

Imagine Maryland

Date: August 20, 2008
Location: Chesapeake Performing Arts Center
194 Hammond Lane, Brooklyn Park, MD
Forum: Roster Artists
Facilitator: Chris Stewart, Sharon Blake
Scribe: Shirley Howard

SUMMARY OF MAJOR THEMES:

About Maryland, people appreciate:

- Landscape, architecture, geographic diversity
- Proximity to government/state resources
- Maryland supports the arts
- All of the above...but I appreciate little things like the farmers market, ARTScape, museums, colleges and universities and the diversity they bring on an educational basis.

Major Issues for roster artist communities:

- Funding
- Health Insurance
- Venues for performances, workshops, networking, mentoring (providing/receiving)
- Professional development, marketing

Future Visions Themes:

- Arts complexes/incubators
- Networking forums to connect artists, and ways to connect to communities, schools, parents, arts and non-arts organizations, funders
- Directory of/for artists – a hard copy catalogue and web version – place to share info, ditto for teachers and schools.
- Traveling showcase of artists as well as multiple conferences for teaching artists and schools and funders to meet and plan working together
- Secure financial base for artists (including health insurance)
- Education/training for artists –integration and other programs

Advice to MSAC:

- Link all artists' websites to MSAC and reciprocal links
- Send funded MSAC programs announcements to media through eBlast for visibility
- MSAC needs to play more of a role as connector, convener and resource
- Create a model after Bill Strickland from Pittsburgh who created an arts center that partners with businesses and the arts community. Strickland has a very interesting book, "Making the Impossible Possible".
- Increase art venues in neighborhoods

SOME KEY QUOTES:

- Arts in communities –went to evaluate something in Cumberland that was unbelievable! Far exceeded my expectations.
- Shirley and Pamela helping small arts organizations...didn't use to be this way at the Arts Council; I had stopped applying. Now things have changed.
- Need an arts census—like they did in NJ...then culminate with great conference...with all stakeholders at the table
- Revise and reuse video the Arts Council did years ago on arts integration...Denise Koch was the emcee. It is a valuable piece—it shows outcomes and how the arts improve test scores.
- Publish a booklet with contact info. We have a puppetry yellow pages...you can find out where to get a puppet fixed , where to purchase puppet supplies, etc. ... could be the same sort of thing
- Arts integration –as artists we are sometimes so in tuned to our “art” that we forget that we need to show it on paper and tie into the outcomes and standards.
- Arts heart or heart arts---a complex for the arts. Centralized. Could house studios, present classes, even the Arts Council could be housed there.

Raw Transcript

Introduction by Chris Stewart, MSAC Arts in Education Program Director

- Welcome, thanks for coming
- What is Imagine Maryland? Chris provides details of MSAC's strategic plan and timeline. Informs audience that a transcript of this session will be available on MSAC's website in 10 days.
- Introduces staff: Sharon Blake, Shirley Howard
- Protocol of meeting—a series of questions asked at each forum

Everyone introduced themselves. Participants consisted of:

- Artistic director of dance organization
- Dancer
- Teacher
- Playwright
- Panelist
- AiE Performing artist
- Voice instructor

- AiE visual artist
- Puppeteer
- Actress
- Executive director
- Program coordinator
- Artists' representative

Question #1 – What do you Value Most about Living/Working in MD?

- Diversity—all kinds. From mountains to beaches, rural to city, immigrant populations.
- Proximity to government/state resources
- Rich culture
- Close to DC and NY
- Easy access to connections
- Opportunities
- I am from NY where everyone gives you the finger; here nobody gives you the finger
- Maryland supports the arts
- County arts councils work together, i.e. showcases, etc.
- People care—when Center Stage dropped its theater playwrights program, I made one phone call to Pamela and three months later---- playwrights were added to the AiE roster.
- All of the above...but I appreciate little things like the farmers market, ARTScape, museums, colleges and universities and the diversity they bring on an educational basis.
- Arts in communities –went to evaluate something in Cumberland that was unbelievable! Far exceeded my expectations.
- Livable---can drive three hours to anywhere in the state
- Lots of commitment to make things better
- Support for recycling and highway maintenance
- Approach of Maryland's arts councils
- Fostering of growth and development at MSAC
- Shirley and Pamela helping small arts organizations...didn't use to be this way at the Arts Council; I had stopped applying. Now things have changed.
- TAI and MATI
- Grant writing workshops; board development workshops
- Administrators getting involved
- Climate
- People
- The arts
- Free events in Baltimore
- Values
- Portability
- Arts in schools
- Accessibility

Question #2 – Major Issues Facing the Arts Community in Maryland

- Money
- Ensure all children have access to the arts—not let geography, diversity, income interfere
- Need to keep art teachers in schools
- Transportation—barrier to access
- No home for dance other than the Museum or Universities. Performance space needed. True for theater companies and small organizations
- No affordable space
- Same true for small orgs in Montgomery county
- Need something similar to Gunston Arts Center in VA
- Mechanic Theater would be a great place for the arts ...all disciplines
- Also the Masonic /Temple on Charles and 39th Street
- Capital start up
- Decrease in private arts funding....including banks
- Cut in funding across the board
- Getting insurance certificate....huge problem
- Insurance for schools have changed.....new set of regulations
- Difficult for individual artists to get money—mostly for non profits
- Awareness- we need to get the word out via media, billboards
- Low income for artists
- Need workshops to show artists how to market themselves
- Communication—between artists and organizations....schools and artists.....organizations and funders
- Need an arts census—like they did in NJ...them culminate with great conference...with all stakeholders at the table
- Have annual meeting with funders and players
- State arts agency would convene and connect artists and venues
- Maybe CAFÉ could address some of these issues
- Curriculum issues in schools—sell arts to administrators
- Have the National Standards connected to schools and get parents involved
- Need strong parent base; PTA's are struggling
- Become more political-----a lot of that is our responsibility
- Arts integration –as artists we are sometimes so in tuned to our “art” that we forget that we need to show it on paper and tie into the outcomes and standards.
- Revise and reuse video the Arts Council did years ago on arts integration...Denise Koch was the emcee. It is a valuable piece—it shows outcomes and how the arts improve test scores.
- In this process, be mindful of the tremendous pressure arts administrators are under...no matter how much they believe it...they are mandated to focus on test scores. Sometimes they cannot take that gamble.
- Accessibility for neighborhoods in the city and rural areas. People do not leave their neighborhoods. Schools, rec and parks could be instrumental.
- Recreation centers are more dysfunctional than schools.

- This is a hard nut to crack. At my son's school they set a date where everyone—parents and children come and make art—instead of having a PTA meeting. It's wonderful.

Question #3—Five Ideas for the future of the arts in Maryland?

Group 1

- Arts heart or heart arts---a complex for the arts. Centralized. Could house studios, present classes, even the Arts Council could be housed there.
- Website to post events/calendar/bulletin board—Arts Everyday is working on website for schools
- Have the IAA awards showcase travel to schools, colleges and community centers
- Present an annual travelling conference of teachers, funders and artists. Travel to different areas of the state.

Group 2

- More money
- Increase art venues in neighborhoods
- Create partnerships with unlikely partners in communities...PAL centers, churches
- Need an agency that offers health insurance for artists and small organizations
- Create networking opportunities between arts and non arts groups
- Keep arts teachers in schools
- Balance between artists and arts advocacy. Do not replace teaching artists with teachers

Group 3

- Link all artists' websites to MSAC and reciprocal links
- Send funded MSAC programs to media through eBlast for visibility
- Msac play more of a role as connector, convener and resource
- Publish a booklet with contact info. We have a puppetry yellow pages...you can find out where to get a puppet fixed , where to purchase puppet supplies, etc. ... could be the same sort of thing
- More non educated funding for individual artists, i.e., Shepherdstown
- MSAC could fund programs that paired a playwright with a theater or the like
- Touring artists roster.....i.e., PennPat (Sharon explained her Touring Artists Program)
- Have an art show on TV –like MPT's Artworks but broader

Group 4

- Money—secure financial base for artists
- Fundraising event to raise money for Maryland artists
- Health insurance for working artists
- Education/training for artists –integration and other programs
- Artists promotion/publicity—performing arts not as prevalent as the visual arts

- Website –interactive on line artists’ directory where artists can communicate and give information on insurance, what works, their experiences, etc.
- Access – to the arts for all Marylanders
- List of venues for artists

Group 5

- Arts incubators
- Support for marketing, administration through counties
- Mentoring opportunities in and outside of incubators---allow folks to speak, train and teach
- Artists’ yellow pages—most tangible and meaningful
- SAG keep actors up to date..why can’t artists be kept up to date
- PTA reflections page—clearinghouse idea—way for people at schools to “opt in” information on line and in paper form
- Director y of teachers and schools
- Create a model after Bill Strickland from Pittsburgh who created an arts center that partners with businesses and the arts community. Strickland has a very interesting book, “Making the Impossible Possible”.

Wrap up thoughts

Someone asked, “What’s next”? Sharon answered that the consultant, staff and task force will meet to discuss outcomes of forums. After information is gathered, plans are to have another opportunity for public to review the information and voice their opinion.

Chris -- If anything changes, website will reflect and inform. Remember, a transcript of this forum will be published on our website (www.msac.org) within ten days. Thank you again for coming.

Closing comments

- Like the cross communication idea and the inclusion of us in MSAC’s Strategic Plan process.
- Great session.