

# The Spillover Effect: Tracking The Impact Of Nonprofit Community Arts Centers

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THESIS

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## ABSTRACT

This paper set out to provide specific data and anecdotal evidence highlighting the private benefits of the arts experience and illustrating how these benefits spill over into the community. Through surveys and in-depth interviews, this study found there are four extremely influential factors in these respondents' decision to participate: enjoyment, artistic outlet, cultural enrichment and friendship. Furthermore, the friendship component was nearly equal with the artistic when discussing motivating factors for participation. In fact, throughout the survey, responses included the establishment, development or continuation of community bonds, emphasizing that these centers are playing a significant role in the creation of social bonds and communal meaning. The results from this study indicate that participants in two Pennsylvania community arts centers exhibit some evidence that they are developing as individuals and, in turn, contributing to the greater good of society, and that a key factor in this development is the social aspect of programming.

To the teachers in my life, who have shown me the value of the arts.

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## INTRODUCTION

Nonprofit community arts organizations believe that they are making a difference in their communities. However, most lack the data and language to develop a sophisticated rationale for their funders. Studies such as *Arts and Economic Prosperity*, published by the Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance, have begun to develop a language for discussing the economic impact, but have oft overlooked other ways in which these organizations have an impact upon their communities.

Authors such as McCarthy *et al.* (2004) have been leaders in bringing awareness to the need for a more holistic approach to discussing the impact of the arts. In their report, *Gifts of the Muse*, the need to discuss the economic impact, part of what they refer to as “instrumental benefits,” or those that “promote important measurable benefits, such as economic growth and student learning” (xi), is acknowledged. However, McCarthy *et al.* claim that to truly understand the impact of the arts, “intrinsic benefits” or those that “are inherent in the arts experience itself and are valued for themselves rather than as a means to something else” (3) must also be included in the discussion. Moreover, research indicates that these intrinsic benefits play a role in every benefit derived from the arts. In fact, in creating a framework to understand these benefits, McCarthy *et al.*

(2004) places these benefits on a continuum, from private to public, illustrating how both instrumental and intrinsic benefits have spillover effects for the greater good (xiii). Alan Brown, in *An Architecture of Value* (2006), develops this idea further in his chart, “Five Clusters of Benefits,” which illustrates the role intrinsic benefits have in developing the more overarching instrumental benefits. What he terms as “Individual Benefits” such as “personal development” and the “imprint of the arts experience”, developed over time, lead to interpersonal and eventually community benefits such as “economic and social benefits” and “communal meaning” (20). Therefore, this study was conducted to provide specific data and qualitative evidence of the ways in which intrinsic benefits, over time, become instrumental benefits which promote the greater good.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The debate regarding funding the arts and cultural sector has been manifest in a variety of forms throughout the literature on arts management. One of the most prominent forms is economic impact reports, such as *The Arts as an Industry* (The Sonoma County Economic Development Board 2000) and the *Arts and Economic Prosperity: The Economic Impact of Nonprofit Arts and Culture Organizations and their Audiences* (Cohen 2005), which study the economic impact of the arts. While the economic impact studies have been found in literature throughout the United States and other parts of the world, there are many who criticize both the validity and relevancy of these reports. Authors such as Adrian Ellis (2000) and Arthur Sterngold (2004) dismiss this type of study as misleading, and others (Morris 2003 and Goldbard 2008) suggest that focusing on the economic impact dismisses what truly draws people to the arts as superfluous.

Others such as Kevin McCarthy *et al.* (2004), Alan Brown (2006), William Cleveland (2002) and Christopher Madden (2001) suggest a new approach that takes into consideration the values that the arts bring to society that are not measured in numbers. Mark J. Stern with the Social Impact of the Arts Project (2003) and Deborah Bedwell at Baltimore Clayworks are examples of how these suggestions can be practically implemented in the discussion on the arts in society. This literature review will examine the growing trend of

implementing a more holistic discussion of the arts – one which includes both instrumental and intrinsic benefits.

The ways in which the arts and culture impact society have been widely discussed. One that has been widely published in the literature on this topic is the economic impact study. Sterngold (2004) states that this type of study became popular in the 1970's because of its ability to support "government funding of NACOs (Nonprofit Art and Culture Organizations) as a profitable investment of taxpayers' dollars, rather than just a costly subsidy" (167). Radich (1992) suggests that this is the result of changes in the arts environment such as the introduction of public subsidy for the arts, significant growth in the arts industry and the debate regarding public funding for the arts. He states

As the policy department became increasingly concerned with jobs, the economy, and community economic development, arts advocates had to craft responses that focused on the relationship of the economy to the arts, using the frameworks and terminology of economics (4).

Arthur Sterngold (2004) agrees, "These early impact studies helped to legitimize public support for NACOs and the analyses grew rapidly in the following decades" (3). The result was a plethora of these reports appearing across the United States, from local communities to national studies.

One example of a local report is that from The Sonoma County Economic Development Board (EDB) in 2000, *The Arts as an Industry*. The EDB created this report primarily to "provide local business executives, industry professionals,

educators, government leaders, and the news media with accurate and current data on the economic impact of the non-profit cultural arts” (3). However, the majority of the document focuses on recommendations for these key policy makers and contributors to support the arts in their community. While numerous local studies such as the Sonoma County report exist, one of the most prominent national studies was conducted by Americans for the Arts, *Arts and Economic Prosperity: The Economic Impact of Nonprofit Arts and Culture Organizations and their Audiences* (2005). This study was conducted to illustrate the nonprofit arts and culture industry’s impact on the nation’s economy.

These economic impact studies provided “strong and credible data that demonstrate the economic benefits of a vibrant nonprofit arts and culture industry,” according to Americans for the Arts (1). Radich (1992) adds that the economic impact studies

provided a way for the arts industry to respond to the argument that the government should not fund the arts. These reports defined the arts as contributors to the economic well-being of communities and as entities that return more money to state and local treasuries than they draw through subsidy (7).

Therefore, economic impact studies became a successful agent for legitimizing public support and rapidly took precedence in government policy (Sterngold 2004).

However, despite the usefulness of such studies, many (Madden 2001 and Guetzgow 2002) agree that relying solely on economic impact analyses for

funding and public policy leave the nonprofit arts on unstable ground. This appears to be a growing trend throughout the literature on the impact of the arts and culture in society. Many authors (Sterngold 2004, Ellis 2003, Guetzgow 2002 and Madden 2001) agree that weaknesses abound in these studies. Sterngold focuses on the overuse of what he terms as the gross measures of impact which ignore other economic factors. Guetzgow takes the argument one step further in his publication, “How the Arts Impact Communities” (2002) in that there are misrepresentations within these studies, but that with the exception of economic impact studies, “almost all other research focuses on the benefits that accrue to individuals and organizations involved in the arts, rather than the direct impact of the arts” (5).

Goldbard (2008) cautions against focusing on the economic impact and maintains the result will be that “only the factors that can be quantified are relevant and the rest — indeed, the heart and soul of the work — is just some soft stuff that has to be scraped away to get at the facts.” Additionally, Estelle Morris, former Minister for the Arts in England, acknowledges in a speech to the Cheltenham Festival of Literature (2003) that “Arts and Culture make a contribution to health, to education, to crime reduction, to strong communities, to the economy and to the nation's well-being” and suggests that finding a way to express that is “the only way we'll secure the greater support we need.” Ellis (2003) concurs and states that there is a “deep anxiety in the arts that the significance of what it has to contribute is somehow misrepresented – or simply missing in policy discussions about culture” (1). In fact, Ellis quotes Bruce

Seaman stating that economic impact studies “are a fashionable excess ...diverting attention from the kinds of research most appropriate for building a legitimate case for further public support of the arts” (7).

Brown acknowledges that “while these are useful constructs, they were designed primarily to support a policy argument rather than to provide a tool for arts practitioners” and suggests that those in the field of arts management begin to develop a new model for discussing the impact of that arts that will “work like a kaleidoscope, offering each viewer a slightly different picture” (18). *Gifts of the Muse* proposes “a view of the benefits of the arts that is broader than the current one in that it incorporates intrinsic and instrumental benefits and distinguishes among the ways in which the arts can affect the public welfare” (69). Ellis (2003) agrees, cautioning that “unless a common and public language can be found in which to discuss cultural purposes, and intrinsic – *alongside* instrumental – value, then funders will tend to focus on a partial view of cultural institutions.” He states, “It would now appear to be a good time to reawaken and rearticulate interest in the fundamental contribution that cultural institutions can make to our quality of life at the deepest level” (9). Therefore, the current literature on the impact of the arts stresses the need for a more well-rounded view – one that considers all aspects of the nonprofit art and culture sector’s contribution to society.

There is difficulty, however, in measuring and reporting this concept. Morris (2003), states that “target performance indicators [and] value added evidence bases are all part of the language we've developed to prove our ability to

deliver, to make progress to show a return and justify the public money that is used,” but adds that “much of this sector does not fit in to this way of doing things.” Reeves (2002) expresses the concern that as a result, these “specific, clear and measurable outcomes may not in themselves reflect the complexity of social impacts” (38). Furthermore, many arts administrators struggle with the requirement that only those things that can be measured are of value. Arlene Goldbard (2008) states that attempting to measure the intrinsic value of the arts is “one of the most grotesque artifacts of post-Enlightenment thinking” and is “antithetical to the deep values of community cultural development.” William Cleveland, a leader in the field of community cultural development and founder of the Center for the Study of Art and Community, agrees that measurement can be difficult and acknowledges that at this point, “the small body of good research that is only just emerging is not yet considered conclusive” (9).

However, despite the difficulty in developing a metric for capturing the full impact of the arts, it is often a necessary criterion from funders and policy makers. The result is a growing area of study examining the more intrinsic benefits of the arts. Deborah Bedwell, Executive Director at Baltimore Clayworks shares her frustration regarding this in “Measuring Joy: Evaluation at Baltimore Clayworks” (2000). She states, “I would be required... to prove to the prospective funder that our programs and activities had created a better life for those who touched clay, and for the rest of the city - and maybe the rest of humanity...A tall order!” After months of research, board retreats and training sessions from the Maryland Association of Nonprofit Organizations, Bedwell came to understand

that “by instituting a down-to-earth, commonsense, understandable framework for evaluation, we could achieve a level of consistency and determine our programs’ effectiveness with far more accuracy than before.” By using the "Theory-Based Logic Model Evaluation" from the Kellogg Foundation, in which staff evaluate each child on how frequently he or she “talks about work to others,” “uses clay vocabulary” and is “anxious to continue,” Bedwell is able to not only report to funders the impact of the program, but also strengthen it through program planning.

On a larger scale, Dr. Mark Stern and Susan Seifert founded the Social Impact of the Arts Project (SIAP), developed in 1994 at the University of Pennsylvania to “research on the role of arts and culture in American cities with a particular interest in strategies for arts-based revitalization.” One study, *Culture and the Changing Urban Landscape: Philadelphia 1997-2002* (Stern 2003) makes the claim that “we can only understand how cultural expression and social conditions influence one another if we can observe these relationships over time” (6). This study therefore looked at the correlations between culture and other aspects of urban life as well as specific case studies about how these agents flow through the community (3). Although the publication does not go into great detail regarding the specific methodology, the SIAP replicated databases from a previous study, integrating data from the 2000 U.S. census taking an integrated, long-term approach. What Stern and Seifert illustrate through studies such as this, Randall Vega (2004) states in her major paper, “The Social Impact of the Arts,” is that “a strong arts organization can anchor a community and strengthen its social

fabric, improving the lives of everyone in the community, not just the community members who participate in their programming and activities” (4).

Vega, however, takes this a step further by challenging city governments to take action measuring the impact of the nonprofit community arts organizations. Her primary example is Baltimore’s CitiStat program which incorporates accurate and timely intelligence, effective tactics and strategies, rapid deployment of resources and relentless follow-up and assessment to “track the progress city departments make (or don’t make) over time in a concrete way” (39). Vega challenges Baltimore to include the presence of arts organizations in the CitiStat program to determine “how many [arts organizations] there are and how many people are involved in their activities and use that information as part of their analysis of the health of a particular neighborhood” (70). Baltimore, she reports, has tentatively begun taking steps in this direction. Should these strategies be implemented, the CitiStat program could stand as an example of how the government and the nonprofit arts sector can work together to track the impact of participation in the arts in entire cities.

Consequently, as evaluation such as Bedwell’s at Baltimore Clayworks and research such as Stern/Seifert at the SIAP becomes more prevalent, there has become a need for a common language in which to discuss the affect of the arts that is sufficient to reflect the complexity of social impacts. In “Mapping the Field: Arts-Based Community Development” (2002), Cleveland credits the ever growing and evolving field for the fact that “clarity of purpose and intent has become more critical” and a few years prior to this publication, the Center for the

Study of Art and Community set out to “graphically map the diverse and interrelated world of arts-based community development” (7). The result was a chart consisting of four “neighborhoods,” or the ways in which the arts contribute to the “sustained advancement of human dignity, health and/or productivity within a community” (7). He claims that various arts-based community activities fall into one or more of the following categories: they educate and inform, inspire and mobilize, nurture and heal or build and improve. The interlocking ovals illustrate the “interdependent and integrated nature of the field” (8), which the Center for the Study of Art and Community hoped would become a framework that would provide “something that would provoke a conversation about the multifaceted quality of the work” (7).

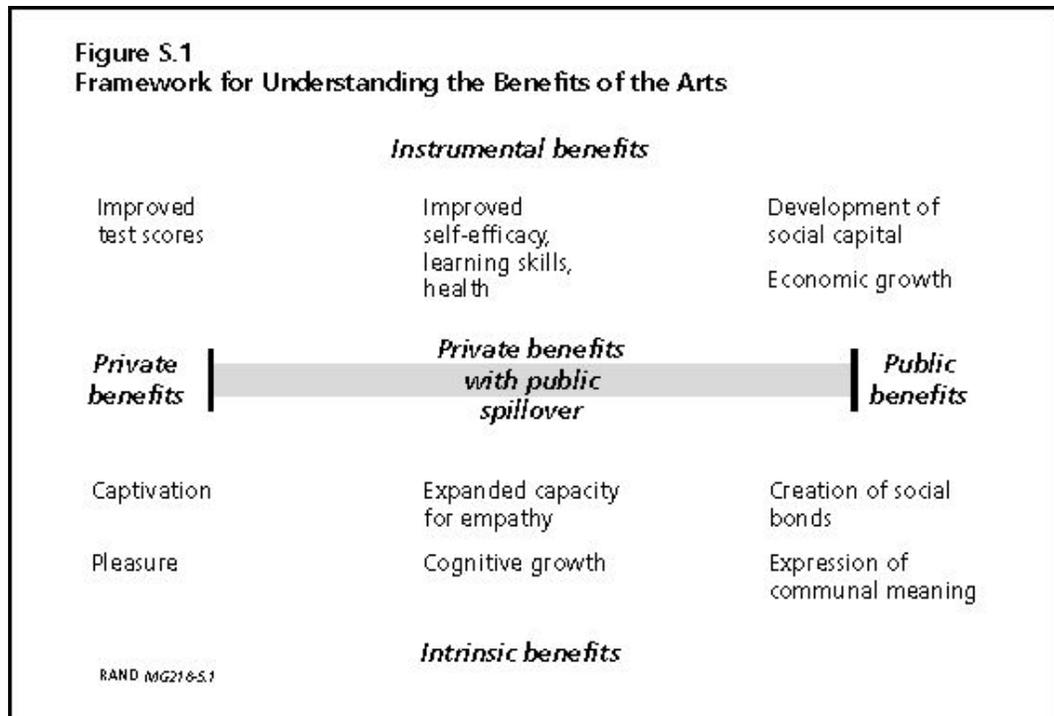


Figure 1-Cleveland's Neighborhoods ("Mapping the Field," 2003)

Others (McCarthy *et al.* 2004 and Brown 2006) have taken a slightly different approach. *Gifts of the Muse* (2004) by Kevin McCarthy *et al.*, has become a widely accepted and quoted publication in this field. The report begins by examining the economic impact approach to the arts, an instrumental benefit, but suggests that this type of argument ignores the impact of benefits accrued to individuals, an intrinsic benefit. He agrees that the arts have instrumental effects or those that “promote important measurable benefits, such as economic growth and student learning” (xi). However, the intrinsic benefits, the more ethereal effects which provide the individual with meaning, pleasure and/or emotion and are what truly draw people to the arts (xv) are difficult to measure, but equally important. He suggests, therefore, that “the arts can create and foster a range of

intrinsic benefits that are primarily personal, but they can also generate private benefits that have indirect, spillover effects on the public sphere, as well as direct effects on the public sphere” (69).

To illustrate this spillover effect, McCarthy *et al.* (2004) place all benefits, both instrumental and intrinsic, on a continuum from “private benefits” to “public benefits” (xiii). Often, policy makers and funders are concerned with the instrumental benefits along the continuum. Or, for example, results such as improved test scores, a private benefit for the child, result in public benefits such as economic growth and the development of social capital. However, the report claims that the intrinsic effects are what draw people to the arts and challenges the “widely held view that intrinsic benefits are purely of value to the individual” (xv). For example, some effects such as captivation and pleasure are undoubtedly at the private end of the continuum. However, McCarthy *et al.* (2004) makes the claim that, with time and exposure, some benefits “spill over into the public realm in the form of individuals who are more empathetic and more discriminating in their judgments of the world around them” (xvi). Beyond that, other benefits such as the creation of social bonds and the expression of communal meanings “arise from the collective effects that the arts have on individuals” (xvi).



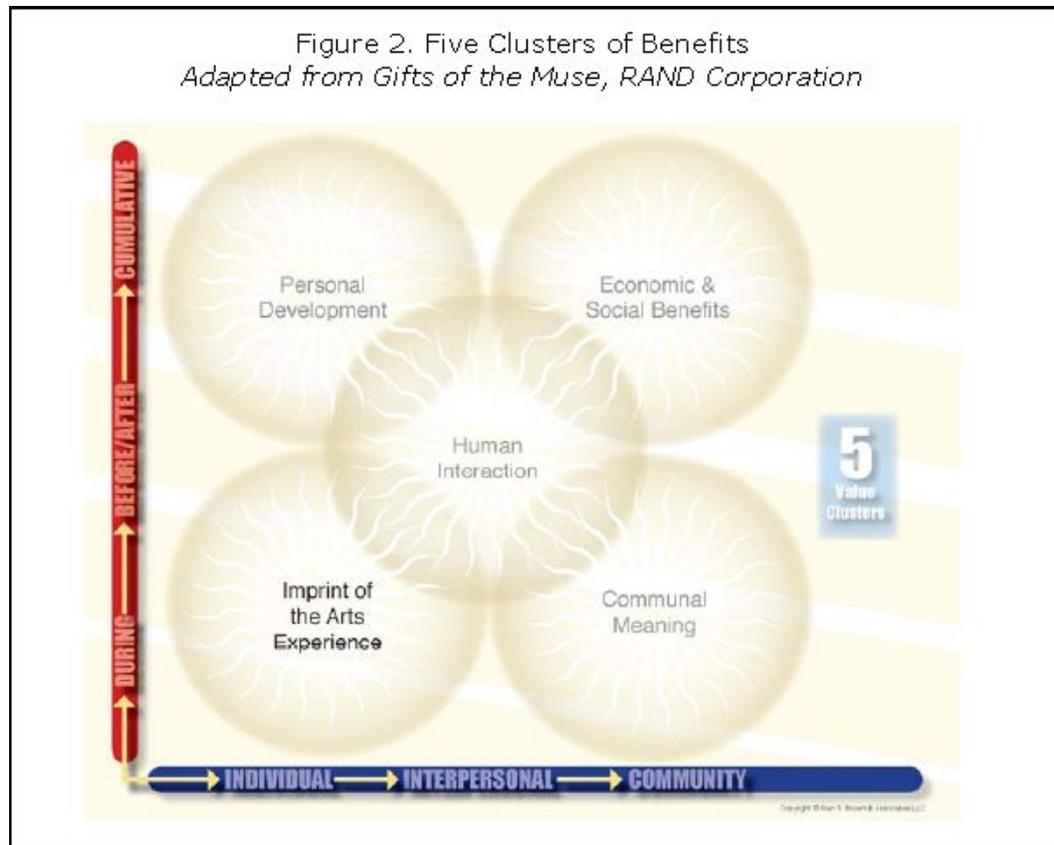
**Figure 2- McCarthy *et al.* Continuum (*Gifts of the Muse*, 2004)**

Brown (2006) agrees that the arts can have an affect on both the individual and society, and furthers the discussion by presenting a framework in “An Architecture of Value” for illustrating how the intrinsic benefits of the arts experience, over time accrete, or “grow or increase gradually, as by addition,” (19) to become a benefit to society as a whole. In response to the McCarthy *et al.* *Gifts of the Muse*, he further develops the framework, stating, “At some level it seems pointless to try to characterize the complex and variable impact of the arts experience in a simple diagram with only two dimensions” (20). As a result, he adds two additional facets to the McCarthy *et al.* continuum – duration of the experience and the participation itself.

Brown (2006) maintains that as the duration of the arts experience increases, the benefits ripple into the community from individual, to interpersonal, to community and adds that there five overarching categories, or “value clusters,” in which these benefits can be defined:

1. “The ‘imprint’ of an arts experience,” or what happens to an individual during and immediately after an arts experience.”
2. “Personal Development,” or those benefits that relate to “the growth, maturity, health, mental activity and overall development of the person.”
3. “Human Interaction”, or those that improve interpersonal relationships.
4. “Communal Meaning and civic discourse”
5. “Economic and macro-social benefits” such as economic impact and lower school drop-out rates.

The third dimension added by Brown (2006) is the type of arts experience, or the specific way in which people participate. Based upon his previous study “The Values Study, Rediscovering the Meaning and Value of Arts Participation”, he adds that there are five modes of participation: inventive, interpretive, curatorial, observational, and ambient and that “experiences within different artistic disciplines induce different combinations of benefits” (20). Therefore, by adding the dimensions of time and participation to the McCarthy *et al.* continuum, Brown (2006) attempts to capture the complexity of the impact of the arts on society. He concludes that *Gifts of the Muse* has “provided us a new prism through which to view ourselves and our work” and challenges, “just as I have extended RAND’ work, I invite others to use mine as a stepping stone” (24).



**Figure 3- Brown's Three Dimensional Chart ("Architecture of Value," 2006)**

In summary, there is a tremendous amount of literature regarding the impact the arts have on society. As a result of increased government funding for the arts in the 1960's and 1970's, nonprofit arts organizations have been forced to justify this support. The result has been a plethora of economic impact studies. However, many in the field of arts management have expressed concerns that focusing entirely on the instrumental impacts of the arts ignores the heart and soul of the arts experience and that the intrinsic benefits are what truly draws people to the arts. Additionally, funders and policy makers are increasingly asking for reporting measures that include both intrinsic and instrumental impacts. Therefore, the need

to develop a framework which captures the complex impact of the arts has led to new areas of research and a developing framework for discussion.

While taking different approaches to this framework, there is general consensus among arts administrators that benefits are interrelated. The spillover effect, as discussed by McCarthy *et al.* (2004) and Brown (2006) suggests that even the most personal of the intrinsic benefits, over time, ripples out into the community. And the next step for this field would be to identify and measure these social impacts, in order to provide arts administrators, funders and policy makers with a well-rounded view of the arts. This can, in turn, enable these leaders to gain the support needed to create a vibrant and meaningful arts and culture sector for the community.

## METHODOLOGY

As the shift moves toward including the instrumental *and* intrinsic benefits in our case making, we as arts administrators must be prepared with a consistent and reliable language with which to discuss these impacts, alongside the data to support it. McCarthy *et al.* (2004) calls arts administrators to action by stating: “The arts community will need to develop a language to describe the various ways that the arts create benefits at both the private and public level” (xviii). The report, *Gifts of the Muse*, begins the conversation by graphing instrumental and intrinsic benefits along a continuum from private to public benefits, illustrating how some impacts spill over into the public sphere. Brown (2006), expanding the work by McCarthy *et al.* (2004), develops what he describes as an ‘architecture of value,’ a three-dimensional concept of the arts impact which adds time and type of participation to the *Gifts of the Muse* continuum. He continues that “many factors affect the creation of value, and a next step would be to gain a better understanding of the full range of factors and connect them with specific benefits” (20).

This is becoming necessary, given that funders are asking for reporting which captures the full complexity of the arts and, as Cleveland (2002) states, “the small body of good research that is only just emerging is not yet considered

conclusive” (9). This study, therefore, seeks to provide specific data and anecdotal evidence highlighting the private benefits of the arts experience and illustrating how these benefits are “rippling outward like waves” into the community, as suggested by Alan Brown (2006) and McCarthy *et al.* (2004). The hypothesis of this report is that by examining the influence of arts education on participants of community arts centers, this research will find that these organizations do indeed have a positive impact in their community. While a definitive set of data was unattainable through the limitations of this research, some qualitative evidence to support this concept did emerge.

To execute this study, I chose two nonprofit community arts organizations in the greater Philadelphia area. Darlington Arts Center is located in Garnet Valley, southeastern Pennsylvania. The Yocum Institute is located in Wyomissing, PA, a suburb of Reading, PA. Both Darlington Arts Center and The Yocum Institute provided a list of program participants to be asked to complete a survey regarding their time and participation at their respective organizations.

The Yocum Institute provided a heterogeneous list of 47 individuals including adults, youth, teachers and parents. The individuals on this list had varying degrees of participation, from taking one class to a lifetime of involvement with The Institute. Darlington provided a homogeneous group of 155 households, which were the last known residence of students that had participated in the music program during their years in high school and had moved on, either to college or a career.

The Darlington list, however, presented a challenge in re-establishing contact with these students, as well as asking for their participation in the study. Letters were sent to a random selection of 73 households, with only 4 responding with their contact information. Due to the lack of response and enormous difficulty in contacting these former students, it became necessary to find other alternatives. After discussions with Executive Director Angela Scully regarding the availability of potential participants, the decision was made to survey adults currently enrolled in programs at Darlington. The response was much more substantial.

Surveys were the primary method for gathering statistical data regarding the impact of participation at an arts center on the individual and community. The 19 questions included in the survey were a mix of multiple choice and essay and inquired about demographics, activities, participation at the organization and the affects of that participation.

Surveys were distributed in three primary ways. The list from The Yocum Institute included some individuals with email addresses and others without. For those with email addresses, an invitation email was sent through SurveyMonkey asking for their participation in an online survey. Those without an email address were sent letters, which included a link to the online survey and The Yocum Institute's phone number to request a paper copy. There were a total of 26 completed surveys from The Yocum Institute. At the Darlington Arts Center participants were asked at the end of class to fill out a paper survey. Including the 3 former music students from Darlington who filled out the survey online, there

were a total of 26 completed surveys from the Darlington Arts Center, for a combined total of 52 completed surveys from both organizations.

Finally, three individuals were chosen for a more in-depth interview, designed to provide anecdotal evidence to connect the data from the survey with the established research of Brown (2006) and McCarthy *et al.* (2004). Ms. Tama McConnell is part of the Music Faculty at The Yocum Institute and a participant in the Theater department. Not only did she take classes at The Institute as a child, she has been teaching at The Institute for over 5 years. She was chosen to provide the unique perspective from an instructor's point of view. Also from The Yocum Institute was Ms. Ann Bittler, who has been involved in the Visual Arts department for over 5 years and has also been involved in Music, Dance and Children's Programming as well. Ms. Bittler was chosen because of the length and breadth of her participation. Finally, Ms. Donna Wetterlund from the Darlington Arts Center has participated in the Visual Arts department for over 2 years. Ms. Wetterlund was chosen because her demographics fit the majority of participants.

There were eight questions in the interview. These questions were designed to both reiterate the findings from the surveys and provide some anecdotal evidence regarding how these findings exhibited the spillover effect – from private benefits to public benefits – as discussed in the literature of arts management. Respondents were encouraged to be as detailed as possible.

## **LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

This study looked only at participants from two nonprofit community arts centers and is therefore limited by location and availability of participants, but was not limited by the length or breadth of participation. Selection was not completely neutral. It relied somewhat on self-selection, the contacts provided by the organizations, as well as the participants' availability and willingness to participate, and, as a result, was limited by the number of responses.

The study also did not examine the impact of the arts centers on those that have not participated in programs offered by either of the organizations. Given the large quantity of economic impact studies in existence, this study focused primarily on the social impact of the organization through the "personal development" of participants, such as self-esteem and discipline, and how that, in turn, affects the community. By focusing specifically on participants from two nonprofit community arts centers, it was possible to compile manageable data to clearly articulate the findings of the research to other arts administrators and policy makers.

## ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILES

### **DARLINGTON ARTS CENTER**

The Darlington Arts Center is a nonprofit community arts center located in Garnet Valley, Pennsylvania, a southwestern suburb of Philadelphia near the Delaware border. The organization was founded in 1978 by Diana Sophocles Hemmenway, and in 2009, Angela Scully took over as Executive Director of the organization. Darlington's mission is

to serve the cultural needs of a diverse community by providing a school and outreach programs for the visual and performing arts.

The Center promotes the enjoyment and understanding of the arts through outreach programs, private instruction, classes, performances and special events for all ages.

In-house, Darlington provides classes and private instruction throughout the week for preschool, children and teens/adults. Programs are very diverse and include visual arts, drama, music, dance, and fitness. In addition to the weekly programming, specialty workshops are also available. These range from Yoga to Self-Defense, Drama to Ballroom and even include special children's activities such as the "Hannah Montana Dance Party" and "Dora & Diego Dance".

Darlington Arts Center strives to be involved in the education of students in their community. In addition to its traditional arts programming, it also offers series for Preschoolers and Kindergarteners exposing students to topics in all four of the arts: Visual Art, Drama, Dance and Music. Additionally, Darlington has partnered with the Garnet Valley School District to bus in students from three local schools for its “Arts After School Clubs.” According to the Fall 2009 Catalog, “Students are met at the bus stop and given a snack before they continue on to their registered classes or lessons. During this half hour, students will be assisted with their homework, reading and other school assignments” (3).

Darlington Arts Center is also very committed to reaching out to the community. The organization offers two outreach programs for those “special needs and economically disadvantaged youth living in the urban areas of Chester and West Chester” (5). The Chester Youth Theater Arts Program not only brings training in all the arts to children ages 5-18, but also allows for performance opportunities, guest artists and cultural field trips. The Suzuki Violin and Early Childhood Music Program provide Suzuki violin training for young children in Chester and West Chester. Additionally, to make the arts available to all students, regardless of income, Darlington Arts Center provides a variety of scholarships yearly.

There are 3,200 participants enrolled in the 2009-2010 programs at Darlington Arts Center. The outreach programs have a total of 460 students enrolled, from both Chester and West Chester. Enrollment varies greatly from program to program. For example, the music program currently has 460

participants, while preschool only has 9. Most who enroll in Darlington's programs participate for about 4 years, according to Executive Director Angela Scully, and the average age to begin participating is 7 years old. Although they do not track demographics, Scully states that most participants are white and age 7-18.

Teaching Artists are another important community at Darlington Arts Center. The organization has a low turn-over rate for their instructors, who stay an average of 9 years at the organization. This can be seen in the percentage of new teachers listed in the Fall 2009 Catalog. There are 49 instructors listed; only three of these are new. Music has a total of 31 teaching artists, all of whom have at least a bachelor's degree in music or music education. Many have an education from the Juilliard School or the Curtis Institute of Music and have international performance experience. Art and Dance & Fitness have 8 and 6 respectively, with only 4 Drama & Language teaching artists.

The Darlington Arts Center is a community arts center that serves Concord Township, Delaware County, Pennsylvania. The U.S. Census Bureau website provides statistics for this township in Delaware County from the 2000 census. The total population in Concord Township in 2000 was slightly more than 9,900. Females make up 51.1 percent of the population of the township. Children under 18 make up 13.9 percent of the population, while those over 65 make up 14.1 percent. The majority, 95.8 percent, are white, while together, Black or African American and Asians make up 3.2 percent of the population.

For those of employment age, 16 years or older, the leading occupations are “Management, Professional and Related Occupations” (55 percent), “Sales and Office” (24.2 percent) and “Construction, Extraction and Maintenance” (8 percent). The median household income, in 1999 dollars is \$85,503 and 21.8 percent have a household income of \$100,000-\$149,999, much higher than the national average of \$41,944. Slightly more than 93 percent of the occupied housing units in Concord Township, Delaware County are owned, while only about 6 percent are rented. And only 3.3 percent of individuals fall below the poverty line, compared to the national average of 12.4 percent. Therefore economically, Concord Township, Delaware County, Pennsylvania is above average.

### **THE YOCUM INSTITUTE FOR ARTS EDUCATION**

The Yocum Institute for Arts Education is a nonprofit community arts center located in Wyomissing, Pennsylvania, a suburb of Reading. The Institute was established in 1934 by Charles Whittell as the Wyomissing Institute for Fine Arts. On July 4, 2009, in celebration of 75 years of operation, the Wyomissing Institute officially changed its name to The Yocum Institute for Arts Education, under the current Executive Director, Susan Rohn. The Institute exists to “operate an educational facility for the arts in Southeastern Pennsylvania, to provide the best instruction possible, and to provide performance and exhibition opportunity to students of all ages while maintaining a realistic tuition base.”

Similar to Darlington Arts Center, The Yocum Institute offers weekly classes and private instruction in all four of the arts: visual art, music, dance and

theater. There are numerous ongoing classes for Adults (ages 18 +), Young Adults (ages 13 +), Children & Youth (ages 2-12). The Institute also offers a range of workshops from “Swordplay – Swashbuckling and More” to “Extreme Improve Workshop” and summer camps for young children to youth.

In addition to the traditional classes offered at community arts centers, The Yocum Institute for Arts Education, in an effort to pursue its mission, also houses a Pre-School and Kindergarten education department. In 1941, the education department was established and received licensing from the state of Pennsylvania. The goal of these programs is to

“focus on the individual child, enabling him or her to increase their [STET] self image, develop self reliance and confidence, to foster the desire to question and learn through: creating, concept building, language development, problem solving concentrating, socializing, perceiving, foster independence and emotional growth.”

These programs utilize art to teach fundamental skills and prepare students for public or private education.

Continuing the efforts toward its mission, The Institute has added additional educational programming focused on community outreach. Primary Stages, is a “Professional Interactive Theater” that regularly performs for local families and includes performances for at-risk children. Primary Stages has expanded to include a satellite program of Neighborhood Bridges, a program that develops literacy through the arts. Other outreach programs include scholarship

ensembles, programs at area schools, and “Does the Elephant have to be Gray?” a multi-disciplinary arts program for at-risk children in Berks County.

The Yocum Institute reaches an average of over 8,000 individuals yearly. In 2008-2009, the most recent year of complete data, The Institute served a total of 1,189 individuals on-site and 5,200 off-site in outreach programs. The dance program was one of the most popular, with an average throughout the year of 139 students enrolled. This number takes into account the fluctuation in participation, providing a more realistic account of enrollment. Pre-school was also very popular; there was an average of 159 children in the program over the course of the school year. Adult Art Classes had the fewest, with an average of only 32 enrolled. However, because of the limitations of the organization’s facility – there are 14 available rooms – the majority of their programming takes place off-site. In fact, in the 2008-2009 year of reporting, there were over 5,200 registered in the outreach programs provided by The Yocum Institute. Overall, including special events such as art exhibits, recitals, etc, which accounted for over 4,800 attendees, The Yocum Institute reached over 11,000 individuals by the end of the 2009 school year.

Length of participation in programs offered by The Yocum Institute varies. For example, many students begin in the dance program around the age of 3 and continue until the age of 9 or 10, when sports become more prevalent. According to Executive Director Susan Rohn, approximately 25 percent of students who begin taking private instruction in music continue for over 2 years, and adults have a tendency to stay for several years.

Participants at The Yocum Institute are quite young; 60 percent are under the age of 12 and 75 percent are under the age of 18. On-site, most are white. However, outreach programs have a very different demographic: 85 percent are Latino and another 5 percent African American, according to Rohn. While income is not tracked on-site, most of the outreach programs serve children who meet the requirements and are enrolled in the school's free and reduced lunch programs. In fact, 81 percent of students involved in Neighborhood Bridges at 13<sup>th</sup> and Union Elementary School and 100 percent in other after-school programs qualify for free lunch.

Executive Director Susan Rohn reports that many teaching artists stay for over 5 years and, in fact, 2 have been there for 30 years or more. Furthermore, there are at least 18 faculty for visual arts alone, all of whom are practiced in the field. Most have at least a bachelor's degree in the arts and many have degrees in education as well. There are also 18 faculty for the music department, all with equivalent and similar qualifications. There are 13 faculty listed on the website in the theater department, 5 of which are guest teachers. The dance department has the fewest teachers with only 5 faculty listed.

Although located in the Wyomissing borough, The Yocum Institute for Arts Education serves all of Berks County through both outreach and in-house programs. The U.S. Census Bureau reports statistics for Berks County from the year 2000. The total population in the year 2000 was 373,638. Females make up 51 percent and males 49 percent. The county's elderly citizens make up nearly 15 percent of the population, while those under the age of 18 make up only 9.6

percent. Nearly 88 percent of the population defines themselves as White, with Black & African American, Hispanic or Latino, and Asians combined accounting for less than 5 percent of the population. The remaining 7 percent defined themselves as “some other race” or “two or more races.”

Of those 16 years and older, the most popular occupations are “Management, Professional and Related Positions” (29 percent), “Sales and Office Occupations” (26 percent) and “Production, transportation, and material moving occupations” (21 percent). The median household income in 1999 dollars is \$44,714, compared to the national average of \$41,994; 22.6 percent have a household income between \$50,000-\$74,999. Additionally, almost 75 percent of the occupied housing units in Berks County are owner occupied. Conversely, only 6.3 percent of individuals fall below the poverty line, compared to the national average of 12.4 percent.

However, in the town of Reading, PA, where The Yocum Institute’s outreach is centered, the demographics are slightly different. Nearly 60 percent are white and 12 percent are African American. Almost 37 percent define themselves as Hispanic or Latino, which, according to the Census Bureau can be “of any race.” Additionally, the median household income is only \$26,698 and 26.1 percent of individuals fall below the poverty line. (See demographic comparison in *APPENDIX B*).

## SURVEY RESULTS: A LOOK AT THE NUMBERS

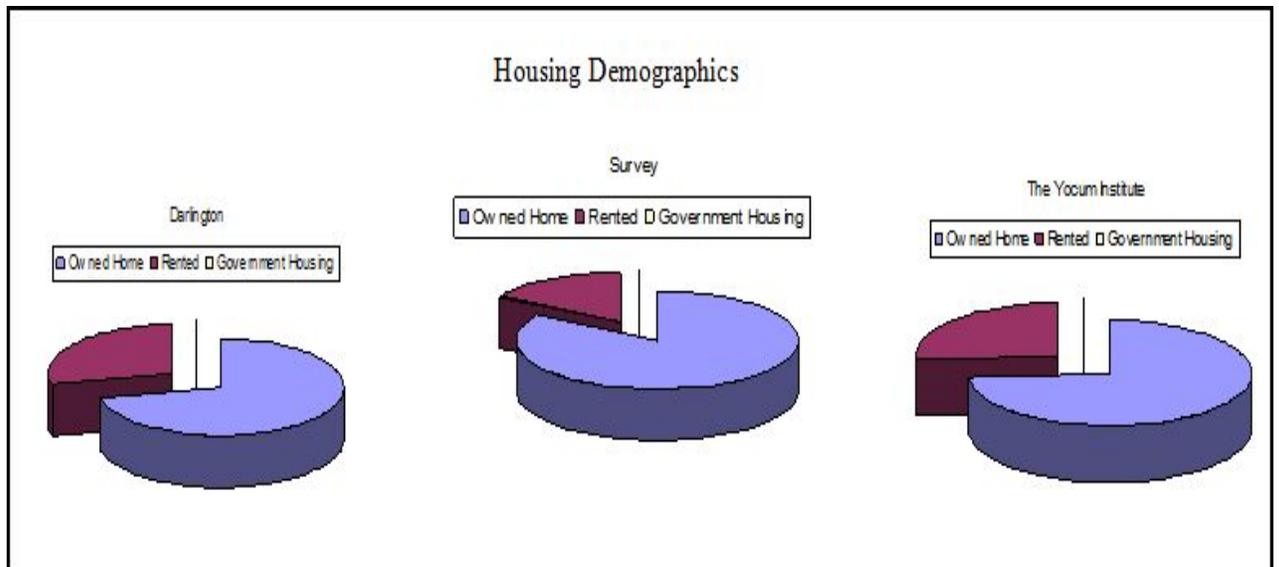
As stated above, this study seeks to provide specific data and anecdotal evidence highlighting the private benefits of the arts experience and illustrating how these benefits are “rippling outward like waves” into the community, as suggested by Alan Brown (2006) and McCarthy *et al.* (2004). Surveys were distributed, online and on paper, to the Darlington Arts Center and The Yocum Institute’s program participants. The surveys examined the respondents’ demographics, activities, participation at the organization and the affects of that participation. In-depth interviews were conducted with three individuals chosen from the respondents to provide a closer, more personal look at the findings of the surveys.

### DEMOGRAPHICS

The surveys began with simple questions regarding demographics of participants at the nonprofit community arts centers. The respondents were overwhelmingly female. And while there were a variety of ages indicated, over half of the respondents from both organizations were over the age of 51. More specifically, nearly 70 percent of all respondents were over the age of 36; 28.5 percent were under 25 and, interestingly, only 1 out of the 49 that answered the question was between the ages of 26-35. Therefore, the typical individual responding to the survey was a woman over the age of 51.

However, both Darlington Arts Center and The Yocum Institute reported very different statistics. The majority of both organizations' participants are under the age of 18. This disparity between survey respondents and program participants is partially due to the availability and willingness of participants to respond, as discussed in the limitations of the study. It is important to note, though, that this data will have implications for the remainder of the survey results. This study set out to examine the larger effect of the intrinsic impact of the arts through the participants of nonprofit community arts centers. The following results, however, will largely reflect the impact of participation on a segment of the general population of the organization, not the full demographic.

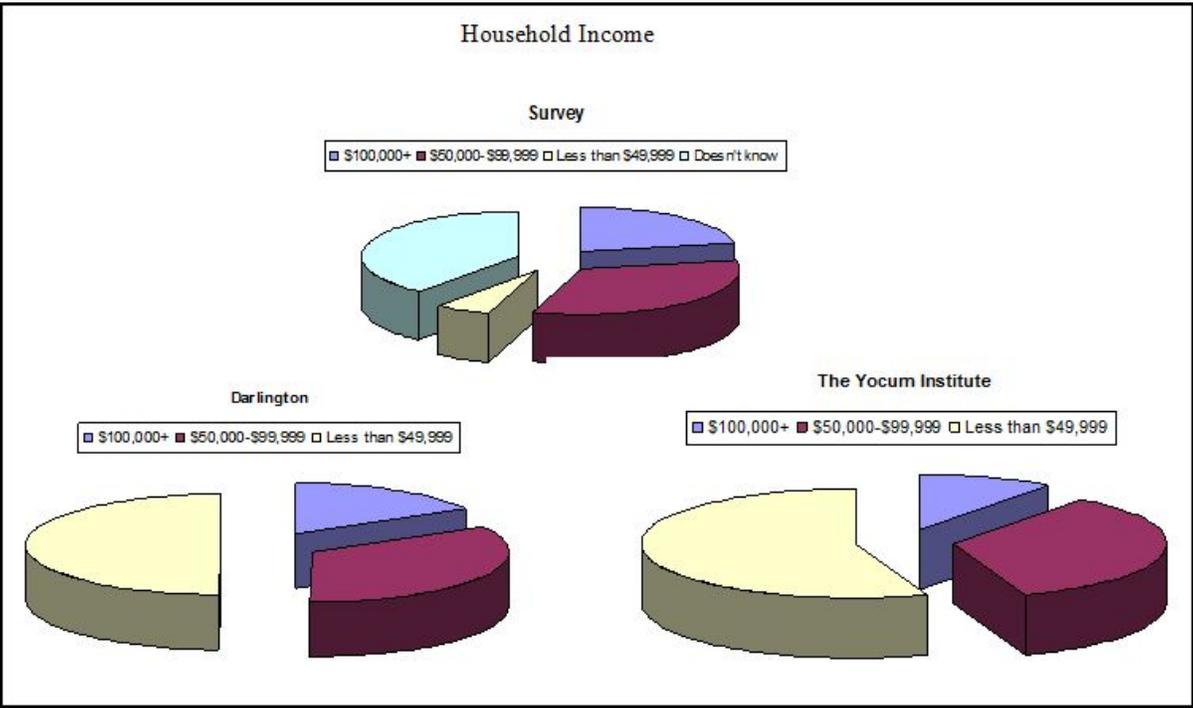
Economically, it was difficult to determine if the survey respondents were in line with the demographics reported by the U.S. Census Bureau for their communities. An overwhelming majority, or 41 out of the 51 of the respondents, live in a home that is owned, not rented. Comparatively, 93 percent of Darlington's community and 74 percent of The Yocum Institute's community live in a home that they own.



**Figure 4-Housing demographics**

According to the survey, one-third of respondents have an average household income between \$50,000 and \$99,999 and over 21 percent have an average household income of over \$100,000, which is similar to what the U.S. Census bureau reports for both communities. On the other end of the spectrum, approximately 6 percent have an income of less than \$49,999 yearly, significantly less than the general population for the communities of both organizations. In Delaware County nearly 50 percent and in Berks County over 55 percent of the population earns less than \$49,999 yearly. This might indicate that those in the community that fall below the \$49,999 mark participate less frequently in these programs. However, the data from this survey does not include participants in the organizations' outreach programs. Additionally, although it may appear that there are significantly fewer households that fall below the \$49,999 mark at these organizations, there were nearly 40 percent that indicated that they were either unaware of their annual income or they preferred not to share. As a result, this

data is not fully representative of the demographics of either organizations’ participants or the total population they serve. What can be seen, however, is that the economic demographics of these constituents, such as housing and income, are somewhat comparable to that of the communities served by these organizations (see Figure 5).



**Figure 5-Household Income Comparison**

Occupations varied greatly from respondent to respondent. When answering the question, “What is your occupation/area of study/current activities?” there were numerous areas listed. These answers ranged from “Biochemistry and environmental science” to “retired-automotive wholesales management” to “High school art teacher”. Many indicated an arts related field, such as “semi-retired artist” and “accompanist/solo pianist”. Other popular

answers were management and professional related occupations, as well as the maths and sciences. Additional fields mentioned were teachers, students and homemakers. This large variety of answers suggests that more than the “typical artist” makes use of these centers; they are attracting individuals with a wide variety of interests.

In summarizing the demographic data, it can be seen that there are both differences and similarities between those of the survey respondents, the nonprofit community arts centers and their communities. The differences were in the age of the participants, whereas similarities were found between the living arrangements of the survey respondents and the communities served by these centers.

Economically, it first appeared that the respondents making above \$50,000 yearly were reflective of the communities, but that those making under \$49,999 were not represented. However, because of the large number of individuals that were unable or unwilling to answer the question, the comparison was difficult. While the survey revealed that the respondents came from a wide variety of backgrounds and interests, the most prominent background was artistic (about 20 percent).

Most other occupations, such as business, teaching, and homemaking, were nearly equal, suggesting that these organizations serve individuals with a wide variety of backgrounds and interests.

## **PARTICIPATION**

As seen in the review of the literature regarding the social impact of the arts, time is an important factor when examining the impact of the arts, and as indicated by McCarthy *et al.* (2004), there are a wide range of intrinsic benefits

but most “require a process of sustained involvement” (70) to have any kind of impact. Therefore, following the demographic section was a series of questions exploring the respondents’ time and participation at their respective organizations.

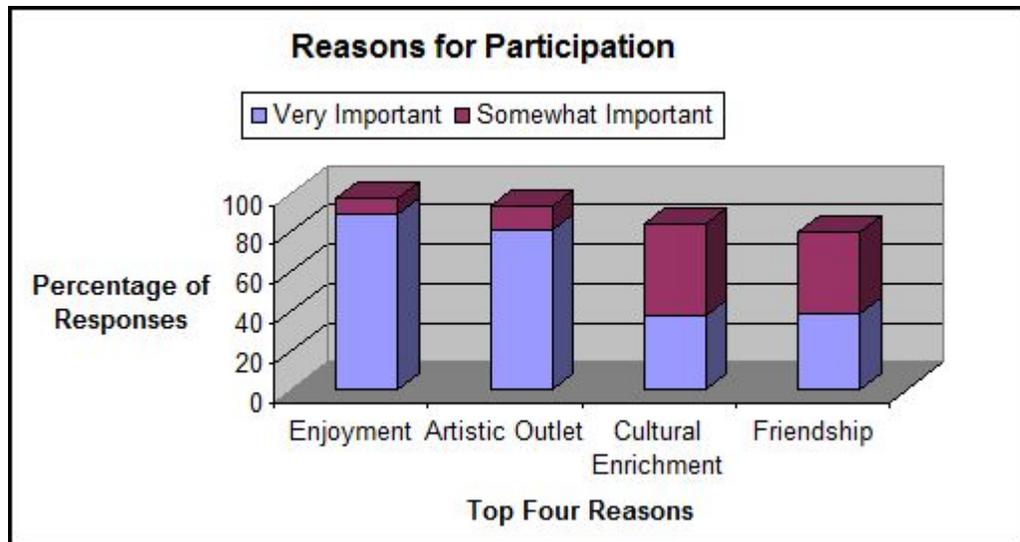
A majority, or 54 percent, of respondents began participating later in life, indicating a selection of middle age or senior citizen. However, a significant portion (34 percent) said that they began as a child under the age of 18. This data reflects only when they began participating at their respective organization, not when they began practicing their art form.

Both reports from the organizations and the results from this survey find that these individuals continue for several years. Nearly 90 percent have been taking at least one art form at their organization for 2-4 years and almost half have taken classes in some art form for over 5 years. Additionally, the study showed that of those participating in visual arts programming, almost half have been taking for over 5 years. On the other hand, the largest percentages for the other art forms – music, dance and drama – all fall within the 2-4 year period. While these numbers might be much larger if the survey examined how long these individuals had been practicing their art form, this data only reflects their time and participation at their respective organization.

What the survey did not examine was the frequency of the participation. For example, taking a dance class daily for two years could potentially result in a greater depth of participation than taking a one hour painting class each week for five years. As a result, future studies could include more questions regarding the depth of participation. On the other hand, what the survey does illustrate is the

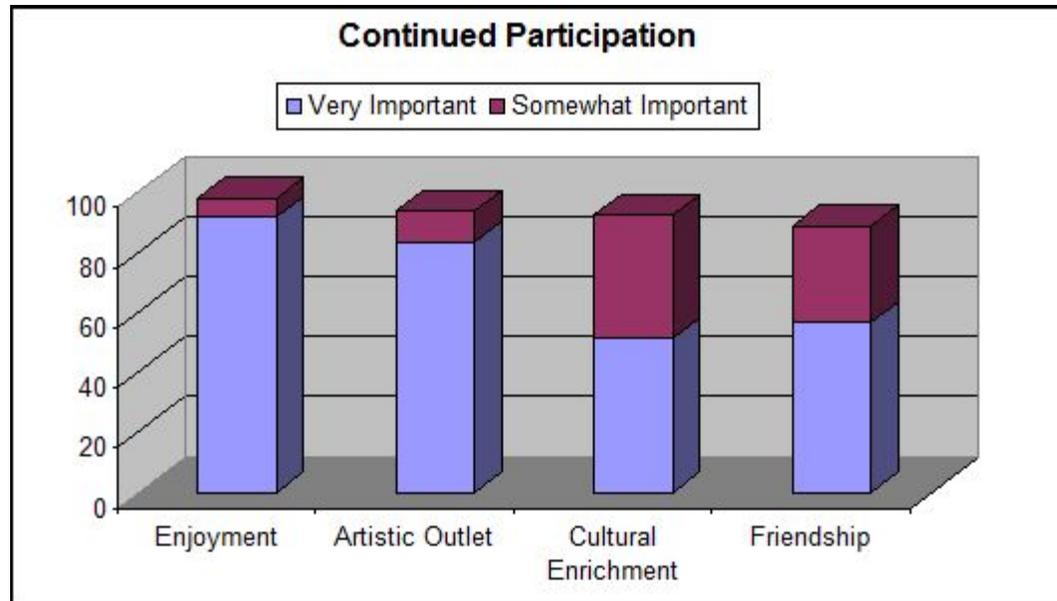
length of participation. Nearly all respondents have been involved in programming at these centers for multiple years, indicating a trend among these respondents of sustained involvement, which Brown (2006) states is necessary for the “longer-term benefits that accumulate or accrete over time” (pg 19).

Given that much of the literature on the topic indicates that the intrinsic benefits are what initially draw individuals to the arts, the survey next examined both the reasons for participation, as well as for continued involvement. Respondents could rate the importance of many intrinsic factors from “not important” to “very important.” Nearly 90 percent (41/52) said that enjoyment was a “very important” factor in their decision to participate and 81 percent said the same for artistic outlet. And, when adding those that indicated that these factors were “somewhat important” two additional motivations emerge: cultural enrichment (84 percent) and friendship (77 percent). (See Figure 6). Therefore, the data collected shows that overall, there are four important factors in an individual’s decision to participate in a nonprofit community arts center: enjoyment, artistic outlet, cultural enrichment and friendship.



**Figure 6-Reasons for Participation**

The question remains then: are these motivating factors as influential in their decision to continue as they are in the initial choice to participate? The answer is essentially, yes. Survey participants were asked, “If you have participated for more than one session, how important were the following factors in your decision to continue?” When considering those “somewhat” and “very important” factors, participants ranked them accordingly: enjoyment was rated important by 98 percent and artistic outlet, 94 percent, then cultural enrichment (92 percent) and finally friendship (80 percent).



**Figure 7-Reasons for Continued Participation**

An intriguing trend that emerges from this data is that the communal component of these arts centers is nearly as important in the respondents' choice to participate as is the artistic component. There are any number of possibilities why friendship is such an important aspect of participation and could range from wanting to take class with friends to the need to develop new friendships. What can be inferred, however, is that participants at both the Darlington Arts Center and The Yocum Institute find friendship to be an important component in their involvement with these organizations. Further research might examine more closely the ways in which the importance of friendship is manifest at nonprofit community arts centers and how this can be maximized in their programming. Furthermore, because many of the arts involve some sort of social component, a look at the relationship of friendship/community and the arts could also be explored.

Therefore, there are three noteworthy trends from the survey data regarding participation at nonprofit community arts centers. First, there was a trend among respondents of sustained involvement in programming, at least two years, and nearly half have participated for over five years. Second, there were four important criteria in the respondents' decisions to participate in programming: enjoyment, artistic outlet, cultural enrichment and friendship. These were important both in the decision to participate and in the decision to continue for more than one session. And finally, the friendship component was nearly equal with the artistic components in participants' decisions to participate, suggesting that respondents find the communal factor nearly as important as the artistic in their involvement in nonprofit community arts centers.

### **BEYOND PARTICIPATION**

To further examine the role of participation in the social impact of these community arts centers, the surveys then went into detail regarding more subtle aspects of their time and participation, such as lessons learned and affects on daily life. Therefore, when participants were asked: "Besides an art form, what positive lessons would you say that you learned during your participation?" nearly two-thirds responded that they learned self-esteem from their participation and 62 percent said the same for dedication. And interestingly, the "other" responses varied widely. Some such examples were "A Share of Information", "Better Health – Physical and Mental", and even "drawing what I see".

Although these questions were focused on lessons learned beyond that of developing a skill set in a specific art form, there were a few responses that

indicated that the ability to learn was itself, an important lesson. In response to the question above, for example, one participant indicated that they had acquired the ability to learn something new through their participation. Later in the survey, other similar responses emerged such as “celebrates life-long learning” and the idea that we are never too old to learn and advance. Therefore, it becomes clear that there are a wide variety of lessons that could be learned as a result of participation in nonprofit community arts centers’ programming and this survey began to reveal some important aspects which could be explored. Further studies might include other options to the question above that encompass the fields of artistic development, health, expression, and open-mindedness.

Next, when asked if there were any negative lessons learned during their participation, an overwhelming majority of those that responded, nearly 94 percent, indicated that they learned only positive lessons. However, this might be indicative of self-selection, suggesting that only those with a positive experience at these centers felt compelled to answer this question/survey and must be considered accordingly.

To summarize, therefore, this research began by examining individuals’ time and participation at their respective organizations. There were both trends that emerged from the survey and areas that can and should be researched further. What can be determined from the data is that these centers, Darlington Arts Center and The Yocum Institute, appear to be attracting individuals with varied backgrounds and interests, given the assortment of answers to this question. The most prominent was an artistic background; however, others such as business,

homemaking and teachers, were equally represented. Despite this variety, however, there were four extremely influential factors in these respondents' decision to participate: enjoyment, artistic outlet, cultural enrichment and friendship. Furthermore, respondents indicated that the communal aspect, i.e. friendship, was nearly equal in their choice to participate as was the artistic aspect.

What remains unclear is why friendship is so important. While the results from the survey indicated that this was a trend among participants at both Darlington Arts Center and The Yocum Institute, the study did not pursue a more in-depth examination of this trend. Additionally, it was difficult to determine what lessons are being learned through participation at these nonprofit arts centers. While self-esteem and dedication were indicated as a positive lesson learned by the participants, the survey brought up many more areas which could be explored. Therefore, a larger scale and longer term study would be needed to examine all entering students' motivating factors for participation and what lessons were learned during this time.

## ESSAY AND INTERVIEW RESULTS: TRACING THE IMPACT

Both Brown (2006) and McCarthy *et al.* (2004) agree that intrinsic benefits play a role in generating all benefits, both private and public. In fact, along the McCarthy *et al.* (2004) continuum, as the intrinsic benefits move from left to right, the spillover effect into the public realm increases. Brown (2006) adds the impact of time to the benefits continuum and suggests that some benefits accrete, or accumulate over the duration of the arts experience (19). For example, he suggests that the private benefit “personal development,” a value cluster which refers to the “the growth, maturity, health, mental acuity, and overall development of the person” is an intrinsic benefit affected by time and is an example of this spillover effect, stating that all of those benefits “have value for both the individual and society” (19).

In examining the survey responses, there was some evidence that can lend support to this theory. Respondents were asked, “From your time and participation at (the organization), what would you say is the one thing that has influenced your daily life? How?” The responses varied greatly. Some examples are as follows:

- “My view of the world is much richer as a result of my ability to view things through an artist's eye.”
- “Celebrates lifelong learning.”

- “New friends, a social outlet, also new business relationships, a sense of accomplishment.”
- And “My dedication to the goals I wish to achieve.”

Despite such variety, there were two leading types of response to this question. The first, and perhaps more expected answer, was that approximately one-third felt that their participation in a nonprofit community arts center improved their ability to produce their art and/or increased their participation in the arts (outside of classes). An example of this type of response is: “It has encouraged me to explore theatre in a more active way.” Ann Bittler from The Yocum Institute explains this further in an interview, “Both teachers and classmates have helped me strengthen my appreciation for the arts, and encouraged me to stretch myself as an artist. Seeing the work done by people around me inspired me to go much further in art and enjoy it so much more.” In other words, the community arts center provided a safe, supportive environment to grow as an artist.

The second leading response that emerged was how participation in these community arts centers positively affected the respondent’s attitude. Some examples are: “My view of the world is much richer as a result of my ability to view things through an artist's eye” and even “I have more humor” and “I have more patience.” Donna Wetterlund, from Darlington Arts Center, took this one step further in an interview, demonstrating how this transformation in attitude has affected her life.

Because this is a creative outlet, I feel like I have a better balance in my life. Working and family commitments require a different type of interaction and creates a certain amount of stress. Being able to spend a few hours a week on something creative that is just for me, is a relaxing way to work off stress and not have to worry about anything but the creative process.

So it seems that the positive influence of a creative environment is not confined to the four walls of the community arts center. It has the potential to overflow into other aspects of the participants' life, as Ms. Wetterlund illustrated. These responses lend some credibility to this theory that even the more private intrinsic benefits, such as personal development, can in some way ripple outward from the individual.

Brown (2006) next traces this spillover effect through what he terms as the "Human Interaction" value cluster, placed at the center of the diagram. Described in *Gifts of the Muse*, these benefits "in the middle range of private-to-public value have to do with the individual's capacity to perceive, feel and interpret the world" (xvi). Furthermore, Brown (2006) places much importance on these learning opportunities, in that "the communal setting and social context in which they [the arts] often occur allows for the spillover of benefits to other people and society as a whole. Thus, human interaction benefits are...key to unlocking larger social benefits" (19).

One statement in the interview with Ms. Wetterlund exemplifies this concept of the benefits in the human interaction value cluster: "My teacher is very

patient and kind. When I see her interact with other students I learn more than just the art, I learn how to approach situations with care and acceptance.” Ms. McConnell also gave a similar example. In discussing a particular theater workshop held annually at The Yocum Institute, she explained how the instructor developed a safe environment for participants to meditate on life experiences and provided the tools/methods to express their emotions from that time. Additionally, seeing and experiencing how others express themselves challenges Ms. McConnell to think about things differently. Consequently, there is some evidence in these examples that nonprofit community arts centers are not only developing the individual, but achieving this through a social setting, supporting the Brown (2006)/McCarthy *et al.* (2004) theory that as the benefits move from private benefits on the left of the continuum toward the community-based benefits on the right, there is an increased spillover effect into the public sphere. (See Figure 3 on page 15).

Finally, at the far right side of the benefits continuum, McCarthy *et al.* (2004) place the public benefits such as communal meaning and the creation of social bonds. Brown (2006) states that “value in this cluster encompasses positive outcomes at a community level that are inherent in the arts experiences (19). There are numerous ways in which the arts achieve these outcomes and several arts administrators and researchers have expressed their opinion. The arts, according to Morris (2003) are what can provide participants with “a civic and national identity and can help us determine our place and contribution as the world becomes an ever-smaller place.” Stern (2003) claims that the arts provide a

setting in which “people can discuss issues, form connections, and take action” (5). Vega quotes John Thompson, Director of Mass MoCA stating, “The arts create and bestow community identity. Identity rallies hope, productivity, pride and economic vibrancy. These are the base conditions for a healthy community” (28).

Establishing concrete evidence for these social impacts becomes increasingly difficult, as the scope of the project increases exponentially. However, authors such as Stern (2003) have made significant progress in this area. Additionally, arts administrators such as Deborah Bedwell (2000) at Baltimore Clayworks have begun establishing practices in their organizations to track the impact of programming to the fullest extent possible within their means. Additionally, there was some anecdotal evidence in this study which lends support to Brown’s (2006) claim that intrinsic benefits, over time, accrete to become social impacts.

The survey showed that nearly two-thirds of all respondents interacted outside of class with individuals from the program such as peers and teachers. And when asked how this interaction has influenced them, the responses were varied. But emerging from this was the trend that friendship and communal bonds were important. Some typical responses were “I am new to the area, so I really appreciate that people have welcomed me and offered their friendship,” We have “developed friendship[s] with other children and their parents met through classes” and “My neighbors and friends use the center as I do.” In fact, nearly 50 percent of the responses included the establishment, development or continuation

of community bonds as an important aspect of their outside interaction. And, as noted above in the Survey Results, friendship was nearly equal in importance in respondents' decisions to continue participating as were the artistic aspects such as having an artistic outlet and cultural enrichment. Hence, these answers shed some light on the way in which friendship is manifest in the programming at these centers and emphasizes that these centers are in one way or another, playing a significant role in the creation of social bonds and communal meaning.

Furthermore, Ms. Bittler commented on the arts center's role in the community, stating that she was an example of how The Yocum Institute "helped reach out to people in the community to educate, entertain and enrich their lives." Ms. Wetterlund illustrates this, stating

Since this organization attracts adult students from areas outside of my normal circle of friends and colleagues, I feel more connected to the larger community. Through conversations in class, I get information about events happening throughout a broader region.

She goes on to say that her participation has made her a "more well-rounded thinker" and enabled her to "envision home improvements or community projects."

However, this spillover effect does not stop in the local neighborhood. Both Ms. Wetterlund and Ms. McConnell have also participated in outreach as a direct result of their involvement at Darlington and The Yocum Institute, respectively. Ms. Wetterlund's class at Darlington set up a booth at a local craft show to raise money for her employer, a nonprofit home for those with mental

retardation. Ms. McConnell's employment at The Yocum Institute led to her participation in Neighborhood Bridges, the program that seeks to develop literacy through the arts. She recalls her time at the Second Street Learning Center, which is connected with Opportunity House, a shelter for the homeless and transient. The arts provided a "bridge", as McConnell stated, for all to learn from each other:

"Both staff and students at the Second Street Learning Center were African American and Latino and here [I was], a Caucasian, coming in there [with] blue eyes [and] white and gray hair. But, I feel that to have someone so different from these kids – like me – come in, can only build bridges by [allowing us to] learn from each other... We enjoyed being together."

These statements and testimonies provide some illustration, on a small scale, of how individuals can find connection and value in society through such organizations as nonprofit community arts centers.

In conclusion, utilizing the essay responses from the survey and the follow-up interview responses, this study was able to provide some anecdotal evidence to support the theory held by both Brown (2006) and McCarthy *et al.* (2004) that intrinsic benefits accrete over time to spill over into the public sphere and that the human interaction benefits are key to this phenomenon. The results from this study indicate that participants from both the Darlington Arts Center and The Yocum Institute exhibit some evidence that they are developing as

individuals and, in turn, contributing to the greater good of society and that a key factor in this development is the social aspect of programming.

Through tracing the social impact of these nonprofit community arts centers in such a way, arts administrators can see that there are ways in which their organizations can examine their social impact and report this, anecdotally and statistically, to key funders and policy makers. By growing and developing this body of research, the nonprofit arts can increase credibility and viability in the public eye.

Subsequently, there are a few areas of further research that have risen out of an examination of these essays and interviews. First and foremost, these organizations should seek concrete statistical data regarding the ways in which the effects of participating in their programming have a spillover affect into the larger community. This study was able to provide examples from select individuals, lending credibility to the spillover theory, but was based on limited data. Therefore, a valuable next step to this research would be to determine the number of participants that are socially active as a direct result of their involvement in the programming. Additional useful research could include an exploration of other ways in which participation in nonprofit arts centers has positively affected the community in which they reside and the role that the social aspect of learning impacts this spillover effect.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

While this research was conducted on a small scale, it was able to provide some qualitative evidence to support what those in the arts already know – the intrinsic benefits such as captivation and pleasure truly have great implications. Utilizing statements and stories from participants in nonprofit community arts centers, this study was able to anecdotally track the impact of the arts from private to public benefits as discussed by McCarthy *et al.* (2004) and Alan Brown (2006).

Given that much of the literature on the topic indicates that the intrinsic benefits are what initially draw individuals to the arts, the survey examined both the reasons for participation, as well as for continued involvement. From this emerged four common factors: enjoyment, artistic outlet, cultural enrichment and friendship. These were important, both in the initial choice to participate, as well as in the decision to continue. Note that the communal aspect was nearly as important as the artistic, highlighting the need for further research exploring both why this is important and how these organizations can strategically implement this into their programming.

Through essay questions as part of the survey and additional in-depth interviews, this study traced the way in which these intrinsic benefits of arts participation, such as enjoyment and artistic outlet, spill over into the public realm

of benefits. What the study found was that first, these centers provide an environment for “personal development.” Emerging from a discussion regarding the affect of participation on daily life, many respondents indicated that their attitude was positively affected. Secondly, this development occurs in a social setting, allowing for the “human interaction” value cluster in which participants learned to “perceive, feel and interpret” their world through interaction with teachers and fellow students. And finally, participation at nonprofit community arts centers, over time, establishes “communal meaning” and the “creation of social bonds.” The survey revealed that participants found development, establishment and/or continuation of community bonds through the programming at these centers. And furthermore, the interviews provided anecdotal evidence as to how their time and participation at these centers directly led to their taking social action.

The key, here, is that the communal aspect of participation at these art centers is an essential element in their larger social impact. It is precisely because the learning at these centers occurs in a social setting that they are able to have a larger social impact. Consequently, the communal component is a fundamental and vital element of these nonprofit community arts centers. It is both a way to attract and retain participants as well as an essential component of their broader social impact.

Throughout the survey, respondents repeatedly indicated that friendship and community were as important as the artistic components in their participation. This trend suggests that these centers are meeting two needs in their community,

beyond that of developing artistic disciplines. They are creating an environment which contributes to the creation of social bonds; in which people with varied interests and backgrounds can meet and learn from each other and develop a relationship. This, in turn, is contributing to the social impact of these nonprofit community arts centers as these individuals work together for the greater good, as exemplified in the interview responses.

However, this research has also created additional questions and areas of study. One area of further study would focus on the impact of children 18 years and under. The majority of this report was focused on adult participation in community arts centers. This was due to availability of respondents, self-selection by the organizations and the willingness of these participants to respond. Hence, the results of this study reflect primarily how adult programming at community arts centers can have a positive social impact. Nevertheless, children 18 and younger remain the largest demographic at these centers. Nearly 34 percent of respondents to the survey indicated that they began participation at this time. Additionally, Darlington Executive Director Angela Scully noted that the majority of students are 7-18, and The Yocum Institute's Executive Director Susan Rohn stated that 75 percent enrolled are under age 18. Therefore, further research regarding the public benefits of nonprofit community arts centers would focus on the ways in which this age group contributes to the spillover effect.

Additionally, when asking survey respondents to indicate both what they consider to be positive and negative lessons learned during their participation, the results were inconclusive. Leaning heavily toward the positive aspects, these

responses might indicate, as previously stated, some self-selection. It is very possible that those responding to the request to complete the survey were willing to do so because of their positive experiences at the organizations. Further research, then, could include a more comprehensive examination of the positive and negative lessons learned from participation at a nonprofit community arts center.

Furthermore, this research raised two additional areas of inquiry regarding the respondents' participation at these centers. While the survey inquired into the length of time the respondent had participated it did not examine the depth of time. In other words, respondents could indicate how many years they had been involved, but not how many times per week they took part. It could prove useful to the field, therefore, to determine if and how a more in-depth involvement affects the spillover into the public realm.

The survey also revealed that friendship was one of the most important factors for respondents in their decision to participate in programming at these nonprofit community arts centers, alongside the artistic components such as artistic outlet and cultural enrichment. Further study could examine the role friendship plays in participation, why it is important and how it could be utilized more affectively by these organizations in their programming.

A final area of study would be to examine the personal development of individuals with a professional psychologist. This study was conducted from the arts administrator's point of view. Information regarding the personal development of individuals was developed solely from the respondents' answers

and language; it is not a psychological evaluation. Definitive data from this perspective would be invaluable to the field and it is recommended that this area be explored by an expert in psychology.

The research from this paper, combined with that of McCarthy *et al.* (2004) and Brown (2006) can offer a valuable platform for arts administrators, funders and policy-makers to view the impact of the arts. It proposes a broad view of the work done in programs, beyond that of the initial act of creating, by providing a framework for understanding the nonprofit arts' role in the larger society. Hence, by supplying some data and anecdotes to these theories, this paper gives insight into the full range of factors involved in the social impact of the arts and contributes to the much needed and growing body of research in this area.

In conclusion, community arts centers are indeed valuable to the community and have a social impact. Building upon Brown's "Architecture of Value" (2006), this study has traced the impact of these organizations from the individual benefits such as "personal development" and "human interaction," to the more global benefits such as "communal meaning" and the "creation of social bonds." In some ways, it might be said that these arts centers are a vital, yet overlooked, resource for the development and well-being of our society.

## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A

### SAMPLE SURVEY

#### **Social Impact of Arts Organizations Survey: Yocum Institute for Arts Education**

1. What is your age?
2. In what programs have you participated at The Yocum Institute and for how long? Please select all that apply.

a. Visual Arts	1 year or less	2-4 years	5+ years	DNP
b. Theater	1 year or less	2-4 years	5+ years	DNP
c. Music	1 year or less	2-4 years	5+ years	DNP
d. Dance	1 year or less	2-4 years	5+ years	DNP
e. Adults/ Young Adults	1 year or less	2-4 years	5+ years	DNP
f. Children & Youth	1 year or less	2-4 years	5+ years	DNP
g. Preschool	1 year or less	2-4 years	5+ years	DNP
h. Workshops	1 year or less	2-4 years	5+ years	DNP
3. At what age did you begin participating at The Yocum Institute?
  - a. Preschool
  - b. Elementary
  - c. Middle School
  - d. High School
  - e. College
  - f. Post College
  - g. Middle Age
  - h. Senior Citizen
4. In what type of home do you currently reside?
  - a. Government Housing
  - b. Apartment
  - c. Townhome
  - d. House (rented)
  - e. House (owned)
  - f. Retirement Community
5. What is your family's average household income?
  - a. >\$20,000
  - b. \$21,000 - \$49,000
  - c. \$50,000 - \$99,000
  - d. <\$100,000
  - e. Don't know
  - f. Prefer not to answer
6. What is your occupation?
7. How important were the following factors in your decision to begin participating in The Yocum Institute's programs?

Not Important/Somewhat Not Important/Indifferent/Somewhat Important/Very Important

- a. Cultural Enrichment
- b. Enjoyment
- c. Friendship
- d. Exercise
- e. Artistic Outlet
- f. Extra-curricular Activity
- g. Educational Supplement
- h. Parents' Recommendation/Requirement
- i. Other\_\_\_\_\_

8. If you have participated for more than one session, how important were the following factors in your decision to continue?

Not Important/Somewhat Not Important/Indifferent/Somewhat Important/Very Important

- a. Friendship
- b. Exercise
- c. Artistic Outlet
- d. Extra-curricular Activity
- e. Educational Supplement
- f. Enjoyed the Activity
- g. Enjoyed the Program
- h. Other\_\_\_\_\_

9. If you have not continued, what was the reasoning? Please select all that apply.

- a. I am still enrolled
- b. Financial
- c. Limited time
- d. Transportation
- e. Involved in other activities
- f. Moved away
- g. Lost interest
- h. Didn't like the program
- i. Other\_\_\_\_\_

10. Please describe in your own words the way in which your participation at The Yocum Institute has influenced your current position (career, school, job, etc.).

11. Besides an arts technique, what positive lessons would you say that you learned during your participation at The Yocum Institute? Please select all that apply.

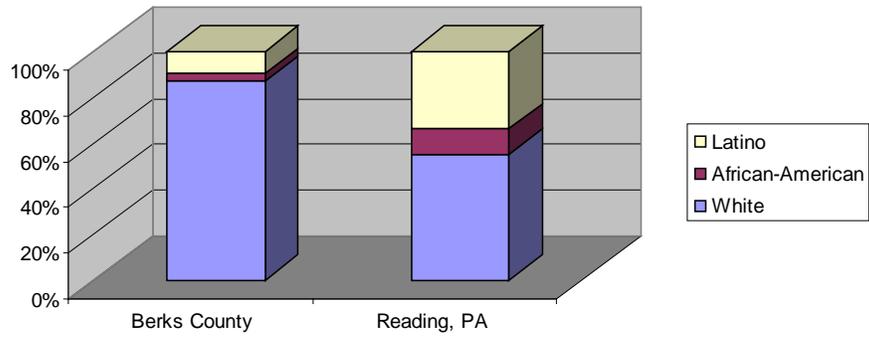
- a. Self-esteem
- b. Hard work
- c. Dedication
- d. Organization
- e. Other\_\_\_\_\_

12. Were there any negative lessons you learned during your participation at The Yocum Institute? If yes, please explain.
  - a. Yes \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. No
13. Are there individuals (peers/teachers/leaders) from The Yocum Institute with which you have interacted outside of the program?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
14. Please describe in your own words how your interaction with these individuals (peers/teachers/leaders) has influenced you.
15. What aspect of your participation at The Yocum Institute stands out to you today?
16. From your time and participation at The Yocum Institute, what would you say is the one thing that has influenced your daily life? How?
17. Would you be interested in participating in a more in-depth interview as part of my research?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
18. Would you be interested in seeing the results of my research?
  - a. Yes
    - i. Please provide an email address: \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. No
19. May I use your name/answers in documentation for my thesis?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. Other \_\_\_\_\_

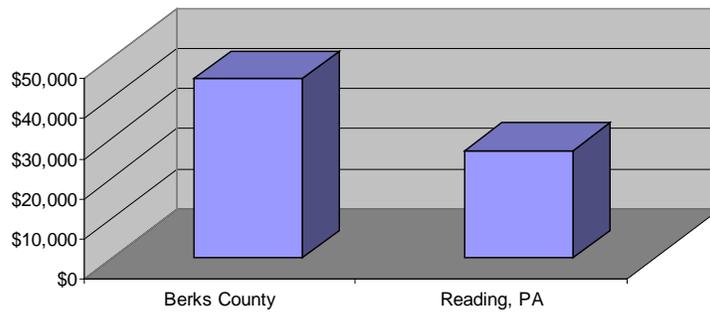
APPENDIX B

COMPARISON: BERKS CO. VS. READING CITY, PA

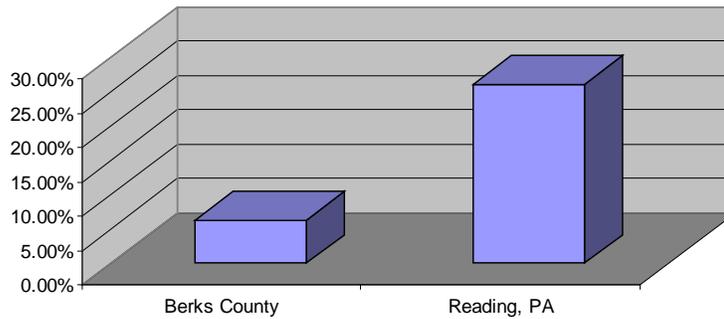
Demographics



Median Household Income



Individuals Below Poverty Line



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