

Imagine Maryland

Date: June 26, 2008
Location: Charlestown Erickson Retirement Community
715 Maiden Choice Lane, Catonsville
Forum: Senior Community Forum
Facilitator: Morrie Warshawski, Theresa Colvin
Scribe: Janel Cohen

Summary of Major Themes:

- This group is unaware of MSAC and its programs.
- They feel that art is important as a boost to people's quality of life.
- These seniors are very concerned that young people are not getting enough exposure to the arts, especially in the schools.
- They want to be exposed more often to visiting professional artists.
- Most of these retirees are from out of state, but like being in Maryland because it provides access to a variety of: people, entertainment offerings, and landscape.
- These retirees want to work more with young people

Some Key Quotes:

"There are outstanding cultural resources here [Baltimore area]."

"Here [the retirement center] there are so many things to do you can't do them all."

"I have recently had children visit me in the art field and there is satisfaction in having a positive effect."

"Art stirs the world up. We get complacent and then an artists throws something in that we never dreamed up and it stirs things up and ultimately becomes part of the standard art world."

"It's important that schools have art because it tames/refines the spirit and gives children refinement."

"All the great cities of the world are strong in the arts."

"[We would like] Session(s) on critiquing and teaching art. We don't get artists in residence here."

Theresa Colvin, Maryland State Arts Council (MSAC) Executive Director

Welcome: This meeting is part of the strategic planning process that will be completed and published in early 2009

- You will be able to track the process on the Maryland State Arts Council website www.msac.org under Strategic Planning: *Imagine Maryland*

Introduction: We have two staff members with us, Angie Lohr and Janel Cohen. We have a few housekeeping items that need to be done. First of all, could you please fill in your name and contact information so we can keep track of who came to our meetings and also to keep you updated with the process. We also have some printed material for you: Frequently asked questions, a Press Release introducing *Imagine Maryland*, a Timeline of the process (including other forums you may be interested in attending), and our Annual Report which will have all the information you'll need to know on the Arts Council.

Morrie Warshawski

- I am a consultant based in Napa
- This is the first meeting we've had in the state out of a series
- The agency feels it is important that we have variety of people who live in Maryland and get as many different ideas as possible
- Question: How many have done strategic planning before? A few have done strategic planning
- Hope you will all be open and honest to give us a sense of what people feel in the communities about the arts
- Today, we will be asking a few questions both general and about the arts
- Please introduce yourselves and state how long you have been at the center.
 - Joyce; 4.5 years
 - Nancie and Richard; 3 years
 - Fred; 15 years
 - Virginia; 8 years
 - James?; 5 years
 - Leota; 10 years
 - John P.; 6 years
 - Sandra from UMBC
 - Jewell; 2.5 months
 - Martin; Works at the Center
 - Jim; 7 years
 - Phyl; 5 years
 - John L.; 5 years
 - Brad; Director Philanthropy at the center – 5 years
- Why are you in Maryland? What do you value? What keeps you here/why live here? What is Special about Maryland?
 - Variety is spectacular – Mini America
 - Our children live here – family

- Went to college here
 - My wife is originally from here
 - It feels like home
 - Came from Oklahoma and the cultural activities here are abundant (museums, DC, etc)
 - Retirement facilities were good for me (originally from West Pennsylvania)
 - I'm from Delaware and this was an outstanding retirement community
 - We came from Boston and Denver
 - Came from Michigan because I transferred for a job
 - I Like the east coast, scenery, lots to do (DC, etc)
 - Our family is here
 - There are outstanding cultural resources here
 - I Enjoy Maryland and that's good for me
 - Weather is better than being in the South
 - I had a job during WWII with the government, so I lived here and met husband here and it's a good state
 - Great seafood
 - Weather/Culture/Family
- Your participation in the arts – as you think of life in the past and recently, how are you (if you are) personally involved with art making (activity/music, visual arts, writing, etc)
 - Part of the Harmonizers choral group at the center
 - Used to sing in church choir
 - Singing
 - Listen to music
 - Draw
 - Watercolor
 - Art group
 - Painter, used to have my own studio
 - Everyone can do art, I preach art to everyone
 - Played cello, musician
 - While I was working I was into photography
 - Always wanted to go to art activities and when I retired I took courses in painting
 - I do something with art almost every day, either actively or passively
 - I was an art teacher for 42 years and I am now doing art for myself
 - I have sold my paintings in Maryland
 - Worked with the National Gallery of Art as a docent
 - I have a degree in art history
 - I wrote a book, non-fiction
 - Woodcarving
 - Do you attend art events/theatre/dance/galleries/listen/etc

- Theater groups in Baltimore
- Museums
- Go to the Meyerhoff to watch the symphony
- We go out to DC and Baltimore
- Trips to museums – sponsored by Charlestown
- Theatre
- Music
- Lived near NYC so I did a lot there
- Art museums
- There is a concert series on campus
- There is an art show on campus that many participate in (visual arts)
- Every Saturday there is a movie at auditorium and once a month foreign films are shown
- We have book reviews each month
- Here there are so many things to do you can't do them all
- Many volunteer at elementary schools and the school gives concerts here, facilitate growing art
- I paint and help the art teachers at elementary schools
- Question: What is the arts council supposed to do?
 - Promote the arts and make them accessible to all Marylanders. Founded in 1967 established by the legislature. Advance the arts for benefit of all Maryland citizens. Lot of grant money. Every event you attended probably got funding from MSAC. We also give grants to individual artists to encourage them to live/work/teach here. \$250,000 go to the individual artists in various genres. Our budget is about \$17million from general appropriations from state and some from the federal government. We also place artists in schools/residencies.
- Questions: Could we get invitations to shows?
 - We have the James Backas gallery in Baltimore at our MSAC offices. At the gallery, we have exhibitions of Maryland artists (usually our individual artist grantees), and we would be happy to send invites out. We were one of the sites for festival of maps with the theme of finding your place in the world. We have about 2-3 exhibitions a year.
- About 2 years ago, we had art show and children from school were invited to show work. Children were interested in what the adults were doing.
- How are you, if you are, involved as far as funding, or being a member, contributor, or volunteer of the arts?
 - Membership to Walters Art Museum
 - We go to the theaters
 - Contributions to theater/music/art museum

- Part of Baltimore Clayworks as an artist member there. I also volunteer there and contribute a little something.
- How have the arts made a difference in your life?
 - Took commercial art in high school and my art teacher was wonderful. She was member of local art group and take to galleries. Went to Parthenon in Nashville and I remember her standing on steps saying this makes me feel like a Greek goddess. She had a great influence on my life with her enthusiasm.
 - Former student of mine was recently able to purchase section in art museum in West Virginia. I have recently had children visit me in the art field and there is satisfaction in having a positive effect.
 - When we first moved to Maryland we saw a live performance in Baltimore (**Brenner**) and it was indescribable and moving.
 - In my student days I went to the Chicago Art Institute and felt immersed in the water lilies exhibit. It is now at the MoMA.
 - Read the book "Luncheon of the Boating Party" and went with group to the Phillips museum to see the painting. Trips planned from here are very nice.
- What is the role of arts in society? What role do you think the arts play/should play in society? Does having arts in the world make difference? What is it?
 - Art stirs the world up. We get complacent and then an artists throws something in that we never dreamed up and it stirs things up and ultimately becomes part of the standard art world
 - To make life more enjoyable for those people who want to go to concerts/paint/etc.
 - Enhances the quality of life
 - The arts made life a lot easier for lots of people during WWII, it lifts spirits.
 - The arts are food for our spirits and sits apart from the intellectual side. It's our feelings that are affected by art.
 - Gives us insight into our behavior and the behavior of others. We can see play or movie and "it just fits".
 - Art speaks to our creative nature
 - People have a need to create/appreciate creativity
 - Speaks to a lot of aspects of life
 - It's important that schools have art because it tames/refines the spirit and gives children refinement
 - We need to expand in music and art in grade schools to offset things we're bombarded with
 - What do we mean by arts?
 - Creative enterprises. The act of creativity. We can find art in a lot of different things, including comics
 - All the great cities of the world are strong in the arts
 - There can't be society/civilization without art

- Grew up in New Mexico with horses, space, mountains, and that was an opening for me. My mother encouraged art, to use things around me
- Why are there people who don't appreciate the arts?
 - Profits low, there may not be money in the arts
 - They're not exposed to it
 - Someone criticized the person early in life
 - Question: Has anyone discourage someone in the arts?
 - No.
 - We should acknowledge creativity of people who encourage/promote the arts and not just the artists
 - Question: when impressionists came famous, was that brought on by the fact that camera also accepted as an art form? Yes, they had to compete with the camera, and they blossomed from that.
- Think back on needs of yours and broader community experiences in the arts. What can MSAC provide directly or in partnership with other organizations that would make a difference?
 - Lecture or series of lectures on contemporary art, we don't have much access to that
 - We have courses given by the community college, but the classes required a minimum of 10 people, but the class only could get 8 people so it was cancelled. MSAC could try to provide an instructor to teach by providing the gap between 8 people to 10 people
 - Leadership enrichment. Roving leadership. A group/class might be stuck in rut because they have same leadership for long time and it would be nice to get different point of view
 - Session(s) on critiquing and teaching art. We don't get artists in residence here.
 - UMBC would like to reach out to the community. We do exhibitions at the school and do scholarships in contemporary art.
 - The State could get into schools and have exhibits at least once a year to reach the whole state and get people attuned to art. Get children involved, and the community will be more involved
 - Maryland Humanities Council is working on "One Book One Maryland" and the Arts Council could do something similar and get people talking about themes that are important to all and bring state together around the arts
 - Most people think of art as drawing. MSAC could get out more information of what art really is. People might be more interested in other types of creative work.
 - O'Malley (as Mayor) said people and businesses comes to cities that have strong arts
I would encourage MSAC to drop artists into the city.
- Any other questions?
 - None
- Around the room – Are there any last comments of arts or this meeting?

- Think it's been enlightening
- Weren't aware of what the Council did
- I second not knowing about the Council before and enjoyed learning about it.
- Back and forth interplay here has been interesting
- Question: What's the source of income of MSAC? State and Federal money, and private money. We partner with PTA's to bring artists into schools. This meeting is a way to gain insight on how to spend the money.
- Statewide competition to bring g.w. back into the schools
- I'm from out of state and my interpretation of the arts here (I'm from small steel town where people could care less, know less about the arts) is very different from what I've gone through
- Enjoyed this very much
- It was worthwhile. Around the room we are all visual artists, and the session could be expanded to include more genres of artists.
- There was a writer's festival here in spring, and we have many published writers here.
- We have a lot of different types of artists.
- MSAC's largest grantee is the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, but most of the organizations are small and midsized. About \$1mil goes to arts in education.
- People would like to see a bigger percentage in the schools
- There has been a recurring theme of getting money resources to school – UMBC has received money and we do outreach to Baltimore County and City schools. University students taught in k-12 art classes in 7-8 wks and at the end they had an exhibition where kids had their things on display at Walters Art Museum (funded in part by MSAC). We are continuing to reach out to schools in Baltimore County and City. We want to extend to seniors and other UMBC schools on campus beyond visual arts. We would like to coordinate with the community on broader level of arts (not just visual arts). Also, we do work with senior groups in Baltimore City and many seniors around the city would bring a different dynamic, will MSAC do any other sessions with seniors?
 - General public regional meetings that all are invited. Online survey and paper survey that will be shared available after August 1st.
- Anchorage Arts Council – I was there as an artist and teacher – thanks to oil money, they had a good situation and had legislation requiring 1% for the arts program – 1% had to be put into the arts (i.e. when putting up a building, 1% had to go to the arts). They were able to bring in a large variety of artists, which eventually filters into the people who have no interest in art. Artists are able to show work, and a lot of artists were brought in – new stuff has to

keep happening. Here there's a lot of old art. There's a lot people can do if you catch them at the right time.

Close of meeting