers saying it was produced by DYS youth.
- Hard to work with media because of confidentiality issues. (2)
- Inviting media to a DYS sponsored activity or presentation poses multiple difficulties. (2)
- Parents will value seeing their child’s work in a public setting. (3)

**KEY LOGISTICAL CONCERNS:**

- Most young people in DYS care have had minimal exposure to the arts.(3)
- Before embarking on this type of program, safety/security of staff/artists/youth must be considered. (2)
- Schedule activities so that members of opposing gangs are not together.
- Geographics of kids’ neighborhoods are important considerations.
- Arts programs should be single sex—not coed. (2)

**ARTIST ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- Artists provide youth with freedom of expression, and should not play the “enforcement” role of DYS staff. (3)
- Artists need good knowledge of subject matter.
- Youth expect adults to let them down.
- Artists must fulfill all scheduling and “showing up,” and follow-through expectations. (2)

- Before embarking on this type of work, artists should be aware that it's not going to be "normal" [punitive behavior, poverty issues, seeing/hearing things one is not used to- need to meet kids where they're at]. (3)
- Artists and other adults must make listening a paramount approach [empathy/relationship building]. (4)
- Artists' personalities play an important role in days/arts partnerships. (5)
- Successful artists take the time to assure that all youth grasp important concepts [patience/encouragement]. (5)
- Messages to youth from artists can, if coordinated, reinforce messages from DYS staff.
- Artists would benefit from crisis-management training.

### ART AS A VEHICLE FOR POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT:

- Arts programming pulls kids' minds away from their day-to-day lives.
- Art is often a positive vehicle through which youth vent/release stresses in positive ways [with intentionality]. (5)
- Art takes parts of kids' lives away from negative activities... slows down or reduces chances that they will get in trouble. Not looking for something negative to do. (2)
- Art is a positive vehicle for expression: poems, songs, paintings, plays, rap, etc. (2)
- "Regular exposure to 'anything positive' is very important for this youth population." They rarely get such exposure. (3)
- Art can be a vehicle for learning about one's community and community change. (2)
- Youth are attracted by the music genre, the theory, the equipment. (4) [*Brandeis note: Very often youth stated that it was use of the equipment that was a major attraction.*]
- Arts programs give youth instant gratification.
- Arts can be fun and enjoyable. (4)
- Many youth want lots of hands-on (doing) activities; in contrast to an artist presentation.
- Kids can express themselves uncensored. (2)
- When collaborating, youth often admire/complement each other's work.
- Kids' talents often come out after something bad has happened. (2)
- Some youth possess transferable skills that, although not directly related to the planned arts activity, could be incorporated.
- Need to broaden youth's horizons beyond street/hood life, language, goals. (2)
- Kids feed a lot of energy into their work.
- Some youth may have previous experience/skill in the art discipline offered.

### PROGRAM PLANNING AND DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS:

- Activities must be high-interest and high-engagement at the start and throughout.(2)
- Hip-Hop/ Rap is the music genre that many youth will gravitate to. (3)
- Some youth would like a "Music Program" rather than a "Hip-Hop/Rap Program." (4)
- Mandatory versus voluntary youth participation must be considered.
- Mandatory participation is not the way to go. (2)
- Over time, many youth "warm to" the arts activities; but it takes time. (3)
- Incentives are important to encourage youth participation.
- Stipends/Incentives important to draw youth into an arts program, but may not be always necessary once youth are engaged. (2)
- Youth who are interested in an arts genre will participate regardless of stipends/incentives. (2)
- Stipends are important to encourage youth participation. (3)
- Stipends help alleviate poverty.

- A culminating public performance of youths' work is important. (5)
- More worthwhile to invest in facilities/resources if arts program is to be long-term.
- Few youth, under the current C.T. design, will connect with the artists in the future (given those youth we spoke with).
- Start Arts/DYS initiatives at a younger age.

### **YOUTH OUTCOMES FROM SELECTED DYS ARTS PROGRAMS**

#### **Context:**

During the November 24<sup>th</sup> meeting, the Brandeis evaluation team presented a set of outcomes produced by the arts programs it reviewed; outcomes that:

- DYS youth workers said that they had observed with one or more young people;
- DYS youth workers suggested might be reasonable and realistic for young people in similar arts programs; and/or
- Youth mentioned during interviews or focus groups.

### **OUTCOMES SUGGESTED FROM DYS/ARTS PROGRAMS REVIEWED BY BRANDEIS:**

- Arts activities produce [short-term] reductions in youth anger and aggressiveness. (2)
- "Space Behavior" is better respected in arts and programs than in other CRC activities.
- Youth "melt downs" may be less serious.
- Youth produce arts products of which they are proud.(5)
- Youth have used/ experienced aspects of the arts/ discipline. (5)
- Youth walk away with a broader knowledge/ understanding of the arts/ discipline. (4)
- On a daily basis, kids will stay longer at a CRC for an arts program.
- Youth have gained a new appreciation of an arts discipline. (3)
- Youth have learned a new skill in arts discipline.(3)
- Youth identify an arts discipline that they would like to pursue further. (2)
- "One, two or three youth might fall in love with" the art they are participating in.
- Public performance has potential for enabling youth to be seen in a positive way by community.
- Some art youth produce may be profane and /or violent, turf oriented.
- Youth say "I want to do this. [In a serious way as an occupation, as a legal route to money]. (3)

### **MOST IMPORTANT DRIVING/UMBRELLA THEMES**

#### **FOR FUTURE ARTS PROGRAMS**

#### **Context:**

During the November 24<sup>th</sup> meeting, having organized the various assumptions into categories, **Arts InFusion Task Force** participants identified what they considered to be the most important themes and concepts that might drive and permeate future arts programs in DYS facilities.

#### **DRIVING THEMES:**

- DYS is moving toward a "positive youth development approach.

- Art is a vehicle for positive youth development.
- Arts programs should be one part of an overall, comprehensive program.
- Arts programs must be an ongoing partnership with regular communication and planning across artists and DYS staff from pre-start to finish. (3)
- Arts programs need to take a long-term view – What happens with engaged/interested youth when the program ends [i.e., connections/access to art schools, colleges, other art opportunities]? (3)
- Arts programs must adjust to kids' multiple variables: geography, neighborhoods, schedules, interests, cultures, skills, experiences, DYS status, etc.
- Arts programs operate best in spaces/environments conducive to their activities [change of venue?] (3)
- DYS changes to and standardization of CRCs will impact this work.

### **POSSIBLE STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES FOR THE ARTS INFUSION TASK FORCE**

#### **Context:**

Given previous discussions and processes, participants generated/brainstormed a series of strategies, and activities that might lead to an action plan for the ***Arts InFusion Task Force***.

#### **POSSIBLE NEXT STEPS TO MOVE THE INITIATIVE FORWARD:**

##### **Visioning:**

- Define what this DYS/Arts initiative is – Give it a name.
- Develop and articulate an overall vision that allows regional and/or customized versions.
- Define and clarify outcomes sought.

##### **Try again, learning from experience:**

- Consider running additional pilot programs to prove viability.
- Develop additional cultural institutional capacity through new pilots.

##### **Attract and prepare artist educators:**

- Develop recruitment processes to match artist-educators with opportunities.
- Acknowledge that in some regions there is an excess of skilled artist-educators; in others there is a drought.
- In some regions, investigate ways to increase the number of artists who want to, and are capable of, working with DYS youth.
- Develop regular trainings for artists who would like to work with DYS youth.
- Have local/regional coordinators to link artists with opportunities.

##### **Determine how to build a system of support within the DYS system:**

- Define links to each level of the DYS continuum of care [pre-detention, detention, transition CRC, transition to community beyond CRC].

- Define how and where arts initiatives connect with DYS interventions.
- Connect arts to youths' individual learning plans.
- Define what linkages are being sought.
- Identify how which arts initiatives might connect with emerging DYS initiatives.
- Determine which systems/procedures DYS might change to better support arts initiatives.
- Set up full arts components in regions' facilities.
- Move to more comprehensive integration of arts into DYS offerings.

Connect and partner with the DYS players:

- Start with DYS Regional Directors.
- Involve diverse cast of players – inside and out.
- Expand knowledge of arts programs in DYS facilities across all levels – vertically and horizontally across organizational charts.

Integrate arts initiatives with DYS' new directions:

- Integrate arts programs into DYS' new directions and standardization.
- Suggest arts-friendly language for the DYS RFR [enabling scoring of descriptors and characteristics].
- Develop ongoing series of arts opportunities for DYS youth that can occur inside, outside, and beyond DYS facilities.
- Make arts activities available in DYS facilities after-school and on weekends.
- Consider tracking youth as they participate in arts programs across DYS levels of care.