

**At the Intersection — Arts Education, Cultural Policy,
Community Development and Capacity Building:**

**A Pilot Investigation of African American
Arts and Culture in Michiana**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

SNAPSHOT SUMMARY	4
Arts Education and New Directions	5
Cultural Policy & Community Development	9
Community Profile in Brief	11
Research Methodology and Methods	15
AFRICAN AMERICAN BELIEFS ABOUT ART	16
<i>African American Artists, Professionals, and Arts Administrators</i>	16
<i>Beliefs of African American Artists include</i>	16
<i>Other Beliefs in African American communities include</i>	16
FINDINGS	16
<i>General</i>	16
<i>On Education, Gender, and Generations</i>	17
<i>On Arts Participation and Events</i>	17
<i>On Capacity Building and Administration</i>	17
RECOMMENDATIONS	18
<i>For African American Arts Association (AAAA)</i>	18
<i>For Cultural Arts Policy & Community Development</i>	18
<i>For Community Foundation of St. Joseph County & Arts Everywhere</i>	19
CONCLUSION	19
Works Cited	20

AT THE INTERSECTION — ARTS EDUCATION, CULTURAL POLICY, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND CAPACITY BUILDING

Discussions about involvement in the arts have traditionally started with some premise about what are “the arts” and what is meant by involvement in the arts. In most discussions a dichotomy has been created between what was “high” or “fine” art and what was “popular,” mass or commercial art. Today, these categories are blurring, and the distinction hardly holds. This is as true of the “supply side” of artistic production as of the “demand side.” No longer can we describe and differentiate an audience for the fine arts versus consumers for the popular arts. Rather, all those involved must be understood as participants in the production of the arts’ meanings, and therefore in their public purposes. This calls for a reexamination of the traditional assumptions about how involvement in the arts serves the public purpose.

Balfe and Peters 2000

SNAPSHOT SUMMARY

African American beliefs about art follow similar patterns as mainstream American culture. The arts are for appreciation and demonstration of concepts of beauty and creativity, as well as for enhancement of quality of life, education, economic positioning, and self-realization. The purpose of this pilot study was to record and assess artistic and creative opportunities for African American artists, arts professionals, and arts administrators in Michiana, southwestern Michigan and north-central Indiana. We did not attempt to define arts and cultural activities based on our own understanding of art, rather to discover the meaning of art in the lives of participants who were interviewed and participated in focus group discussions. In *Public Involvement in the Arts*, Balfe and Peters (2000) write: “Current data do not inform us about what people have actually been doing, how they participate and define what they consider to be the arts. It is time to rethink the categories and be in a better position to then assess how people are actually involved in the arts as they define and use them.”

The generalized belief that “everything is art” and “everyone can be an artist” is a mantra in the African American community. Therefore, these beliefs do not distinguish amateur from professional art and artists or provide credibility to either categories as legitimate topics of inquiry and scholarship. African American people in

general do not believe that professional artists can earn living wages and support their own lifestyles through the arts. The production of art, with exception to entertainment, is therefore a sideline activity based exclusively on individual interests and effort. Art produced, therefore, relates to individuals and not community or shared beliefs, traditions, and values. This is a significant departure from ideals governing art and aesthetics from the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s to the Black Arts Movement of the 1960s. What remains consistent is that African Diasporic people continue to believe that mainstream arts organizations and gallery owners bar African American and other artists of color from success due to race, ethnicity, and heritage. This belief holds firm in Michiana.

Contradictory beliefs about practice and appreciation of the Arts in African American culture mimic the same discord about careers in the Arts as in mainstream communities. More than a few participants noted that local artists must leave Michiana to establish careers in the arts, to curate and host exhibits in reputable galleries, and to utilize performance spaces and other venues for ethnic specific activities. Additionally, they believe that “institutionalized racism,” mainly through policy construction rather than through individual action, is frequently the root factor that creates glass ceilings for artists of color and ethnicity locally. Moreover, the accepted, common, and most stated belief remains that local artists must live

somewhere else to achieve national and international recognition before their art is accepted in Michiana.

Historically, African American people have appreciated creativity in poetry, dance, music, theatre, and drawing, and encourage youth education and cultural preservation via the arts. However, African American people do not associate professions in graphic art and design, theatre administration and acting, fashion design, gallery ownership, filmmaking, music and concert administration, with either entrepreneurial concepts and activities or art production. In this geographic region, this ethnic group stresses professional development in areas such as business, law, education, social work, and healthcare as means to stable incomes and as evidence of social achievement. Art and the making of Art only complement and enhance the quality of life for professional individuals and cultural communities. This view of the Arts, therefore, connects to the quality of life and entertainment, but not to economic sustainability and prowess of individuals. Though careers and professions in the Arts often lead to new business ownership and financial solvency, such activities are not usually linked to business or management.

Our research shows that creativity and aesthetics do not exist separately in African Americans' understanding of art and how it works in their lives. Many African Americans, like other Americans, associate art primarily with Western European art concepts that appear in museums and galleries. At the same time, African Americans protest the absence of images and representation of ethnic people in local gallery exhibitions, performances, and planning processes. Additionally, this cultural group creates and encourages the development of amateur art and art education processes that focus on the preservation of cultural heritage in their communities. This in no way indicates that only one view of African American heritage art exists, rather that multiple expressions associated with culture heritage art is demonstrated in this community. As in mainstream American culture, beliefs about artists register both high praise and diminished capacity simultaneously ranging from genius creator to be revealed to flakey

administrator to be shunned. The artist, in American belief, is a mythical person who is highly creative but who can not hold a regular job, coordinate work teams, management projects, or co-operate with others. These notions highlight paradoxes in public use and comprehensive understanding of Art and of artists as they relate to ethnic inclusion and diversity. Consistent also with mainstream culture, African Diasporic assumptions about differences between high, popular, and folk art and between inclusion and diversity show variation depending on context, content, and genre of the creative work.

Arts Education and New Directions

In *Towards an Arts Industry*, Hillman Chartrand (2000) offers five categories in art: Amateur, Applied and Decorative, Entertainment, Fine, and Heritage. Three categories are most directly related to the discussion of African American art: Entertainment, Heritage, and Amateur, in that order. Though the remaining two categories are also present in discussions of art, they are not at the forefront of generalized discussions about art for African Americans. In brief, heritage arts are defined as “art that links us with our past reminding us of who we are and from where and when we come” (Chartrand 2000). Yet, Rapping, singing, dancing hip hop, acting, and modeling are thought to be vehicles of entertainment and access to economic independence. These art forms are not often associated with arts or skills development for youth or for emerging fine arts professionals.

Concepts related to African American art intersect and overlap several of Chartrand's categories. The photography of James Van Der Zee captures life and culture of 20th-Century African Americans in Harlem whereas the photography of Lorna Simpson juxtaposes African American life and culture through images and inquisitive statements written on photographs. Van Der Zee and Simpson captured seemingly mundane and everyday imagery of African American people to begin dialogues about the significance of traditions, beliefs, heritage, and art in cultural preservation. Creating photography nearly a century apart, each artist contributes to an ongoing dialogue

and documentation of African American people, their lives, and the art that represents them. Complexities associated with artists of color from the Harlem Renaissance to the Black Arts Movement to the contemporary Hip Hop Movement to those artists who appear in margins of African American culture are documented in visual, musical, dance, and literary chronicles. The works of Kara Walker, Michael Ray Charles, Ntozake Shange, Jean Toomer, Gordon Parks, June Jordan, Audre Lorde, Wanda Coleman, Sonya Sanchez, Etheridge Knight, Charlie Parker, Duke Ellington, Jimi Hendricks, Faith Ringgold, Marian Howard, Annie Lee, Thornton Dial, Allison Saar, Bettye Saar, John Biggers, Ron Phillips, Hussein Sadi, Quincy Jones, and a host of other artists of color remain outside high school, college, and university curricula, as well as outside of African American home and community learning environments of. Recently, Michiana youth and students have been exposed to local artists like Jake Webster, Bill Nicks, and Darryl Buchanan through special events and musical performances, but not through integrated and organized learning units in curricula. Similarly, local cultural institutions have been negligent in integrating ethnic artists into their programming and collections. These institutions have failed to connect living artists and practices with artists traditionally thought to be “Masters.” Since the beginning of this study and the formation of the African American Arts Association, several events and dialogues addressing inclusion and diversity have been held, yet these activities are exceptions rather than standard practices in arts learning and management in this region.

A common belief is that universities and colleges teach African American issues in art and aesthetic. This research however reveals that few academic courses with ethnic arts content exist at the collegiate level in Michiana. Even fewer professors include learning modules on African American arts, Black Aesthetic, or African Diasporic issues related to race and ethnicity in art. Similarly, K-12 teachers who participated in this study also acknowledged the absence of African American content and subjects. Additionally, K-12 teachers often referenced the absences of art supplies, instruments, and financial resources to support

the Arts in general classroom instruction and for special event attendance at local arts venues.

African American art and black aesthetics appear as minor learning units in most literature, music, and studio art courses. Studio and workshop art course focus on the production of art, whereas literature and ethnic studies courses focus on the synthesis and integration of practice, aesthetics, history, and content of art and artists as these related to culture and society. While the former is focused on production and the latter is on critical analysis, integrated approaches related to creation and study of African American arts, artists, and arts activities have not been developed to introduce and to sensitize scholars, researchers, artists, and professionals with understanding of cultural heritage art that are impacted by race, ethnicity, and social struggles. American students of all ethnicities and backgrounds have not demonstrated capacity to synthesize the study of culture, history, public policy, and creativity as integrated components of cultural heritage including mainstream American heritage.

Compared to African American courses offered in Art and Black Studies Programs and Departments in the 1970s, the number of ethnic-centered arts studies courses offered today is significantly lower. Departments in Art History, Art Education, Creative Writing, Dance, Music, Studio Arts, and Theatre or in African American, American, Multicultural, and Ethnic Studies do not sufficiently introduce students to issues in the arts related to ethnicity, race, public policy, and cultural preservation. Few arts faculty of color work at local universities and colleges, even fewer work at local high schools. Most art courses in high schools, colleges, and universities in Michiana appear to concentrate on arts production and the making of art. Some of these courses include background data on the artists and his or her intent. Yet, students do not fully engage in comprehensive dialogues that deconstruct and reconstruct art and its relevance in establishing and maintaining culture through both formal and informal policy processes that shape and govern communities. Art continues to remain at the forefront of social change movements in African American culture, but

often goes unacknowledged for the roles it plays in shaping culture and innovators' viewpoints.

University officials and nonprofit administrators claimed an inability to recruit and hire professors of color, in part, because Michiana is not culturally diverse and, in part, because people of color do not respond to position postings in discipline journals and on websites. Non-black participants also cited the disinclination of arts faculty of color to teach in small towns and predominantly white academic environments. Similar comments were offered by non-black representatives from arts organizations about recruitment and employment of arts professionals and artists of color. Due to such barriers, few artists, professors, and administrators of color are hired for teaching and program administration in local arts and cultural institutions.

This research revealed that multiple outreach and recruiting strategies are needed to target and re-enforce recruitment efforts for artists, professors, and professionals of color including the dominant method of "word of mouth" or networking. Printed advertisements and website postings lay the foundation for recruitment but do not inform individuals about the institution or about with whom they may be working. In addition to face to face contact with people of color, search committees must develop working relationships with artists, professionals, and professors through local, regional, national, and international conference and workshop attendance.

Mainstream cultural, arts, and education institutions have not been proactive in their recruitment and employment efforts related to artists and arts professionals of color. Though mainstream arts networks intend to be inclusive, their policies often are perceived to be "unwelcoming" and exclusive to people of color. Similarly, African American artists, professionals, and arts professors have not been proactive and consistent in formalizing networks with other African Americans and ethnic cultures. Additionally, this group often remains outside established pre-dominantly white social and employment networks.

On the other hand, Michiana arts professionals and artists of color have not been pioneers or trailblazers when faced with adversity related to race and cultural heritage. No evidence was found as proof of regional challenges to either real or perceived policies that bar artists and administrators of color from careers at arts organizations. In sum, little innovation or efforts in recruiting arts faculty, professionals or students of color at Michiana universities and arts organizations exist. Additionally, Michiana artists do not appear to organize for collective advancement. Moreover, policies have not been constructed to assure artists, arts faculty, and arts professionals of color that longstanding and local institutions value their participation in the design and implementation of arts programs and services.

The issue of employment and recruitment of black professors and artists to teach is separate from the creation and development of ethnic content courses. To be considered an ethnic studies course for these purposes, the course must have 80 percent or more ethnic content. However, not all courses with ethnic content need to be taught by black professors or artists. Some non-black arts faculty and educators explained that their courses contain ethnic specific content, but students of color and ethnicity still do not enroll. Similar comments related to low attendance were reported by administrators representing local arts and cultural organizations about projects and exhibitions targeting African Americans and other ethnic people. A host of reasons could exist to explain low enrollment and attendance. These reasons could include: limited number of staff and faculty of color; faculty and departmental past reputations; and insufficient advertising, promotion, and marketing.

The recognition that "word of mouth" promotion and networking remain significant communication methods among African American artists and people is essential, but does not substitute the need for employment infrastructures that welcome applicants of color. Universities, colleges, school corporations, and arts staffs must have histories of prior employment of faculty and managers of color to authenticate, validate, and accredit the efforts of

those departments and organizations as genuine. Organizations that have no backgrounds or dappled histories of ethnic employment will remain suspect with students, faculty, and other participants of color. If an organization does not have past histories outlining its efforts toward diversity and inclusion, then the next best option is to show potential employees the current financial investments and other resources that have been made to change its organizational culture and image.

What is more disturbing in education is that few professors of color insist on offering courses with 80 percent or more ethnic studies content for fear of having their scholarship discounted by peers and colleagues in tenure processes. Some professors even elect not to teach ethnic studies courses for similar reasons. More importantly, when art professors are employed, the content in their courses often does not reflect local arts. In general, arts professors have not incorporated the development of “lived experiences” or experiential learning opportunities where students interact with living artists and arts professionals via classroom visits or field trips to museums, gallery openings, theatre productions, poetry readings, arts festivals, and dance performances that supplement classroom instruction. Lived experiences through the Arts can bring students, educators, administrators, and living artists into dialogue and contact that enriches the intellectual experiences of adults and students, as well as advances future sustainability of the Arts. In sum, arts administrators, arts professors, and K-12 teachers have not fully utilized available arts resources at local arts organizations. This topic however remains a subject for future research with arts education managers, arts professors, and K-12 teachers.

Once thought to enhance the quality of life and lived experiences, the Arts, for some African Americans, now appear to be thought of as frivolous activities, unless those activities lead to careers in entertainment. Traditional notions associated with cultural preservation via ethnic arts do not appear to be transmitted from older generations to younger generations successfully.

Sharp differences in definitions exist in what parents feel is music and younger generations identify as music, especially related to Rap. Also sharp differences related to fine and amateur theatre exist, particularly with the “Gospel Plays” such as Tyler Perry’s Madea Series. As noted by several presenting art organizations, the Gospel Plays are the only theatre formats that gather large African American audiences. Yet, most college and university faculty of color do not value “Gospel Plays” as representative forms of either fine or amateur art. Some academics even question the validity of these plays as meaningful entertainment due to the frequent use of stereotyped characterizations and exaggerated religious content. These plays fall under Chartrand’s category of heritage arts based on ethnic content, characterization and targeted African American communities. Though representative of comedic and religious art, these plays entertain and provide first time theatrical exposure and experiences for some African American participants. Gospel Plays will remain controversial due to their targeted appeal to specific factions within African American communities. Currently, Gospel Plays are the only contemporary art form embraced widely by both older and younger generations of African Americans in Michiana.

Limited notions of the Arts and Arts Education continue to permeate throughout Michiana communities. Many students and participants of color do not feel they need to attend arts events and activities to become knowledgeable about their own culture. Some students and adults in Michiana believe that heritage and culture is achieved through lived experiences only and not through academic enlightenment or arts activities. Student and adult learners are also reluctant to enroll in African Diaspora Studies courses because many do not fulfill degree requirements for business, science, pre-medical, and pre-law studies and therefore are deemed “unnecessary.”

As an academic advisor, I enrolled hesitant students in African American poetry, literature, and music courses that fulfilled department and university degree requirements. Literature and jazz classes were not offered consistently in art studies. Black Studies courses in the Arts often

go absent for two or more years when professors leave universities or go on sabbaticals. Unfortunately, student advisors often do not request those or similar courses as replacement courses. When offered, these courses are limited in size and numbers and available seating diminishes fast. In five years of advising in Michiana, I did not see one ethnic-centered workshop or studio in the arts. Also absent were seminars on major black writers like Charles Chesnutt, Claude McKay, James Baldwin, Ralph Ellison, Richard Wright, Zora Neale Hurston, Alice Walker, Margaret Walker, and Toni Morrison. If African American theatre and art courses were available, they were not cross-listed and therefore did not technically meet Africana Studies degree requirements.

Administrators and faculty make decisions about what courses count toward degrees and what courses need to be offered. In the same way, arts organizations and cultural institutions determine where to allot their resources to support ethnic programs. In Michiana, neither university nor cultural administrators have contributed or allotted enough resources to make significant advances in their respective campuses and organizations related to arts development for people of color.

Arts Education must continue to expand beyond K-12 curricula and the making of art to include critical thought about quality of life, public policy, creativity, and diversity in application and in arts development. Cultural policy, community, and arts development are inexplicably linked to arts education and public policy. The development of academic courses, seminars, and discussions via universities, cultural associations, arts organizations, and arts affinity groups is essential for creating positive growth and appreciation for the Arts. Topics related to definitions of art, artists, public purpose, professional development, and culture increase in importance when building sustainable arts infrastructures.

Cultural Policy & Community Development

Rosenstein (2006) reports: “A sense of community is not something many of us can take for granted anymore. Yet across the United States, nonprofit cultural heritage organizations are helping people to remember and celebrate their shared experiences, traditions, identities, struggles, and aspirations.” Cultural heritage institutions and academic departments have traditionally been the keepers of ethnic culture via art exhibitions, performances, festivals, and musical gatherings while concurrently conducting other social welfare and justice activities. The understanding of Art and its role in social welfare and justice linked to ethnic culture is inadequate among both mainstream and African American populations. Few are aware of social commentary in folk ballads of Sweet Honey in the Rock, Muddy Waters, Bessie Smith, and the Boys’ Choir of Harlem; in concerts of vocalists like Paul Robeson, Marian Anderson, Leontyne Price and Jessye Norman; in poetry of Sterling Brown, Gwendolyn Brooks, Michael Harper, Jay Wright, and Robert Hayden; in jazz of vocalists like Nina Simone, Ella Fitzgerald, Lena Horne; in dance performances of Josephine Baker, Bill Robinson, Kathleen Dunham, Alvin Ailey and Judith Jamison; in the comedic performances of Moms Mabley, Nipsey Russell, and Richard Pryor; or in the visual art of Augusta Savage, Romare Bearden and Chakaia Booker.

For the most part, African American arts participants do not connect arts activities to careers in art or to organized studies. Art and creativity are often thought to be gifts of inspiration that do not require educational and financial investments. Education remains of high value to African American people for its potential financial return to the individual and eventually to ethnic communities. In contrast, fine arts studies are viewed as having little to no potential return value to ethnic communities but perhaps to individuals. Youth and adults of color who identify future job prospects as arts administrators and artists, like their mainstream counterparts, do not request or enroll in arts or studio studies courses and often reject advisor recommendations for formal study in the Arts.

One vivid example comes to mind of a practicing poet who failed to enroll in African American literature and topical courses like Introduction Jazz and Intermediate Jazz because he did not see how these related to his intent to become a spoken word performer. A second example is of a senior arts administrator's refusal to supplement her education with accounting and human resource management training as these did not apply to her view of event planning. Reluctance to enroll for improvement and development of skills in arts and management courses is linked to notions that everyone has innate ability to create and/or to manage art.

In Michiana's African American communities, "Art" remains outside the collective understanding of how ethnicity, race, diversity, and social justice contribute to quality of life and heritage. Many arts participants of color host annual arts events and volunteer in church choirs, fashion shows, theatrical performances, spoken word readings, and other arts activities as community and student leaders. These same participants also denounce the study of the Arts as valid career choices. Few participants of color connected African American arts activities like singing in a choir, conducting the church choir and/or band, coordination of a church recital, organizing a spoken word event, etc., to categories in art, rather such activities were said to be contributions to a religious or social function. Few adults or students linked their own personal activities as event managers, graphic artists, musicians and spoken word poets with professional development and training or with black aesthetics and improvisational performance. Additionally, arts activities are not often linked to arts management, arts production, or arts participation. Most African American youth and adults do not acknowledge that cultural arts development requires the creation of complex infrastructures involving issues and concerns related to cultural beliefs, traditions, education, administration, and public purpose.

Parents and community leaders encourage African American youth to choose professions in business, law, medicine, religion, and social welfare to become valuable members in African

Diasporan communities. Like their adult and American counterparts, youth of color do not associate careers in the arts with well-paying professions in research, museums, galleries, community centers, social centers, and medical environments that utilize visual, performance and musical arts as therapy for patients. Most people continue to think of living artists as freelancers without direction and without capacity to make living wages. These narrow views of ethnic art, aesthetics, and art professions proliferate both inside and outside academic communities because educational infrastructures have not been developed to sustain and support arts education and participation at all societal levels. Some African American artists suggest that this latter view is connected to a limited willingness of African American consumers to pay market rates for arts services and products. Until serious dialogues and educational support systems are constructed in academic institutions and cultural organizations, contradictory messages about African American art and its role in cultural preservation will continue to promulgate.

African American adults and youth are exposed to arts and cultural activities through their religious institutions, affinity and membership groups like the African American Arts Association, Urban Arts Council, The Links, the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, and local chapters of Indiana Black Expo. Examples of local performances included a presentation of James Brown, Boy's Choir of Harlem and Jessye Norman. Several participants provided narratives about the refusal of their offspring to attend cultural events. These descriptions included narratives of tug of wars and pleas against attendance that resulted in positive outcomes and gratitude of their children after parental persistence.

Most African American parents believed that they learned culture mainly from their own parents. In most narratives, mothers were the parents who encouraged their children to attend cultural events and musical training. Taking piano lessons was the most acceptable form of artistic skills development. Most fathers were said to willingly pay for lessons, but did not unwillingly participate in most arts activities.

Additionally, few African American men identify themselves as artists even when they write poetry, perform break or hip hop dancing, or sing in choirs. Participation in the Arts, especially for men of color, carries gender stereotypes and depends greatly on the art activity, e.g. music versus dance, spoken word performances versus poetry readings, etc., whereas the former examples are thought to be more masculine, the latter is often more associated with femininity. Moreover, attendance at formal arts events such as concerts and gallery openings are frequently associated with “training for how to act in societal gatherings” or etiquette development for youth. Few participants were able to name a regional or local artist of color or ethnicity beyond Jake Webster, visual artists and poet, and Bill Nicks, drummer and former Motown musician—both are seasoned artists.

Older participants were introduced to the arts through cultural institutions, their parents, and other relatives in their youth. Younger participants receive most of their exposure through broadcast media and some instruction from parents and other relatives. Yet the research reveals that a significant number of participants believe that youth are not sufficiently exposed to arts and culture in either their homes or academic environments. They continue to believe that access and exposure to the Arts have broad limitations. Such limitations are amplified in American communities where small offerings of ethnic and cultural heritage arts activities exist. National and international cultural organizations continue to address issues of access, exposure, and inclusion of African American and other ethnic cultures in exhibitions and performances with limited success. Nevertheless, African Americans in Michiana continue to feel unwelcome, even when invited to cultural events and activities. They feel as if arts institutions provide activities but do not fully integrate ethnicity and diversity in their programming, staff, and policies.

Philosophical conflicts and varied definitions about ethnic arts and race relations exist in Michiana. Most conflicts are avoided through compromises designed not to engage root causes associated with race, cultural heritage,

and diversity. Most cultural groups and arts administrators utilize an “avoidance” or “tolerance” strategy in race relations. These strategies are then interpreted by African Americans as institutionalized policies designed to prevent full participation of artists and others of color. Through this project’s focus groups and individual interviews, critical inquiry has been initiated towards different cultural policy construction and infrastructural development. Some changes have occurred in local arts activities as more programming and participants of color have increased. However, many of these inclusions appear to be cosmetic efforts that treat symptoms without evidence that sustainable resolutions are being developed concurrently to address root concerns of artists and arts administrators of color.

Even in patriotic times such as these where singing, dancing, acting, and fashion events are abundant in raising consciousness about Americanism, most Americans do not connect these activities or events to professions in the arts, arts management or arts production. Significant planning and preparation gaps related to non-mainstream arts activities exist in Michiana. Complexities associated with race, diversity, age, and gender inclusion have not been fully comprehended or analyzed by policy administrators in the arts when developing cultural components to support artists, arts institutions, and arts administrators in Michiana.

Community Profile in Brief

Michiana consists of a series of neighboring cities and towns that share regional similarities in income levels, graduation rates, histories of factory employment, and extended families. Yet communities in Elkhart, Granger, Mishawaka, and South Bend, Indiana, and in Niles, Michigan, also have distinct features that keep each community unique. These cities are seated in St. Joseph and Elkhart counties in Indiana and in Berrien County in Michigan. This geographic area was settled by immigrants of German, Polish, Irish, Hungarian, English, Dutch, Swiss, and Italian descent. The Native American and Asian populations in this region are small. The Latino population is the fastest-

growing, and the African American population remains constant at about 10 percent of the total population. Historically, African Americans migrated to Michiana for factory employment at Studebakers, AM General, Bendix and Clark Equipment Company.

Many focus-group participants shared beliefs about each city and county functioning independently of one another. However, regional businesses frequently operate across city and county lines. Yet, little cooperation exists between arts groups and organizations across city boundaries and county lines. For example, two chapters of the Indiana Black Expo exist in South Bend and Elkhart, but no evidence was found to show cross promotions or collaborative planning for arts activities by either group.

Information found on City-Data.com reveals that more people move freely across city and county lines than perceived by regional inhabitants. Daytime populations, for example, increase significantly due to commuting to and from each of Michiana's major cities. Additionally, area residents seem to relocate within the three counties without restraint. In essence, these geographic areas in practice operate as one region. However, focus group participants' perceptions about separate city and county arts activities in Michiana are accurate.

Racial composition for each county varies but remains predominantly white. Elkhart County, Ind., is 83 percent white and 5 percent black. St. Joseph County, Ind., is 81 percent white and 12 percent black. Berrien County, Mich., is 78 percent white and 16 percent black. Focus-group participants indicated that the two racial groups have limited interactions and race relations are strained. Focus group discussions also revealed that African Americans in Michiana attend events throughout the three counties, but African Americans from other cities and counties are not involved in localized planning and execution of arts activities.

African American-owned businesses are few and also appear to be localized per county. As most commerce opportunities originate from mainstream enterprise, few African American

owned businesses self-identify as ethnic companies. Focus-group participants also stated that few opportunities exist for black enterprise to flourish in this region, especially related to cultural specific arts. Some focus-group participants indicated that African-American-owned businesses would be willing to sponsor and support arts activities if asked. However, one paradox of black enterprise in regionalized communities and in philanthropy is that because so few ethnically owned businesses exist in small geographic regions, these businesses can easily be overburdened with random and frequent requests from emerging arts and cultural organizations. In such instances, black philanthropy sometimes experiences a "plateau effect" where giving initially increases to high levels then decreases to a smaller and consistent gift level. For future research purposes, more information about ethnic owned businesses is needed for the region. Additionally, more information is needed to describe the economic relationship between African American business owners and regional Arts.

Demographic data on City-Data.com also shows that this region is economically diverse. The highest median household income in Granger is \$82,000, the next closest median household income in Elkhart is \$45,000, then in Mishawaka is \$35,000, and in South Bend, IN and Niles, MI is \$32,000. The median house value in Granger is \$192,000, in Mishawaka is \$96,000, in Elkhart is \$91,000, in South Bend is \$82,000 and in Niles, MI is \$94,000. As a portion of property taxes help to fund school corporations, higher income levels and property values provide school corporations with more financial resources. Therefore, school corporations seated in areas with higher property values appear to have more funds available to support the Arts and arts education.

Michiana has 13 public high schools, six private high schools, 11 colleges and universities, and six seminaries and trade schools. The University of Notre Dame and Indiana University South Bend are the largest universities in the region. Public-school systems in Michiana continue to be plagued with modest graduation and high attrition rates. Elkhart School Corporation has a 78 percent graduation rate, South Bend

Community School Corporation has 69 percent, Mishawaka High School Corporation has 55 percent, Penn Harris Madison (PHM) has 83 percent as reported by the Indiana Department of Education in 2006. Limited information was available about arts education in most school systems, but focus-group participants stated that the South Bend Community School Corporation consistently has limited resources to support the Arts. Direct comparison can not be made between school corporations and their arts curricula because each corporation operates and plans curricula differently. The South Bend school corporation, however, is the only one of these corporations with a performing arts magnet high school. A cross-comparison review of arts education curricula and arts activities of Michiana's school corporations remains for future investigation and research.

Throughout the 1950s to the 1970s, jazz, blues and other musical performances were abundant in Michiana. Some participants reported that Downtown South Bend was a jazz and blues center that drew international and nationally renowned virtuosos who were showcased in downtown night clubs. Others reported that jazz and blues musicians scheduled planned and unplanned layovers in South Bend while en route to Chicago, Detroit, and Indianapolis, cities with more vibrant music scenes. The first collegiate jazz festival in America was established in 1958 in South Bend at the University of Notre Dame, according to one participant. As an aside, South Bend is mentioned as a jazz location in the 1956 classic film *High Society* starring Bing Crosby, Grace Kelly, Frank Sinatra, and Louis Armstrong.

Currently, South Bend appears to be the arts and cultural hub in Michiana for African Americans and others. This however does not imply that the Arts are abundant in this or any other Michiana city. Historically, at least one black theatrical group, the Black Arts Players, was established locally. The first African American drama produced and performed in Michiana was Nigerian playwright Wole Soyinka's satirical farce, *The Trials of Jero*, at Saint Mary's College in 1969. In the 1970s, Don L. Lee, now Haki Madhubuti, appeared at the Afro American Bookstore and at the Rap Shack, a

South Bend gathering place for African Americans. Historically, a significant number of black arts activities were developed in the local community with the support of Notre Dame black faculty and students. The relationship between local African American citizenry and African American Notre Dame faculty and students was more pronounced in the 1960s through the 1970s. Currently, collaborative arts projects with both university and community participants are rare in Michiana. Art produced on college and university campuses generally are neither marketed to greater Michiana nor to other regional campuses. The exceptions are campus presenting organizations, like the DeBartolo Performing Arts Center, that create marketing campaigns to advertise broadly to the South Bend Community.

Marketing and outreach that targets the African American community are limited in Michiana. The area's best known black newspaper, *The Reformer*, was published last in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Focus-group participants also indicated that local radio and television media promotion and coverage of African American arts and culture activities was scarce. A frequent example cited by focus group participants described their dismay with the sudden format change of a local radio station from Rhythm and Blues (R&B) and Soul programming to "smooth" jazz program in 2004. The radio station was a primary information resource for the black community. Within two years, the station underwent a subsequent format change to contemporary and "old school" R&B. Focus group participants also discussed the difficulty of identifying consistent marketing outlets for delivering information to Michiana's African American communities. The relationship between mass media, the African American communities, and the Arts remains an area for additional research.

The South Bend Heritage Foundation, before and since the now defunct Michiana Arts and Science Council of the late 1990s, has been the primary supporter of artistic activities related to ethnic culture in South Bend. Several other groups have also made attempts to sustain African American arts and cultural activities. These include the African American Arts

Association, Urban Arts Council, Inner Vision, Black Arts Players, Aoleian Society, Souls of Soul, local religious institutions, community centers, and individuals, but none of these appear to have had the management capacity or financial resources to develop long-term infrastructures. Previous attempts to establish African American arts and cultural institutions failed because resources to train and develop staff and organizational infrastructures were not longstanding and were insufficient and/or because the “founders” refocused their energies to other activities and endeavors.

In *Pioneers Together: Notre Dame and the Local Economy 2002—Economic Impact Report*, the arts and culture receives less than four of 75 pages in the report. The section begins with a discussion of Notre Dame Libraries followed by discussions of the DeBartolo Performing Arts Center’s construction, the Summer Shakespeare Festival, and the Snite Museum’s holdings. It also outlines previous exhibitions celebrating Black History Month, Day of the Dead, Native American Arts, and a Free Film Series on Notre Dame’s campus. Nearly five years later in *City Plan: Our bridge to the future*, the comprehensive strategic planning document for the City of South Bend, the arts and culture received less than 10 of 170 pages in that document. Each publication asserts that the arts are beneficial to individual advancement, community development, and public growth. The latter report reads: “For example, the personal benefit of increased understanding of other viewpoints translates into the public benefit of increased tolerance, an important community value in our pluralistic democracy. The public can take full advantage of this beneficial impact by integrating arts and culture into the educational system, community celebrations, neighborhood life, urban design, commerce and tourism, and public sector institutions. The roles art and culture play in the economic and social life of our city needs to be developed.”

City Plan heralds fine arts venues like the Morris Performing Arts Center, the College Football Hall of Fame, the Northern Indiana Center for History, the South Bend Civic Theatre, and the Studebaker National Museum. It also showcases

community events like Art Beat, the Leeper Park Art Fair, and the East Race concert series in Downtown South Bend. The City of South Bend has provided grant support to renovate and construct several major arts facilities’ that include \$250,000 for South Bend Civic Theater’s \$4 million renovation of the former Scottish Rite building; \$1 million to the future Ray and Joan Kroc Corps Community Center of the St. Joseph County Salvation Army that will feature fine and performing arts; and \$15.7 of \$24.3 million renovation costs for the Morris Performing Arts Center and the Palais Royale Ballroom. Even with such notable support in building construction, the City of South Bend, like other regional governments and nonprofit agencies, has neither provided adequate funding nor expertise to train and develop art staffs through educational, professional, research, and leadership opportunities need to advance Michiana’s arts and cultural activities, especially as these relate to African American artists, educators, and organizations.

Cities like Mishawaka and Elkhart have also invested in planning for additional resources toward arts development. Most Michiana cities concentrate on increasing festivals and outdoor arts events as colleges and universities increase faculty. Bethel College its Mishawaka has increased in arts faculty in recent years; Indiana University South Bend has an active search for a Dean of the Raclin School of Arts; the Notre Dame Theatre Department also has an active search for a professor with a specialty in African Diasporic drama; and City of Elkhart continues to explore options to increase its arts and cultural representation in its downtown areas. The Community Foundation of St. Joseph County, as the Indiana Arts Commission Regional Arts Partner, continues to develop its informational website, an arts magazine, and a granting fund as a collective known as Arts Everywhere for regional arts and cultural organizations.

Changes in the Arts have been occurring in the past five years and will continue to increase arts awareness and participation in this region. Local plans, such as the above listed, eloquently adopt language of national arts reports in their calls for well-designed school-based arts curricula and

culturally diverse community-based arts programming. However, little evidence exists to demonstrate actual practice or substantial financial resources being invested in community change related to either mainstream or cultural heritage arts. More importantly, little evidence exists to show that either local governments or their designated cultural representatives, while developing their own cities' arts infrastructures, are planning for regional arts development throughout this three-county area.

The claims of African American artists and others that black inclusion in planning processes and in representational images appear to be accurate. In our efforts to uncover base levels of inclusion and representation, the research team traveled throughout the City of South Bend and other contiguous areas seeking public art. We discovered three forms of public art that were fire hydrant painting, mural painting, and public sculpture art. Throughout the region, we found little representation of ethnic populations in local public art. The Fire Hydrant Painting Project, created in 1976 to celebrate the Bicentennial of the American Revolution and revived in 1987 to celebrate the Bicentennial of the Constitution, supplies paint kits to neighborhood organizers for fire hydrants. Each neighborhood is responsible for organizing volunteers to paint fire hydrants. Forty paint kits exist for historical American characters of which two are African American: George Washington Carver and Crispus Attucks. The research team found only three hydrants that currently depict African Americans in the City. Some participants who interviewed remembered seeing fire hydrant with black characters as younger adults.

Although other fire hydrant designs are not permitted under this program, we found several hydrants depicting leprechauns, a Ronald McDonald, a firehouse dalmatian, a spacecraft, and other creative concepts. All fire hydrant kits were of males and no other ethnic groups were identified. South Bend is the only city in Michiana with evidence of having maintained a public arts program with fire hydrant, mural, or sculpture purchasing art program. Few murals were found throughout the region and even fewer depicted and/or represented people of

color. Murals painted on walls of some private businesses have recently been painted over. Of the eight murals found, three show images that could be ethnically identified as African American. One mural near Downtown Elkhart features Dr. Martin Luther King, but no evidence of an organized public art program was found. Jake Webster's sculpture For Whom The Bell Tolls appears in White River Park in Indianapolis, Indiana, but nothing appears in Michiana where he has resided for most of his adult life. Unfortunately, the claims of African American artists and art appreciators of color about the absence of representational images in Michiana are correct.

Research Methodology and Methods

Race-Based Assessment Methodology (RBAM) focuses on race and ethnicity as the key factor for understanding the research topic. It is a form of ethnographic research methodology that observes and analyzes cultural groups and phenomena through focus group discussions, personal interviews, participant observation, literature review, and photo documentation. RBAM also utilizes organizational theory and behavior research in attempts to understand organizational operations and policy development. The primary researchers have backgrounds in cultural policy development that combines arts policy, administration, public policy, and arts education.

This project adapted research objectives developed by the Ohio Arts Council for its SOAR model that are as follows:

1. To identify and describe components of the arts environment in Michiana, southwestern Michigan and north central Indiana
2. To analyze the relationships of artists and arts groups within that environment
3. To describe and examine resources that influence African American arts, artists, and arts activities in Michiana
4. To examine public perception of African American arts
5. To outline research data and ensure that it is accessible for all stakeholders, especially arts participants of color and ethnicity

6. And to document the research process as a model for future study for African American and other ethnic arts groups

Whereas SOAR was supported by a million dollar budget and spanned three years, this pilot project, with a budget of less than \$10,000, spans 18 months. The research data was collected from June 2005 through December 2006. The research team conducted an extensive literature review of arts policy and administration, capacity building, arts education curricula development, economic impact surveys, and partnership building. The research team conducted archival research of *The Reformer*, a local African American newspaper published from 1968 to 1971, 10 focus groups with community members, university faculty, college and high school youth, arts educators, arts administrators, and local African American artists. We also conducted nine individual interviews and attended over 25 special and annual arts events.

The team became familiar with social theories like critical race theory, multiculturalism, social welfare, and social justice in order to develop a context for some concerns of focus group participants and interviewees. Although this research does not draw conclusions utilizing the above theories, our analysis was been informed by those theories.

AFRICAN AMERICAN BELIEFS ABOUT ART

African American Artists, Professionals, and Arts Administrators

- ± Are not invited to strategic planning forums on local arts development
- ± Are not invited to participate in local arts activities, events, and exhibitions
- ± Are strategically barred from professional, managerial, and exhibition opportunities
- ± Do not receive the same compensation or access to career opportunities as their white counterparts in the arts
- ± Are not capable of financial stability and sustainability through careers in the arts

Beliefs of African American Artists include

- ± African American people do not value art

professions as entrepreneurial activities and frequently request free services

- ± Local ethnic and mainstream business and professional communities do not support local arts and artists of color
- ± Local administrators in arts organizations are not knowledgeable about artistic and creative needs of artists of color
- ± Non-ethnic cultural institutions, researchers and administrators appropriate arts programming innovation as their own

Other Beliefs in African American communities include

- ± African American community can not economically sustain regional arts activities
- ± Art must have a utility to support a primary purpose like politics, protest, education, etiquette development, and/or inspiration
- ± Youth of color learn African American arts, aesthetics, culture, and history in colleges, universities, and in their homes
- ± Degrees in higher education should focus on “serious” activities like business, law, medicine, education, religion, and social work
- ± Art is expensive and time consuming for families and individuals
- ± Viewing African American arts activities requires travel to other regions and communities outside Michiana
- ± No universal definitions exist about black art or black aesthetics in Michiana

FINDINGS

General

- ± Personal dedication and commitment from a few individuals have sustained African American arts activities and events in Michiana
- ± Arts careers for African Americans are often viewed as non-serious activities by people of color and others
- ± Arts programs developed by artists of color are not valued by local cultural organizations, but those same programs are appropriated by

non-ethnic institutions

- ± Arts marketing and programming does not target African Americans as potential patrons or audiences except through last minute and post facto efforts to increase ticket sales
- ± African American artists and arts participants are not proactive or persistent in quests for arts programming or arts funding
- ± Artists and administrators of color do not have formal training in arts management and are usually former educators
- ± Artists of color must maintain two careers to support their creativity and arts productions

On Education, Gender, and Generations

- ± African American people promote education, but remain suspicious of researchers and participate reluctantly in research processes
- ± Art designed for people of color generally has educational, religious, or social justice foci, seldom is cultural heritage art created for art's sake
- ± Artists and administrators of color perceive arts and nonprofit management programs to be unwelcoming to people of color
- ± Older generations believe fine arts and arts making should act as cultural conduits and serve as means for etiquette development
- ± Younger generations view arts making as entertainment and as a mean to communicate to other youth through Rap music and spoken word poetry
- ± Neither older nor younger generations, in general, recognize or prefer careers in the arts for their children or themselves
- ± Gender and gender preference stigmas are present in African American attitudes about some art forms, specifically dance, theatre, poetry, and fashion
- ± Women of color are more likely to nurture, educate, and introduce their families and communities to arts activities, and more likely to manage arts events and activities
- ± Men of color are more likely to financially support music lessons and training for their families and are often musical performers and visual artists, but not dancers or poets

On Arts Participation and Events

- ± The Ethnic Festival of 1970s and 1980s was the most successful and ethnically diverse festival in South Bend
- ± Events held in ethnic communities and downtown areas are more likely to attract larger audiences of color and ethnicity
- ± Local musicians of color performing at venues like *Fridays by the Fountain* and the former *Firefly Festival* attract local and intergenerational audiences of color
- ± African Americans are more likely to attend gospel plays like Tyler Perry's *Madea Series*, religious performers, and black films than to attend other live performances
- ± African Americans are less likely to attend formal performances in art venues like the DeBartolo Performing Arts Center, the South Bend Civic Theatre, or the Raclin School of Arts
- ± African Americans feel unwelcome when attending local arts venues even when black soloist, casts, and visual artists are featured
- ± Filmmaking, graphic design, arts production, horticultural, and culinary arts are rarely associated with careers in the Arts

On Capacity Building and Administration

- ± African American business and professional communities are not typically approached to support heritage arts projects and activities, even though most may be interested
- ± Mainstream organizations have not developed foci related to cultural heritage arts, ethnicity, and race in the same ways that Irish heritage is showcased regionally
- ± Mainstream and ethnic businesses do not provide systemic or continuous support for artists or arts organizations of color
- ± The City of South Bend maintains notable financial support of arts and cultural activities via Art Beat and other activities, but has not invested in systemic cultural change through policy construction and grants development to support citywide and regional arts infrastructures in Michiana
- ± The Community Foundation of St. Joseph County, as the designated Regional Arts

Partner of the Indiana Arts Commission, contributes to a growing arts presence, yet more technical assistance for individual artists and arts organizations is needed

- ± Additional research is needed to compare K-12 arts curricula, African American businesses and the Arts, and arts marketing for African Americans in communities within this three-county area

RECOMMENDATIONS

For African American Arts Association (AAAA)

- ± Develop one or two annual signature events to highlight local artists and events like Martin Luther King Jr. Day Celebration or Juneteenth in partnership with other cultural organizations like the Indiana Black Expo
- ± Host forums about black aesthetics, social justice, cultural heritage arts, and tourism, in addition to hosting arts events and exhibitions
- ± Create professional development activities and workshops for local artists, arts administrators, and arts educators
- ± Continue to develop infrastructures to support organizational operations and opportunities for individual artists to become entrepreneurs
- ± Identify African American business owners who will supply volunteers and other resources in support of cultural heritage arts
- ± Create a capacity-building plan to sustain long-term growth and stability for cultural heritage arts
- ± Hire consultants to work with the AAAA board and artists to develop strategies for board recruitment, fund development, and arts program designs over the next three to five years
- ± Appeal to the African American Fund at the Community Foundation of St. Joseph County for special initiative grants to raise arts appreciation and awareness of African American arts locally and regionally
- ± Coordinate scheduling of ethnic and cross-over arts activities to prevent duplications and conflicts whenever possible
- ± Create concurrent educational arts activities for adults and K-12 participants

- ± Develop family-oriented field trips to local arts and cultural museums, galleries, festivals, etc., and to Nappanee, New Buffalo, Chicago, Detroit, Indianapolis, Toledo, and other Midwestern cities
- ± Forge collaborations with other arts groups via enrollment opportunities in summer arts camps, in addition to establishing its own arts camps and activities
- ± Develop a research component to continue documenting African American arts participation and activities in Michiana
- ± Work with Neighborhood Associations, Colleges and Universities, and Parks and Recreations Departments that host festivals like the Kamm Island Festival, the Reggae Festival, and Riverfest

For Cultural Arts Policy & Community Development

- ± Diversify and increase staff/board of directors with people of color throughout initial planning and implementation phases
- ± Increase ethnic arts at local and regional festivals and fairs to showcase cultural heritage, folk, and professional arts
- ± Develop educational components to discuss differences and similarities in ethnic arts and mainstream arts activities
- ± Increase representation of culturally diverse artists at local fairs, festivals, galleries, and in public spaces
- ± Increase coordination of regional arts activities with contiguous cities like Mishawaka, Elkhart, Niles, and Granger
- ± Increase ethnic and racial focus in community planning, murals, and fire hydrant programs
- ± Develop and coordinate an arts appreciation week across municipalities and counties in Michiana
- ± Develop management and human-resource policies to recruit and sustain arts managers and volunteers of color
- ± Work with local colleges and universities to establish courses in arts management that also include cultural heritage arts and entrepreneurial training for artists
- ± Work with local universities and colleges to assist K-12 teachers and arts education managers in establishing integrated arts

- ± curricula that support local arts activities
- ± Establish an Arts and Cultural Leadership Program for artists, administrators, and arts educators to increase regional leadership and encourage networking between people of color and arts managers
- ± Work with Parks and Recreations to identify career opportunities for artists and arts organizations of color

For Community Foundation of St. Joseph County & Arts Everywhere

- ± Provide technical assistance to arts organizations, arts professionals, and artists in income development and management, marketing, and networking
- ± Clarify, define, and market Arts Everywhere (AEW) as multiple misunderstandings about AEW exists in Michiana
- ± Coordinate and identify, through AEW, local arts activities focused on communities of color and ethnicity
- ± Assist local governments in the creation of an Arts and Cultural Leadership Program
- ± Create a financial program to subsidize hiring of consultants and management for new and emerging arts groups, especially targeting groups of color and ethnicity
- ± Purchase blocks of tickets from local arts organizations to subsidize family and individual arts attendance, professional development and education
- ± Offer professional development scholarships to individual artists, arts educators, K-12 teachers, and administrators of color and ethnicity to attend regional and national arts conferences.

CONCLUSION

Cultural Policy in Michiana is at the intersection of change and innovation. The purpose of this pilot investigation was not to define African American arts or black aesthetics for people living in Michiana, but rather to collect data for future review and policy recommendations that will assist local and regional planners in arts infrastructural development and that will support cultural heritage arts events and

activities, especially related to African Americans. Future research and discourse will provide regional definitions to describe African American arts.

If this project were to be replicated, additional financial resources would be needed to cover a five-year plan to observe annual changes in the cultural environment, arts appreciation, and arts curricula. Within the 18 months of operation, the research team saw changes in policies and approaches to diversity and inclusion. Although we do not make claim to these changes, we feel that some changes were the direct result of arts administrators' and artists' participation in focus-group deliberations. This project introduced needed conversation and dialogue into the cultural landscape. We also observed a willingness of community and civic leaders to enter dialogue with arts professionals, arts educators, arts administrators and artists, many of whom cited these discussions as unique and never before being facilitated in Michiana. Furthermore, the formation of the African American Arts Association also increased the number of arts events and educational activities for African Americans in South Bend. With more staff and student workers, we could have attended more festivals, shows, exhibitions, and activities in Michiana. Project volunteers would have been able to travel to greater distances and collect more data about events and ethnicity of people attending those events and activities. We would have also been able to discern if arts participants attending Blues Festivals and Art Fairs in South Bend were the same as those attending events in Elkhart and Niles.

On recruitment of faculty and administrators of color and ethnicity, educational institutions and arts agencies must adopt a resource development mode of operation. Currently departments and cultural organizations hire faculty and employees to match job descriptions exactly but without the intent to develop emerging scholars and budding staff for senior positions in the arts. Neither colleges and universities nor arts organizations have done enough in human resource development to change organizational cultures or to sustain pluralist environments in arts development.

What remains important is that this pilot project on African American arts, artists, and arts activities begins a needed dialogue about diversity, representation, cultural heritage, and arts development in Michiana.

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Keith D. Lee, Ph. D.

Nonprofit and Arts Management Consultant

Keith D. Lee consults with public, private, and nonprofit agencies in the design of management infrastructures and projects to support arts and community development. Employed, from 2002 -2006, in the Department of Africana Studies at University of Notre Dame, Lee assisted in the transition of that academic program to a department. Dr. Lee acquired terminal degrees in three areas: a M.F.A. in Creative Writing that focus on studio critique and literary analysis; a M.A. in Arts Administration that centers on management, marketing, and arts infrastructural development; and a Ph.D. in Art Education with a cognate specialty in Arts Policy and Administration that include curricula development, community relations, and public policy management. Concurrent to his academic pursuits, Dr. Lee held administrative positions in nonprofit and public arts management. Such positions include: Director of Education, Assistant Director for Program Development and Operations, and Special Professional Faculty at the University of Notre Dame; Barnett Fellow and Associate Instructor in Art Education at the Ohio State University; Community Development Specialist at the Indiana Arts Commission (IAC); Community Relations and Volunteer Programs Manager at the WFYI TelePlex; Grants Administrator at the Indiana Repertory Theatre; National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Arts Corp Fellow at Salisbury Wicomico County Arts Council in Maryland; and Associate Instructor in African and African American Studies at the Indiana University Bloomington. Dr. Lee has also been employed in K-12 public school environments. His field and academic research efforts include ethnic diversity and multicultural studies, endowment formation and implementation at state arts agencies, Youth Reach Ohio, and the Ohio Arts Council State of the Arts Report (SOAR).

Jacquelyn Rucker, Director

Community Relations for the University of Notre Dame

Jacquelyn Rucker, Director of Community Relations for the University of Notre Dame, graduate of Notre Dame with a bachelor's degree in American Studies in 1983. Rucker returned to the University in 1984 to serve as a financial aid administration and later an admissions counselor. She has 20 years of experience in the education, manufacturing and health care industries. As corporate diversity manager of Memorial Hospital, Rucker launched numerous initiatives including diversity training for employees, policies promoting a diverse workforce, and social networks to foster community, national, and regional relationships concerned with diversity. In addition, she created a system to measure the effectiveness of her efforts. Rucker has worked as a personnel administrator for Allied Signal in South Bend and a marketing coordinator for New Energy Company of Indiana. She is also co-owner of Integrity Commercial Cleaning Services. Rucker has served as a board member of the Black Alumni of Notre Dame and remains active as an alumnus of University of Notre Dame. She also participates in the South Bend community as a board member of CONNECT – the Chamber of Commerce's Coalition for Educational Success--and Take Ten—a violence prevention program coordinated through the Robinson Community Learning Center. A founding board member of the National Association of Health Service Executives, Mrs. Rucker is concerned with science, health services, and education. As a native of South Bend, Jackie, with her husband Christopher, parents two children, Christopher and Jillian.

Ericka Smith

Ericka Smith, current Director of Development for The Black Star Project, a Chicago-based nonprofit organization with a mission to close the racial academic achievement gap, graduated from the University of Notre Dame in 2006. She earned a B.A. in American Studies and African & African American Studies and served as an officer of the University's Chapter of the NAACP. Her participation on this arts research team began through the Ronald E. McNair Post-baccalaureate Achievement Program in the summer of 2005. She continued to work as a research assistant until graduation and her relocation to Chicago, IL where she served an Americorps VISTA with Chicago Public Schools Homeless Education Program. For that organization, Ms Smith developed a tutoring program for Chicago homeless shelters. Ms Smith was born and raised in Slidell, Louisiana.

