

**Samuel S. Fleisher Art Memorial
Partners in Arts Education Grant Application
May 2008**

Narrative

1. Goals

The Fleisher Art Memorial is a community-based art center with a 110-year commitment to making the arts accessible to all. From the days when Samuel Fleisher stood at the door with charcoal and paper in hand encouraging Philadelphia's working-class immigrants to come and learn art, to today's thriving institution that welcomes over 13,000 arts participants annually, Fleisher is a leader in arts education locally and nationally. Fleisher's programming rests on a stable foundation of core activities including an onsite art school serving 1,000 children and 3,000 adults each year, many taking classes offered free of charge; a respected exhibition series that welcomes 7,000 visitors annually; and the Community Partnerships in the Arts (CPA) program, which offers artist residencies for low-income youth. From its founding in 1996, CPA has provided in-depth community and school-based arts instruction for 500 youth annually, while supporting the professional development of teaching artists and classroom teachers.

This application requests a \$20,000 grant to help Fleisher and school partners George Washington, Abigail Vare, and Eliza Kirkbride Elementary Schools use the arts to enrich classroom learning for nearly 300 youth in Philadelphia. Beginning this year, Fleisher is significantly expanding the way it initiates relationships with prospective school partners, and is working closely with the South/Southwest Regional Office of the School District of Philadelphia and the Office of Creative and Performing Arts to position the CPA program as an important resource for schools that have received a new (as yet unfunded) mandate to provide arts education for their students. Through partnership with Fleisher, schools are able to fulfill their goal of connecting students to in-depth, comprehensive instruction in the arts that complements classroom lessons and brings the curriculum to life.

The artist residencies that Fleisher develops and implements with its partner schools are our most important vehicle for engaging an audience that would not otherwise be able to pursue opportunities to learn about and make art. This collaborative work helps serve as a point of entry for youth, and by extension their families, to become excited about art, realize the benefits of art-making, and continue to participate in the arts, either onsite at Fleisher or elsewhere in the city. At the same time, the partnerships enable Fleisher to serve as a resource for artists and educators, providing professional development, employment, and continuing education opportunities for this sector of the creative economy. Teachers and administrators who benefit directly from the program serve as ambassadors to their colleagues, sharing lessons learned through school-wide “Small Learning Community” meetings, and helping improve the entire school environment.

For the coming year, support from Partners in Arts Education will enable Fleisher and our partner schools to provide in-school artist residencies for 278 low-income youth, led by practicing, professional artists who work collaboratively with classroom teachers to develop a curriculum and meet with students twice a week for 1.5 hours per session. Six residencies will meet over the course of the school year (24 weeks), and five will meet for one semester (12 weeks), for a total of nearly 19,000 hours of student contact (not including additional in-school and after-school artist residencies that Fleisher will offer through its CPA program). Specific goals for our partnership include:

- Continue working with George Washington Elementary, offering four year-long residencies for grades first through fourth;
- Continue working with Kirkbride Elementary, expanding the partnership to include two year-long residencies for fourth and fifth grade, and one new semester-long residency for sixth grade;
- Re-establish partnership with Abigail Vare Elementary, offering four semester-long residencies for third and fourth grade;

- Measure the impact of the program through detailed student interviews, feedback from classroom teachers, teaching artists, and school principals;
- Increase the influence of CPA at each school by convening non-participating classroom teachers with participating teachers and artists;
- Continue providing teaching artists and classroom partners with professional development workshops.

2. Needs

CPA addresses students' need for a multifaceted approach to classroom material to expand and reinforce their learning, as well as their need for creative engagement and expression. Students served by CPA come from low-income families and do not have the means to pursue art instruction outside of their school environment. CPA residencies expand the understanding of art for these students by integrating art-making in their everyday lives and providing them with a holistic approach to their classroom material.

Art-making is an important building block for developing new insight into academic subjects. A classroom teacher partner notes, "Art provides students with experiences that address their multiple intelligences." A principal adds, "It is important to provide each student an equal opportunity to excel in the classroom setting. For students with special learning skills, art opens their eyes to material that they find difficult to access otherwise." A teaching artist also sees the benefit the program holds for youth's learning: "[The partnership] helped the kids because it increased their learning to look at what they're already working on in a different way, to do things visually."

As students feel more comfortable with classroom materials, and more confident in their own abilities, they begin to believe in the importance of what they have to contribute to the learning environment. Teaching artists and classroom teachers report that students show greater interest in communication and a newfound understanding of the importance of developing a

unique response to a given subject after exposure to art-making. This experience can be especially profound for students who speak English as a second language and often struggle to communicate in an English-dominated learning environment. Art gives them new ways to contribute to the classroom, and, over time, makes them more likely to take risks in speaking and writing.

In addition to enhancing learning, CPA partnerships also foster a love for art-making. A teaching artist shared the following: “At the start of the semester, students would bring me drawings on crumpled notebook paper. We spent a lot of time discussing the work of professional artists, both contemporary and those from art history. By the end of the residency, the students had developed respect for art-making and used proper materials. They would bring me drawings on nice white paper, instead of on notebook paper.” For many students, CPA is their first introduction to art-making. Teaching artists often remark on how gratifying it is to watch students develop a love for the subject over the course of the residency: “I have several students that struggle academically, but they’re really good at art, and when I bring out the materials they are ready to dive in and they’re independent and they’re creative and they do things that I don’t expect and I know that that’s really valuable for them, both as young artists and as young people.”

3. Target Population

Participating youth all live in South Philadelphia and their public school populations range from 350 to over 1,200 students; the vast majority of students are considered living in poverty and receive free or reduced price lunch at school. Their schools tend to have high concentrations of a single race and most have significant numbers of students who are non-native English speakers and require ESL services.

School	African-American	White	Asian	Latino	Other	Poverty	ESL
Vare	46%	11%	23%	15%	5%	85%	17%
Kirkbride	21%	6%	58%	15%	1%	80%	49%
G. Washington	67%	5%	20%	8%	0%	81%	19%

This grant will directly impact nine public school teachers, who due to interaction with teaching artists expand their classroom curricula and are better able to recognize their students' abilities. Teachers will learn techniques from the teaching artists on how to incorporate the arts into their lesson plans, and will share experiences and lessons with their colleagues at Small Learning Community (SLC) staff meetings, to expand the impact of the residencies and help the entire school community.

Five Philadelphia-based artists will benefit from the program as they provide art instruction to youth in partnership with classroom teachers. Fleisher will enhance the artists' experience through professional development workshops, a day-long artist retreat focusing on evaluation techniques and program assessment, and meetings with classroom teachers.

4. Curriculum

The curriculum of each CPA artist residency follows Pennsylvania's Academic Standards for the Arts and Humanities (www.pde.state.pa.us/statboarded/lib/stateboarded/pdfarts.pdf). For the visual arts these include:

- A. Know and use the elements and principles of each art form to create works in the arts and humanities.
 - a. Visual Arts: color, form/shape, line, space, texture, value
 - b. Visual Arts: balance, contrast, emphasis/focal point, movement/rhythm, proportion/scale, repetition, unity/harmony
- B. Recognize, know, use, and demonstrate a variety of appropriate arts elements and principles to produce, review, and revise original works in the arts.
 - a. Visual Arts: paint, draw, craft, sculpt, print, design for environment, communication, multi-media

Each partnership's distinct curriculum integrates visual arts projects with themes from core curriculum lessons in math, science, social science, and/or literature. Teaching artists and

classroom teachers develop a curriculum for each residency prior to the start of each semester. Once decided, each individual art lesson begins with a review of the core curriculum theme being studied, a demonstration of the day's art project, and images from art history that correlate to the project and inspire students' imaginations. Students are encouraged to work out ideas in their sketchbooks, through discussion with peers, and through conversations with the teaching artist and the classroom teacher. At the end of each class, students gather for a critique to review what they have accomplished and practice using "visual words" to explore the work of their peers. Over the course of the residency, students develop a progressive body of work. By the end of each residency, they are working individually and collaboratively on complex projects with sophisticated materials.

A partnership with the 1st grade class at George Washington Elementary is an example of a residency from the 2007-08 academic year. Teaching artist Alison Stigora partnered with classroom teacher Toni O'Karma to explore the theme, "What can one little person do?" Students began making a trip to the National Liberty Museum to learn about people who have contributed to society. They created an accordion book that illustrated what they learned at the museum and ways in which they themselves can make a difference in the world. Each student then selected one hero from his/her culture for a portraiture project. In spring 2008, students advanced to three-dimensional media through the construction of clay pots, which they sold in support of a charity they selected as a group.

5. Outcomes

We expect the following short-term "knowledge outcomes" and long-term "behavioral outcomes" from each residency:

Knowledge Outcomes

- Students will increase their knowledge of a secondary subject through art. Art will help them to access and understand themes from their social science, science, and literature curriculum.
- Youth will learn new art-making techniques and how to use new materials.
- Youth will believe that art is a legitimate field of study.
- Youth will expand their vocabulary to include “visual” words. Teaching artists will emphasize the importance of learning the proper terminology for materials and techniques so that students can engage more fluently in critiques. Students will learn words such as value, balance, shade, hue, and texture and will understand how they differ in meaning when they are used outside the context of art-making.
- Teachers will learn art-making techniques, materials, and language in tandem with their students.
- Teaching artists will learn classroom management techniques and new pedagogy during CPA professional developing workshops, one-on-one training sessions with the CPA Director, and through observation of the core curriculum teachers with whom they are partnered.

Behavioral Outcomes

- Youth will become more confident expressing themselves in myriad ways, especially those students that speak English as a second language.
- Youth will practice art-making outside of the classroom and will pursue additional instruction. At least one third of students will enroll in a summer workshop at Fleisher or take a free Saturday class during the school year. At least two thirds of students will attend an event or an exhibition at Fleisher.
- Youth will persevere when they find projects difficult or challenging.
- Youth will interact more cohesively with peers during group-work.
- Youth will feel more excited about school and learning.
- Classroom teachers will integrate art-making into their regular curricula beyond the tenure of the teaching artists.

- Teaching artists will teach future residencies with greater skill thanks to the experience they gain working in public school classrooms.

6. Assessment

The degree to which each of the above outcomes is achieved is measured through written and visual journals in which students record their experiences, what they've learned, and how their thinking has evolved. Teaching Artists keep journals documenting the progress of each residency, and review the students' journals individually and in groups to discuss developments in their art making. Surveys are administered to classroom teachers and principals, and the CPA Program Director interviews each to document their views of the value of teaching through the arts in their classroom. This interview also assesses their awareness of changes in their students, including new ways they have discovered to appreciate strengths and skills that their students expressed through the arts.

Fleisher continues to use an in-depth oral interview for students to document how the artist residencies impact students' school experiences. First implemented in 2006, the interview protocol measures changes in the way students feel about themselves, their schoolwork, and their identity as artists as a result of the residency. Recent results indicate that 100% of surveyed third graders thought they had become better artists, 83% said art made them happy, and 80% said they felt more excited about school because of the residency. Additional interviews will be conducted at all partner schools in the coming year and data collected will further document how students respond to their arts experience.

7. Support

The knowledge that Fleisher has developed over 12 years of administering artist residencies in partnership with local public schools helps ensure that the artists it recruits to the program; the training it offers classroom teachers and teaching artists; and the supervision that

the program director provides for planning and evaluation all contribute to the program's excellent quality. The partner schools bring a deeply held conviction that the arts are critical to the success of their students; commit significant amounts of classroom time to meet the time requirements of each residency; and welcome the teaching artists to their school communities. Schools make in-kind contributions by way of teachers' and principals' time devoted to the partnership, and this year, for the first time and with support of the South/Southwest Region, are contributing portions of their discretionary Title I budgets to help cover costs. Fleisher is responsible for securing corporate and foundation funds to support the program, and also commits a portion of its annual endowment distribution to help pay for the partnerships.

8. Challenges

One of our biggest challenges this year is that demand for our program may exceed our capacity to provide it. While in years past our artist residencies have been delivered in response to forward thinking school principals who contacted us and requested to work with us, this year we have laid the groundwork for a more systemic relationship with the South/Southwest Region of the School District. In May, Superintendent John Frangipani convened 40 school principals at Fleisher to discuss how we can help them meet a new District mandate to provide arts instruction to their students. This expands Fleisher's role from delivering an enrichment service, to being more central to the life of the school. While the majority of Fleisher's partnerships are not confirmed until the summer months, interest in what we have to offer is already higher than ever. We must respond by growing our program strategically and avoid overtaxing our resources at the expense of our program quality.

A second challenge is to improve the effectiveness of our program evaluation. The tools we have in place to measure the impact of our work qualitatively are strong, but we want to

collect and learn more from quantitative measures of the impact of our partnerships. While this challenge is inherent to nearly all arts education programs, we are working to address it using resources that are available to us via a recent Wallace Foundation Excellence Award. Funding from the Foundation over the next three years will help support the development and implementation of tools to identify and track Fleisher's audience. This will help us determine (more than anecdotally) how successful we are in using our CPA partnerships to open a door to long-term involvement in the arts for the low-income youth we meet in the public school environment.

9. Evaluation

The success of each school partnership is evaluated during a series of meetings that occur throughout the course of the artist residencies and work from the data collected via the assessment tools described above. Each residency begins with conversations between the teaching artists, classroom teacher, and the CPA Program Director to select the residency theme and identify specific ways that art-making will support identified academic goals. Planning and assessment meetings between teachers and artists continue every two to three weeks, and adaptations to the original curriculum and timeline are made if necessary. The CPA Program Director provides ongoing support and guidance to the teachers and artists, and discusses progress with them during classroom visits/observations that are scheduled once every four to six weeks. At the end of each semester, all partners, including the school principal, meet to discuss lessons learned and to begin thinking about new themes and strategies for subsequent residencies.