

Community Arts Action Plan for Toronto Progress Report

Date:	January 15, 2010
To:	Economic Development Committee
From:	General Manager, Economic Development & Culture
Wards:	All
Reference Number:	P:/2010/Cluster A/EDCT/ECON DEV/February/ed1002-006

SUMMARY

This report responds to the direction given by City Council at its meeting on December 1, 2 & 3, 2008 for a progress report noting specifically concrete results that have accrued as a result of the endorsement of the Community Arts Action Plan. The Plan comprises recommendations to be implemented over a course of five years to strengthen arts in communities across Toronto including enhanced support for Toronto's lead community arts organizations, the Local Arts Service Organizations.

The Community Arts Action Plan for Toronto has served as a strategic planning framework that helps community arts organizations to better plan together to address the priorities and achieve outcomes identified in the Plan.

Since the implementation of the Plan, it has served as a tool and inspiration for lead agencies such as the Toronto Arts Council and the Local Arts Service Organizations, to start and/or augment citywide community arts initiatives and networking opportunities to address the gaps in the community arts sector identified by community members and stakeholders. Tangible outcomes as well as key ongoing efforts are highlighted in this Report below. (See Appendix 1).

Financial Impact

There are no financial implications resulting from the adoption of this report.

DECISION HISTORY

City Council on December 1, 2 and 3, 2008, approved the Community Arts Action Plan for Toronto that outlines 14 recommendations to support community arts development across Toronto over the next five years.

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2008/ed/bgrd/backgroundfile-17314.pdf>

At that meeting, the Executive Director, Cultural Services was directed to submit a progress report, in one year's time, noting outcomes that have transpired from the Plan.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

City Council on June 24, 25 and 26, 2003, approved the *Culture Plan for the Creative City* that outlines 63 recommendations to provide clear direction for the City's cultural agenda until 2013. On July 26, 2005, Toronto Culture presented a *Culture Plan Progress Report* to the Economic Development and Parks Committee.

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/2005/agendas/committees/edp/edp051109/it004.pdf>

The Committee received the report and requested that staff consult with stakeholders outside the downtown core about their opinion on Culture budgets and the potential for increasing the budgets for their programs and that staff report back to the January meeting of the Committee.

On December 5, 2005, Toronto Culture held a focus group for community arts stakeholders outside the downtown core which included representatives from the four LASOs (Arts Etobicoke, Lakeshore Arts, Scarborough Arts Council, and UrbanArts Community Arts Council); Downsview Park Arts Alliance (DPAA) and other community arts and cultural groups. A Staff Report was presented to the Economic Development and Parks Committee outlining community-identified opportunities and challenges regarding community arts development across the city.

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/2006/agendas/committees/edp/edp060116/it003.pdf>

At its January 31, February 1 & 2, 2006 meeting, City Council directed Economic Development, Culture and Tourism staff to report back to the Economic Development and Parks Committee on opportunities to formalize a structure and that the stakeholders group be requested to further advocate the goals and objectives identified in the report. At the September 12, 2006 Economic Development and Parks Committee, Meeting 6, Clause 19

(<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/2006/agendas/committees/edp/edp060116/it003.pdf>), Culture staff recommended Toronto Culture undertake a thorough survey of community arts stakeholders including community members from the 13 priority neighbourhoods, underserved neighbourhoods and groups, Toronto Arts Council, and youth and youth-led organizations to determine implementation of the goals and objectives previously identified and to develop recommendations for strengthening community arts across all areas of the city.

In May 2007 Toronto Culture held a series of citywide community arts stakeholders' consultations as a framework to gather ideas from community arts groups, artists and the broader community. Grounded on 2005 findings, the 2007 public consultations sought

community input on four identified areas wherein services gaps were evident: funding, space for Community artists and organizations, resource-sharing and increasing the profile of the community arts sector. In October 2007, Culture staff brought forward to Council, the recommendation to develop a Toronto Community Arts Action Plan which would encompass ways to strengthen community arts across the city based on broad community input. (<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2007/ed/bgrd/backgroundfile-8014.pdf>).

Throughout 2008, Cultural Services staff in consultation with an Advisory Body developed the Toronto Community Arts Action Plan and presented it to Council at its December 1, 2 and 3, 2008 meeting.

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2008/ed/bgrd/backgroundfile-17314.pdf>

Cultural Services had been requested to submit a progress report, in one year's time, noting outcomes that have transpired from the Plan.

In 2009, Cultural Services in collaboration with community partners delivered 18 new and/sustained programs to address gaps identified in the Toronto Community Arts Action: space, funding, raising the profile of the sector and resource-sharing among the community arts sector.

A total of 48,320 square feet of new space has been opened up for community arts use. Twenty thousand square feet of performance space have been opened up for community artists to perform at TTC subway stations at 50 performance occasions through the project *City on the Move*. A large mural project initiated by Arts Etobicoke brought to live 10,000 square footage of mural space.

In partnership with community arts organizations, additional funds and in-kind support in the amount of \$934,247 were levered in 2009 to support community arts programming across the city.

The Toronto Arts Foundation, in partnership Toronto Arts Council and ArtStarts, and in cooperation with Arts Etobicoke, Lakeshore Arts, Scarborough Arts Council, UrbanArts Community Arts Council has brought into fruition the Neighbourhood Arts Network. This network aims at fostering greater understanding of the impact of the arts on the lives of Toronto residents, raising the profile of community arts and linking with other networks and advocacy groups to achieve a broad inclusion strategy. The official launch of the Neighbourhood Arts Network is scheduled for January 27, 2010. Toronto Arts Council contributed \$25,000 to the research phase of the Neighbourhoods Arts Network. Over \$300,000 in provincial and private sector funding has been raised for the Neighbourhood Arts Network to date. The citywide Youth Arts Pitch Contest implemented by ArtReach in partnership with Manifesto and Cultural Services provided the platform for emerging youth artists to learn the basics of how to make a live pitch to a professional panel which included highly successful artists and arts entrepreneurs. Three awards were presented to finalists from the categories of youth artists, youth-led community arts groups and youth arts entrepreneurs (new category in 2009).

Cultural Services also collaborated with citywide community arts groups to raise the profile of youth and their employability in the cultural sector and creative industries. For example, the *Small Business Arts Forum*, partnership between Cultural Services, Enterprise Toronto and Cultural Careers Council of Ontario, provided one full-day training on how to create and build a business in the arts and cultural industries. UrbanArts' new *Micro Loan Program* facilitates access and creates improved expertise among youth in Toronto. In 2009, 16 youth were hired from priority neighbourhoods in arts projects, 4 youth artists were hired, 52 youth facilitators/mentors were engaged in diverse projects from various art fields and artforms. The new category of award at the 2009 Youth Arts Pitch Contest provided an enterprising youth group *N.I.S.E.* the additional assistance it needed to further develop their clothing enterprise which hires and trains young designers from priority and underserved neighbourhoods.

The *City on the Move* project created a new artistic and audience platform for urban dance and music, visual art and performance art. From August 2009 through the summer of 2010, this new program brings the transit experience to life by regularly featuring the artistic creativity and culture of emerging and more seasoned young artists performing in a fluid, public living environment - subway stations on subway cars, buses and streetcars. Fifty-four artists held 25 performances in 17 subway stations and 3 public vehicles. For the first time, performing artists gained access to an unconventional performance venue to profile their accomplishments and interact with the general public.

Facilitated by young people and developed by youth-led organizations, funders, ArtReach, Cultural Services and other partners, *GOAL* (Grassroots Organizing and Leadership) workshop series provided training for youth on topics that spanned financial management for nonprofits, fundraising, grant-writing, and models of youth work. Out of the workshop contents held from previous years, 4 online modules have been created to benefit youth who wants to gain access to funding and other resources in the arts sector. Further information of major 2009 highlights of community arts programs is included Appendix 1.

The Toronto Arts Council, through its Community Arts Office, has made significant changes to its granting guidelines and categories. These changes reflect a constant effort to be a catalyst for innovation, meaningful engagement and artistic excellence in the field of community arts. The projects funded through the TAC are focusing more on creative vision, artistic merit and the collaborative experience that each project affords Toronto residents and artists alike. Through various funding mechanisms and by honing program guidelines, TAC supports multidisciplinary projects that are increasingly responsive, compelling, collaborative and powerful. The Toronto Arts Council implemented 4 project funding streams to support community arts across the city: Community Arts Residency, Arts Access, Community Arts Events and Artistic Development. In addition, the Toronto Arts Council supported 21 operating clients who are engaged in ongoing, multidisciplinary community arts work city-wide. A total of \$394,230 was provided to 54 projects (39 Arts Access, 9 Community Arts Residencies, 4 Community Arts Events and 2 Artistic Development projects) while \$403,950 was allocated to support operating organizations. In 2009 the community arts office allocated an additional

\$26,433.00 over 2008 to enhance the sector. Further information about the 2009 community arts projects funded by the Toronto Arts Council is included in Appendix 2.

CONCLUSION

The arts are an integral part of a healthy culture, nourishing creativity and providing social and economic benefit. The Community Arts Action Plan has been key in providing a strategic road map for the city and community partners and organizations to collectively address gaps identified by community members. It has also served to further promote inclusion, social equity and healthy social change as important components of all arts program planning in communities across Toronto.

Implementing the Community Arts Action Plan strengthens Toronto's community arts sector, which in turn, furthers the *Culture Plan's* vision for building a socially and economically healthy urban community through the arts. Enhancing the community arts sector continues to nurture a vibrant community arts infrastructure, increased cultural wealth and resilience in Toronto's diverse communities and neighbourhoods.

CONTACT

Nadira Pattison
Manager, Arts Services, Cultural Services
Tel: 416 338-1263
Fax: 416 392-6834
Email: npattis1@toronto.ca

SIGNATURE

Michael H. Williams, General Manager
Economic Development & Culture

ATTACHMENTS

Appendix 1: Toronto Community Arts Action Plan Progress Report (For the Year 2009)
Appendix 2: Toronto Arts Council - 2009 Community Arts Grants