

Community Observations: Improving Cultural Education

The following is a synthesis of a group process at a community meeting held at the Hayti Heritage Center on June 17, 2003 as part of the Durham Cultural Master Planning process. It was attended by over 110 people. Participants were able to comment on a series of seven issue areas that had been identified by the DCMP Steering Committee. We are eager to hear your reactions to these observations. In particular:

- 1. Do you agree with these observations?*
- 2. Do you feel that there are any inaccuracies?*
- 3. Is there anything missing that should be added?*

Please review this document and send any comments you may have to mdemott@durhamarts.org

Thank you.

- There are many reasons why it is important to educate young people about arts and culture. It is a way to pass on traditions. And arts can improve learning. Involving young people creates audiences, community involvement, and artists. Art can break down barriers and help us to understand and appreciate each other. Arts & humanities help us understand our world and its problems & issues, and inform us about the roads to solutions.
- Arts & culture needs to be relevant to youth. It helps if you can start arts and cultural education early. DPS involves its students in art and cultural venues in Durham especially the Carolina Theatre.
- We need more programs, classes and educators to teach about arts and culture. Perhaps combine academics with culture using community members to teach and educate.
- Colleges and universities have a role to play. They should allow their spaces to be used by the community. Higher education can spread interest in arts and culture. There need to be scholarships for young people in the arts. Perhaps there are opportunities for shared faculty among various institutions.
- We need to see more collaboration between the community and colleges and universities. Perhaps there is a way to use college students to teach youth about arts and culture. Perhaps there is a way to use the capacity of DSA.

- Young people need appropriate sources of information about arts and culture to foster participation – they need to receive promotional materials. This may require a parent/child collaboration/partnership around arts and culture perhaps fostered in the schools.
- Arts need to be accessible in terms of cost, transportation, language, must be able to meet a variety of interests. Perhaps we can create a corps of youth volunteers in arts and culture. This would provide an opportunity for young people to learn about the economics and business of performances and exhibitions.
- If we are to education our children about arts and culture, we must maintain funding for arts & culture in schools and we need more arts programs in community centers. There need to be year-round arts & cultural activities that are youth driven programs after-school.
- Cultural education must reach more than just children – life-long learning is critical. Use arts as therapy with groups. Organize trips for elders/senior to Durham’s cultural/arts venues/events. Develop programs with variety and accessibility for adults. Bring arts and culture into the work place. Inter-generational arts and cultural experiences need to be promoted.