



# Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

## Community Arts Initiative

### Phase 2 Evaluation Study



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November 2008

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## ABSTRACT

The Institute for Learning Innovation (ILI) was contracted by the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (MFA) to evaluate their Community Arts Initiative (CAI), a partnership with local community organizations that seeks to introduce young people to the museum collections and the art-making process, while helping them to understand how art can be an important part of their lives. This report summarizes results from Phase 2 of the evaluation, a case study of the role of the CAI within four participating community organizations. Data were collected over an 8-month period from January through August 2008, using multiple sources of information including observations of key program events at the community organization and at the museum, and interviews with key stakeholders at each community organization, including staff, parents, and children.

Key results from the study include the following:

- The CAI has been well integrated into each of the four community organizations studied here, albeit in slightly different ways. Previous research conducted by ILI would suggest that such integration not only takes years, but takes strong commitment and effort on the part of both parties (Luke & Adams, 2003; Luke, Bronnenkant & Stein, 2004). This finding suggests that the CAI is in fact a true partnership at these sites, something that is not easily accomplished but provides a necessary foundation from which to build to participant outcomes.
- From the perspective of staff within the community organizations, the program is entirely aligned with their organization's mission, and extends and enriches their ability to infuse the arts into their surrounding community. According to Elaine Ng, Executive Director, Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center, the CAI allows them *"to incorporate arts more actively into people's lives."* Staff also reported that the CAI builds their capacity for arts programming. In the words of Andrew Swain, Executive Director, Yawkey Boys and Girls Club, *"They fill the gaps for us in terms of programming."* Staff pointed to much-needed resources provided by the MFA through this program whether it was help installing a kiln at Yawkey or help facilitating arts activities for families during a special event at BCNC.
- Participating parents and children reported that the program positively influenced children's attitudes towards both art and museums. Parents and staff repeatedly used the word "exposure" to describe what the program did for participating children, explaining that most of these children had little or no opportunities to get out of their neighborhood let alone visit an art museum. As a parent from Jordan said, *"It's just transporting them to a different world."* Parents and staff told stories of how specific children came to see the museum as something fun and exciting; how they came to express greater interest in actually going to the museum; and how they came to feel more comfortable in the museum. This notion that an art museum program can benefit

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children by exposing them to art and art museums is in keeping with previous research conducted by ILI (Adams & Luke, 2002; Luke & Adams, 2003).

- Parents and children also felt that the program enhanced children's skills, related to creativity broadly and art-making specifically. In the words of a boy from Jordan, "*I can do things with clay much better than I used to do.*" Children, parents, and staff all talked about how the CAI gave children a chance to work with clay, and to improve their techniques using this material. Parents in particular felt that the program allowed children to express themselves and to experiment with different ways of doing that.
- Children's heightened self-awareness was another positive outcome of the program, as perceived by parents and staff. They talked about how the Artist Project helped children to feel confident in their abilities to make art, and to feel a sense of accomplishment relative to their art work. To quote a parent from Yawkey, "*It helps her build her character, helps build self-esteem.*" Again, this finding is in keeping with previous research conducted by ILI, showing that programs like the Community Arts Initiative can enhance children's perceptions of themselves (Adams & Luke, 2002).
- The degree to which CAI has impacted participating parents and families remains to be seen. It is encouraging that each of the four community organizations studied here is making great efforts to involve parents in the program; however, research shows that parent involvement requires repeated attempts over time, and that it needs to fit with the realities of low-income, cultural minority parents' lives (Calabrese Barton et al., 2004). There is some indication in the data that parents of children in the Artist Project are not only aware of the project, but value it and want to support their child's participation in it. Many parents attended the celebration at the museum in May, and some said they have talked about the project with their child. If the MFAB truly wants the CAI to impact not only children, but parents as well, it may be that more targeted programming for parents is required.

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## INTRODUCTION

The Institute for Learning Innovation (ILI) was contracted by the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (MFA) to evaluate their Community Arts Initiative (CAI), a partnership with local community organizations that seeks to introduce young people to the museum collections and the art-making process, while helping them to understand how art can be an important part of their lives. This report summarizes results from Phase 2 of the evaluation, focusing on the impact of the CAI on four community organizations.

### Program Description

Funded by the Linde Foundation, the Community Arts Initiative is an ongoing, community-based program whereby the MFA serves as an art and cultural resource within their immediate neighborhood and surrounding communities. Working with after-school programs and community organizations, the CAI Initiative provides young people aged 5-12 years with opportunities to engage with the MFA's collections and the art-making process, seeking to enhance their understanding of the important role that art plays in their lives. Specifically, the CAI involves partnerships with eight community organizations, including five Boys & Girls Clubs of Boston in Blue Hill, Charlestown, Chelsea, Roxbury, and South Boston; the United South End Settlements; The West End House Boys & Girls Clubs of Allston-Brighton; and Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center.

Four main goals inform the activities that are part of the CAI:

1. To engage young people with the MFA's collection, encouraging joy, awe and wonder relative to works of art;
2. To empower young people to express themselves through art-making;
3. To encourage young people and their families to feel comfortable in the museum, to feel a sense of ownership;
4. To build a community of educators who see the MFA as an educational resource and an advocate for their work, and who understand how to use the MFA to further their goals for the children they serve.

While the program has several components, at its core is the Artist Project (AP), a 4-8 week collaboration between the MFA, the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (SMFA), and participating community organizations. Each year, an artist (selected through a juried competition) works with the children to create a collaborative work of art inspired by the Museum's encyclopedic collection. The completed project is exhibited in the MFA's Courtyard Gallery. During the 2007-2008 year of the CAI, the Artist Project was called *Heroes*, and was led by artist Shirah T. Rubin. In the *Heroes* project, students created columns composed of over 90 stacked ceramic busts of heroes, which were displayed in the MFA's courtyard gallery. The ceramic pieces were fired at the community organizations and at the SMFA.

In addition to the AP, there are many other facets to the CAI. Each community organization is assigned a “Community Liaison” who works on site with the children, coordinates museum visits or special events related to the CAI program, and helps with the annual Artist Project. As part of CAI, participating community organizations can organize as many Artful Adventures (AA) sessions as they like free of charge. The AA program combines gallery exploration and art activities for groups of children, from pre-school to high school. The program is flexible and the content can be determined by the group. A typical AA at the museum lasts about an hour and a half; sessions usually start with looking at and discussing art, and conclude with an art-making activity. Beyond AA, community organizations are given free museum tickets to distribute to their families. Finally, staff from participating community organizations are invited to MFA Professional Development sessions that are offered every year, as well as studio classes and MFA Community Forums. Children from the CPs can also attend studio classes with a scholarship.

## Evaluation Focus

The Institute for Learning Innovation (ILI), a nonprofit research and evaluation organization, was contracted by the MFA to evaluate the Community Arts Initiative. Two complementary studies were conducted. Phase 1 assessed the degree to which child-based learning outcomes were accomplished through program participation, as well as specific ways in which the partnership could be enhanced (see Adams, 2006). Phase 2 focused more broadly on the impacts of the CAI within four participating community organizations, seeking to create a rich and detailed picture of the role that the CAI plays within the life of these organizations over time. Results from the Phase 2 study are reported here.

## METHODS

A case study approach was used to study the role of the CAI within participating community centers. Case studies are a qualitative methodology appropriate for the exploration of bounded systems over time through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (Creswell, 1998). Four community organizations were selected as case studies: 1) the Yawkey Club of Roxbury, Boys and Girls Club; 2) the Gerald and Darlene Jordan Club of Chelsea, Boys and Girls Club; 3) the Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center; and 4) the United South End Settlements. The selection of these four community organizations was guided by the principle of “maximum variation,” a strategy that involves “defining the dimensions of variation in the population that are most relevant to your study and systematically selecting individuals, times, or settings that represent the most important possible variations on these dimensions” (Maxwell, 1996). The following key dimensions of variation were considered:

- Ethnic mix of the neighborhood (e.g., homogenous vs. mixed ethnic populations);
- Organizational capacity of the community organization (e.g., strengths and weaknesses of each community partner);
- Geographic location (e.g., distance from the MFA; location within the city);

- Socio-economics of neighborhoods;
- Levels of parent involvement;
- Nature of participation within the CAI program.

Data were collected by Research Associate Bronwyn Low over an 8-month period from January through August 2008. As is called for with case study methodology (Stake, 1995; Yin, 1989), data collection drew upon multiple sources of information, including observations of key program events at the community organization and at the museum, and interviews with key stakeholders at each community organization, including staff, parents, and children. Appendix A provides a detailed description of data sources.

Data analysis included both *within-case analysis* – including detailed descriptions of each case and the themes within each case – as well as *cross-case analysis* – including thematic analysis across cases and interpretations of key issues/themes within each case and what they mean for understanding the role that the CAI plays in various community organizations.

## RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Results are presented as four distinct case studies. Across the four cases, we weave a consistent, three-part story describing a) the community organization, including the surrounding neighborhood, programs offered, relevant staff, and the structure of the CAI; b) the impacts of the CAI on the community organization and its staff; and c) the impacts of the CAI on selected children and their families within each community organization.

### Case 1: Yawkey Club of Roxbury

#### A. Overview of the Community Organization

##### Community

Roxbury was founded in 1630 and became a part of Boston in 1868. It is now home to a predominantly African-American population. The area is undergoing a transformation, with new businesses, housing, and public spaces. However, it still has difficulties with unemployment, poverty, and crime. At the time of the 2000 census, Roxbury's population was 65% African-American or Black, with 25% Hispanic of any race. As compared to Boston citywide levels, the poverty and unemployment rates were higher, and the median household income was lower.

##### Club Programs

The Yawkey Club of Roxbury is part of the larger network of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Boston (BGCB). It offers a range of programs for youth and teens, ages 6 to 18. During the school year,

Yawkey is open from 1pm-8pm every weekday and Saturday afternoon. The club also offers programming during school vacations and a separate full-day summer program. They serve approximately 1,100 members. Renovated in 2006, the club includes a teen lounge, technology center, gym, pool, music studio, performing arts center, and play areas outside. Annual membership costs \$25 for youth, ages 6-12; and \$5 for teens, ages 13-18.

The children participating in the after school programming rotate among activities in groups based on age. The number of children in each rotation varies. During rotations, children participate in activities including art, karate, dance, music, swimming, and homework.

### Staff

**Ralph Beach** is Yawkey's Art Director and plays a central role in how the partnership with MFA is integrated into Yawkey's programming. He grew up in the neighborhood of Roxbury and used to go to the Boys & Girls Club. Ralph attended art school at the Pratt Institute of Art, Brooklyn, NY, and worked at day care centers, schools, and home-schooled his children. He is a working artist and has been at Yawkey since the winter of 2007, making him relatively new to the CAI. At Yawkey, Ralph is responsible for developing the arts curriculum and leads art activities for the after school program and summer program. He also helps with artistic programming, decorations, and costumes for holidays, plays, and events. Ralph is the key point-person at Yawkey for the CAI, organizing logistics for the *Heroes* Project and chaperoning the *Heroes* sessions at the MFA. Ralph's work with MFA extended to working closely with the museum to get the kiln set up, working with their staff on weekly art classes, helping set up the summer field trips to the MFA, and serving as a resource for other staff members who were interested in finding out more about what the CAI could offer. In addition, Ralph attended this year's MFA Community Forum and took studio classes through the CAI program this summer, according to MFA staff.

**Andrea Swain**, Yawkey's Executive Director has been at Yawkey for seven years and remembers when the CAI started. As Executive Director, she is aware of the MFA partnership and her Art Directors keep her well informed about the program's activities. Though she has attended a couple of events at the MFA, Andrea does not participate directly in the running of the program.

**Cynthia Stone**, Yawkey's Program Generalist, started as an assistant in the art program and was present during weekly art sessions. In the summer, she works with the 10-11 year olds and visited the MFA with them once as a chaperone. Cynthia is the mother of a child who participated in this year's AP and she attended the *Heroes* opening.

**Leah Reich**, Associate Director of Program Services (BGCB), works in program services at the main BGCB office and is a former staff member at the Jordan Club in Chelsea. She has met with MFA staff about the CAI, attended CAI events and meetings, and works with BGCB's Art Directors and other program leaders at the clubs.



**Kathryn Smeglin** started as Yawkey's MFA Community Liaison in the fall of 2007. During the 2007/2008 school year, Kathryn led weekly Artful Adventures sessions at Yawkey, which was a significant part of their CAI participation beyond the AP. In the fall of 2007, Kathryn (and the MFA) helped Yawkey install a kiln for their Art Room and is involved in its maintenance and operation. Kathryn teaches ceramics and had also worked with all of the children prior to *Heroes* on ceramics projects at the club. Kathryn also coordinated Yawkey's participation in the *Heroes* project and led two of the sessions herself when the lead artist was absent.

In addition to these staff members, other Yawkey staff serve as chaperones during MFA field trips and previous Art Directors have also worked with the CAI.

### Arts Programming at the Club

Art is included as one of BGCB's six core areas of programming. Groups of children rotate through Yawkey's Art Room on a daily basis. Yawkey also offers programming in performing arts and music and they collaborate with other cultural institutions like the Institute of Contemporary Art. It appears that the Art Room's School-Age Child Care program focuses on three age groups: 6-7, 8-9, and 10-12.

Staff at Yawkey and BGCB talked about how art is valuable for children's development and learning. Discussing why art was important for their population, Andrea noted, *"I think art stimulates the creativeness, the openness, how you look at life through a different lens. And for our young people to compete globally, they have to be creative, they have to use... the left side of the brain, and it gives them those skill sets."* As an artist himself, Ralph said that *"...I personally believe that art is so connected to life..."*

Leah talked further about art and the CAI's wider impacts: *"It encompasses more than just art, it's learning, it's educational again, it's career exploration, without them really even knowing it. It could be seeing the SMFA, that's college awareness; it's so much more than just art. It's kind of gaining a sense of other cultures, other values; it's so much more than just what some may typically think of as art. It's sculpting, expressing themselves, learning about other cultures, values, beliefs, people."* She also talked more about how cultural learning might be valuable for their members: *"I think [it] helps them learn how to be more accepting, understanding, work with people who are different than them and appreciate those differences - just the whole element of diversity."*

### Description of the CAI Program at Yawkey

Yawkey has been part of the CAI since its inception in 2002/2003. During the most recent CAI year (2007-2008), Kathryn led weekly Artful Adventures (AA) sessions at Yawkey, which was a significant part of their CAI participation beyond the AP. In the fall of 2007, Yawkey got a kiln for their Art Room. Kathryn and the MFA helped get the kiln set up and running. Kathryn herself has done ceramics and taught ceramics and she had a technician from the School of the

Museum of Fine Arts help install the kiln. For the rest of the year, her weekly art sessions focused on ceramics. She started by doing a class on Friday with all of the children in each age group, but there were too many children involved. Eventually she ended up doing a series of ceramics activities with a small group of children within each age group as they cycled through the Art Room in the afternoon. During these sessions, she would show them artwork from the MFA and lead a discussion and then the children would work on ceramics projects, fire their artwork in the kiln, then paint it. She thinks she worked with every child in each of the age groups at least once, and some children participated repeatedly. They also started to incorporate a field trip to the MFA into their sessions. In addition, Kathryn decorated a bulletin board in the Art Room with images and ideas from the MFA and their ceramics projects.

This summer, Yawkey also participated in a series of AA field trips to the MFA. Every week Jason Springer, an MFA instructor and Community Liaison from another CAI group, worked with a group of 10-15 children from each of 3 groups divided by age from Yawkey. He picked them up at the club and drove them to the MFA. They looked at art in the galleries together, made an art project, and then Jason drove them back to the club. Each group had 2-3 chaperones from the club. In order to give each child in each age group an opportunity to participate in an MFA field trip (for example there were 54 total 10-11 year olds), usually a different group of children went each week. By the end of the summer some children had gone to the museum multiple times.

Yawkey has also participated in the CAI in other ways this year. For instance, the MFA arranged for a comic book artist to do workshops at each of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Boston, including Yawkey. There was also a group at the club studying the history and culture of Japan and they were able to attend a lecture and see the Japanese collection at the MFA.

#### Artist Project: *Heroes*

Yawkey children participated in 6 *Heroes* sessions on successive Thursdays from March 6 to April 10, 2008. They devoted their extra 6<sup>th</sup> session to finishing their hero busts. The first session took place at Yawkey; the second session took place at the SMFA and MFA; and the remaining sessions were at the MFA. The sessions at the museum lasted for about 1½ hours in the afternoon (from between 4:20-4:30 to 5:45-5:55). During the project, they did not do any extra sessions at the club; however, Kathryn, Yawkey's MFA Community Liaison, had been working with the children on ceramics projects all year and had told children about the project prior to starting it. Children, staff, and parents from Yawkey attended the exhibition opening in May. There were 4 children who had done the *Heroes* project, all of whom brought family. Ralph also attended, as did a large group of parents and children (about 30) who had not participated in the *Heroes* project.

#### *Participants*

Kathryn and Ralph worked together on determining who would participate in the project and they settled on their 8-9 year-old group for the project. She started to talk about it 4-5 weeks in

advance, and narrowed the group down based on who asked about it and who consistently said they were interested and could make a commitment, and then gave out and collected permission slips.

While seven children from Yawkey participated in at least one session of the *Heroes* project, only five did the project consistently—three girls and two boys. Of these five, three attended all six sessions, one attended five, and one attended four. Most of these children were of African-American background, with one Latino. Two of the children were cousins. Kathryn did not think that any of them had done prior APs, in part because of their age. Based on observations, some had been to the MFA before, some had not.

### *Staff Facilitation*

Shirah led four of the *Heroes* sessions. Kathryn attended all of the sessions and led two of them. Jay, an MFA instructor, helped for four of the sessions though he often joined after the session had started. An additional MFA staff member helped set up one session and helped out during another one. The staff to student ratio, including Yawkey staff, was fairly high, with a lot of opportunity for the children to get one-on-one attention. During the activities, Shirah and the MFA staff worked one-on-one with the children, talking with them about their work and helping with techniques and any problems they were having.

Ralph served as the chaperone for the *Heroes* sessions at the MFA. His role varied – at times he would go off on his own and did not really engage with the activities at all, while at other times he helped the children with their artwork and activities. He also worked on his own bust during some of the sessions and would look at art for himself during the gallery visits. He seemed to have a close relationship with the children and they would talk together and have some funny conversations.

### *Project Details*

The participants in the Yawkey AP program seemed to be a close-knit group, in part perhaps because of the group's small size and consistency and their prior relationship with Kathryn. Ralph described them as a "*small artist community.*" The children made mostly personal hero portraits – four did parents and one did a soldier. They incorporated symbols, though some appeared more intentional or representational than others. One boy did "surgery" on his bust and sculpted a brain to show his father's intelligence. Another showed her mother was a nurse by making a stethoscope. One girl used glasses, hair, and a scar to depict her father while another made a big smile to depict her mother. The boy who did the soldier worked on a helmet and a medal. All in all, the children from Yawkey seemed genuinely engaged in the project and the concept of heroes.

## B. Impacts of the CAI on the Community Organization and its Staff

### Staff's Attitudes towards the MFA

Yawkey staff clearly value their partnership with the MFA, holding it up as a model for future partnerships with other organizations. They felt the museum is clearly committed to their community, the partnership is strong yet flexible, and the programming itself is of the highest quality. In the words of Andrea Swain, Yawkey's Executive Director, *"I would say we have a strong partnership, it's beyond collaboration...the main difference is that it's a collaborative partnership and that we can count on the MFA and the MFA can count on us. In other partnerships, the relationship is not as defined."* Ralph talked about seeing the MFA partnership as a model for other partnerships: *"I would like to have the same relationship that I have with the MFA with the Museum of Science, the Children's Museum, the Boston School of Visual Arts, MassArt,"* adding *"the collaboration with the MFA is absolutely wonderful. I really would like to have that with other people."* Leah reinforced her colleagues' sentiments saying, *"It's just been incredible"* and *"they've been an amazing partner, just open and receptive to feedback too, so it's not 'this is what's on the table, this is the agenda', but really, we've got some input on the process."* She specifically mentioned how the Art Directors now help select the artist for the annual Artist Project from the general community, whereas previously the artist came from the SMFA: *"I think the Art Directors appreciate that, they've been on the selection committee, which is really nice, and they know best what our members may be interested in."*

When asked if their partnership with the MFA was different in any way from other partnerships, Andrea explained that *"the MFA has really reached out to our community, an underserved population, to provide art and art exposure and art history."* Leah described MFA's commitment to outreach as follows: *"They're really, really trying to make this museum open and available to all communities"* and they have *"been working with us and having conversations with us around how they can make that happen and go beyond serving our clubs, to serving the communities we serve as well."*

Staff also valued the high quality of MFA's programming, and its flexibility. Andrea noted that *"the MFA is a wonderful partner in terms of the high caliber of quality programming"* and later talked about *"...the resources the MFA has deployed at the club level, whether it's supplies, staffing, providing programming..."* On a personal level, Ralph talked about feeling that the MFA was theirs: *"Francisco when you can call him up and say, 'Listen I want to bring 15 children over and we want to talk about bugs,' and they have someone who can tailor a tour on that subject – that's like having the museum be yours. I find that personally wonderful."*

Despite the fact that two of the key people working with the CAI have only been on staff for about one year, there were indications that the partnership has grown over the years, that new facets have been introduced this year, and there are ideas about further growth of the partnership. Andrea talked about how the partnership has grown since its inception, noting, *"From my understanding of it, we [BGCB] looked at our art programming and wanted to move it to a new level, so there was direct outreach to the MFA through their community outreach*

department. And from there we have forged an alliance around the annual project, joint staff training, joint staff meetings between MFA, Boys & Girls Club staff, I mean the partnership has flourished.” On a club-wide level, Leah said she had recently met with MFA staff and that they were “talking about how we can work with other program teams as well and integrate art into other program teams.”

### Staff’s Perceptions of the Program’s Impact on their Work

As a working artist, Ralph had been to the MFA many times prior to participating in the CAI. Still, he felt that the program may have changed some of his thinking about the museum, helping him to better appreciate its potential as a resource for him: “I have a greater appreciation for Francisco and Kathryn for seeing how wide open they are, actually very open to the community, which is fabulous.” In particular, Ralph acknowledged the value of the MFA Community Liaison, Kathryn Smeglin. At a general level, he seemed to feel that her presence provided much-needed support for his work: “It helps me a lot. When I first came into this job, I didn’t know what to envision...Kathryn being here has validated a lot of things for me, [helped me to see] that I can do it. I realize that I have been doing it for years...It’s given me a chance to do the things that are in my heart, that I really want to do, like these collaborations with the MFA. Kathryn takes a burden off me [and gives me] peace of mind, if nothing else.”

More specifically, Ralph felt that Kathryn’s presence freed him to work with a smaller group of children, and spend more focused time with them: “Well, what can I tell you about having another body, another adult in the room. It shares my load...That is rare, I hardly get to be with small amount of children...it’s always good when you can get one on one attention.” He also described how his participation in the CAI inspired him as an artist. During the *Heroes* project, he worked on his own portrait bust with the children, and so had an opportunity to do art for himself. Looking forward, Ralph seemed excited about participating in the coming year of the CAI. He enrolled in studio classes this past summer, and was trying to arrange for children from Yawkey to take studio classes as well. At this year’s MFA Community Forum, he also volunteered to be on the MFA’s Advisory Committee.

For Cynthia, the CAI provided her with the opportunity to visit the MFA, something she had never done before despite growing up in the neighborhood: “When I did actually get a chance to go, it was nothing like what I imagined it to be all these years. I thought it was just going to be pictures all over the walls. But you know, it had history to it, like you know where you can view the history, and it had pictures. And it wasn’t only pictures – it was lots of other things.” Reflecting on the role that the CAI may have played relative to her professional practice, Cynthia felt that observing program activities likely gave her some ideas for things she might be able to use in her own work, including some creative projects and team-building exercises.

Leah suggested that the program may make a difference to BGCB Art Directors by giving them an opportunity to work with artists in partnership with the MFA on the AP. On a personal level, she is a member of the MFA, however she admitted that “it was something that wasn’t on the forefront of my thinking, but then it started to be. It actually just became more available to me,

*because I realized and saw all of the great things that were happening there within the community, let alone the incredible exhibits they have there.” Seeing BGCB members participate also makes her proud and happy on a personal level: “I see them enjoying themselves, having fun, getting into the process, committing to the process, feeling proud of the end of result and that makes me proud...puts a smile on my face.”*

### Staff’s Perceptions of the Program’s Impact on the Organization

Yawkey staff reported that the CAI makes a positive difference to the community organization, complementing their own goals and beliefs about the importance of the arts in children’s development and providing additional resources that extend and enhance their existing arts programming. As Andrea described, *“The MFA and the Boys & Girls Club partnership is one of the critical aspects of our programming. As you know the arts are cut in public schools. Exposure to art, art history, art culture, art programming, happens at the club. So it’s an essential component of the service delivery for the club...”* Leah added that with diminishing support for school-based art programs, it is more important for places like the BGCB to provide outlets for members to explore art and express their creativity.

Ralph agreed that the CAI offered new avenues of art exposure for its members and enabled programs at the club to be expanded. He added that the CAI has also provided some basic capacity-building benefits. For instance, after Ralph was hired as Art Director, Kathryn suggested that the MFA could help him install a new kiln that the club had recently purchased. In Andrea’s words, *“...the MFA actually found someone, paid someone to come on site and run the kiln [which meant that] we could offer ceramics...so the MFA has been a partner, they have been a provider of services, they fill the gaps for us in terms of programming.”* During the Artist Project, Ralph and Shirah discussed the possibility of getting a potter’s wheel for the club next year.

The CAI also helps Yawkey meet its center-wide goals dealing with collaboration and exposure to cultural institutions. Andrea talked about how *“one true wider goal is exposure to the cultural institutions in the greater Boston area. We have people that live less than 2 miles from MFA, [yet] don’t access it. And so it’s a way for our youth and parents that we have been able to leverage a community asset like the MFA.”* When asked about how the program helps him or the club meet other goals, Ralph noted *“that the collaboration with the MFA is absolutely wonderful. I really would like to have that with other people.”*

## **B. Impacts of the CAI on Children and Families**

### Children’s Perceptions of Program Benefits for Them

Although researchers attempted to interview 5 participating children and their families, we were only able to speak with one child who did the Artist’s Project at Yawkey. Derricka is 8 years old and in the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. Her hero portrait was of her mother, Cynthia, who works on the Yawkey staff. Derricka has been to the MFA before with family, school, and Yawkey. This was

her first time participating in the AP, but she has been involved in other CAI activities at Yawkey. The reason she wanted to participate in the AP was because she liked working with clay.

When asked what she learned from her experience, Derricka described her work with clay, citing tools and techniques she used. While she admitted not learning anything new about art museums since she had been before, she said the program helped her to see how fun her friend Auriana was. Derricka made her mom as her hero and went to the *Heroes* party with her family.

Derricka had a positive attitude about being in the MFA. She remembered specific works of art – *“when you go upstairs there’s like blocks and squares, I guess shaped together”* – and talked about how seeing art in a museum is different than seeing it in a book – *“you get to see it up really close.”* When asked what she liked best about being in the museum she said *“everything.”*

#### Parents’ Perceptions of Program Benefits for Children

Cynthia, Derricka’s mother, went to the museum for the first time for the *Heroes* opening and visited subsequently through the CAI program. Several themes emerged from our interview with Cynthia, including her feeling that the CAI helped Derricka to further her aptitude for art and that it provided her an important opportunity to visit the museum. In Cynthia’s words, *“...Being a young child, it’s good for her to be active in a variety of different activities, sports, academics...It helps build her character, helps her build self-esteem. I think it helps the children while they’re younger to be able to go to things like that and you know, do activities and see the different cultures, see the different things that are out there at this age. So it’s better to start early. So then you can be interested in it and maybe when she grows up she wants to be an artist, and she has something to look back on.”*

At the *Heroes* opening, Cynthia saw Derricka’s portrait of her, and she described feeling proud that evening: *“I was glad. I felt proud. Out of everybody she could have picked to be her hero, she picked her mom. So I was proud about that.”*

#### Staff’s Perceptions of Program Benefits for Children

First and foremost, staff felt that the CAI exposed children to the museum, and heightened their appreciation for and interest in museum-going. For instance, Andrea talked about children accessing the MFA: *“From having our young people visit the MFA, we have quite a few young people that live in close proximity to the MFA, but have never been there until they join the club and through the MFA and Boys & Girls Club partnership have weekly onsite tours and classes. That whole community link and having a population not necessarily accessing the MFA, now as children, the young people...now see the MFA as part of their larger community.”* Leah echoed these sentiments, saying that the MFA *“...opened their doors and made it available to them. It provided them the opportunity to get out there, it provided the transportation...I*

wouldn't be surprised if some of our families and members probably wouldn't have gone to the MFA for a visit had it not been for the partnership." Ralph talked about children feeling more connected to the museum: "Well, it's right in their neighborhood, but so many things in our neighborhood [make people feel] 'That's for other people.' But the museum lets them know that it's actually for you. It makes them feel more comfortable about going."

In addition, staff talked about the CAI generating further interest in the museum. Many children participated not just in the *Heroes* project, but also the weekly art sessions Kathryn led at the club. Kathryn observed that over the last year, many children showed a greater interest in going to the MFA: "I have noticed an increase in the interest in going to the museum. Like kids want to go and I think that's partly because they notice when other kids go and partly because when other kids go they come back and talk about it." She explained further: "Enthusiasm and the word of mouth...the best thing is to get them excited and to get them to ask. So now when I go, children are asking me 'Can we go to the museum, when are we going to the museum?'" While Kathryn noted that there was variation in the population and that not every child was excited or interested in going to the museum or doing the art projects at the club, the children who participated in the *Heroes* project did consistently show interest and take part in her art sessions at the club. Cynthia mentioned that the children this summer who did AA at the museum were also enthusiastic about revisiting the MFA.

Staff also felt that the CAI exposed children to other adults, an important aspect of their development. In Ralph's words, "It gives another opportunity to go somewhere and see something and be around a different set of adults as well." He praised the work of the MFA Community Liaison in terms of impacting the children in the program: "Kathryn definitely had an impact on the children...they ask for her all the time." He thinks she may have also played a role in personalizing the museum for the children and extended the Museum's hospitality into the community. Ralph noted that when Kathryn comes regularly, they "associate with her with warmth" and she acts as a "face to the museum."

With the new kiln at Yawkey, and Kathryn's weekly Artful Adventures sessions focused on ceramics, some club staff also mentioned that the children may have learned more about working with clay. Cynthia described the children's behavior over time: "At first, a couple of the children complained because they really didn't understand what Kathryn was here to teach them. For a lot of them it was the first time working with clay and the fact of getting their hands dirty, they didn't like that." She added "But once they got the hang of it they were looking forward for her to come on Thursdays." As their skills improved the children became more interested in actively participating in the program.

Staff talked about other positive impacts of the program, like generating pride, confidence, and interest in being an artist, even on the part of boys. At the *Heroes* opening, Leah observed, "There was this one kid I saw show up with his father, and he ran over, and he pointed it out and I said 'hey, tell me about it' and he just spoke with such pride and enthusiasm that you could tell he was feeling really good about that accomplishment. I mean they were all loving the opening." Ralph also talked about the *Heroes* opening generating pride, a sense of being an



artist, and further interest: “...*Those children were beaming when they had the show... They say, ‘Now I’m a real artist.’*” In addition, Ralph felt that many participating children were more confident in their abilities and more committed to finish things they started. Andrea talked about the children feeling like artists and noted that she thinks the program has worked particularly to increase boys’ interest in art: “*The MFA project has made it very cool for boys to be into art...Now you have boys sketching, drawing, wanting to go to the MFA.*”

### Potential Program Benefits for Families

Since researchers were not able to talk with more than one parent at Yawkey, there is not enough data to point to potential program impacts on families. However, it is worth noting that the club is clearly working hard to make families aware of the CAI. Parents have to sign permission forms in order for children to attend the museum; four children who attended the *Heroes* opening brought their parents and at least 30 parents of non-*Heroes* children attended the opening as well. Ralph reported that many of these parents actually explored the museum while they were there. In addition, Ralph distributed free museum tickets to parents; he is not sure if families have used them or not, but he plans to put up flyers to encourage museum visitation this coming year. Ralph also said that parents saw the MFA van at Yawkey on a regular basis over the summer.

## **Case 2: Gerald and Darlene Jordan Club, Chelsea**

### **A. Overview of the Community Organization**

#### Community

Chelsea is a small city located across the Mystic River from Boston. According to the 2000 census, it has a population of roughly 35,000 residents, almost 50% Latino or Hispanic, with almost 60% speaking a language other than English at home. Chelsea has experienced growth and strengthening infrastructure since the 1990s, but there are still challenges, including poverty, with 20% of families below the poverty level, inadequate education, unemployment, and crime.

#### Club Programs

The Jordan Boys & Girls Club of Chelsea offers a range of programs for youth, age 6 to 18. During the school year, there are rotations for different age groups in the after school program, plus some evening programming for older teens. Rotations include arts, education, computer room, game room, and the gym. The club is also open during school vacations, there are field trips offered on weekends, and the club offers a summer program as well. Rotation groups are determined by age and the number of children in each rotation varies. The largest group is the Junior group, aged 9-10 where there can be 35-45 in the group. The pre-teen group is smaller, with 15-20 children. There is a waiting list for the club and many children stay multiple years. The cost is \$25 per year, not including summer camp and extended school vacation. Daily

attendance is about 230, with full capacity at about 400. The club annually serves more than 1,900 youth, with nearly 54% of members attending the club at least once a week.

### Staff

**Alice Vogler** has been the Art Director at Jordan for the past 6 years and has been working with the CAI since its inception saying, *“I feel very glad that I’ve been able to be a part of it from the get-go.”* She is an artist herself and a graduate of the SMFA. Alice plays a pivotal role in the CAI and is the primary contact between the MFA and Jordan. Her responsibilities include arranging all of the logistics for the club, chaperoning and assisting with the Artist Project, and consulting with MFA staff on future partnership possibilities. Prior to working at Chelsea, she worked at the Charlestown Boys and Girls Club and worked in Montessori schools. Alice also serves as the Art Director liaison for the Boys and Girls Club of Boston (BGCB) and is an important sounding board for issues and challenges that have come up during the program relating to the different Community Partners. In her capacity as Art Director at Camp Harbor View, a 4-week summer camp open to Boston youth from at-risk neighborhoods operated by BGCB, she has used the MFA as a resource to provide more arts programming at the camp. Alice has attended a few non-Artist Project events, like artist talks, and would be interested in doing more: *“I have gone to a few things. It’s more just a time thing ... If I had more time, I definitely would do more.”* Neither she nor other staff has been able to attend any of the professional development classes stating, *“I’m 90% sure it’s a time thing.”* She has tried to take advantage of the studio class scholarships, but has not been able to attend, again citing timing.

**Patricia Manalo Bochnak**, Performing Arts Director at Jordan, has worked at Jordan for six years and was one of the only staff members who helped Alice with the CAI program, though more so in the initial years of the project.

**Leah Reich**, Associate Director of Program Services at the Boys & Girls Club of Boston, used to work in the teen programs at Jordan and now works at the BGCB main office, assisting with program services.

**Nina Reck**, MFA Community Liaison, also plays an important role in facilitating the partnership activities. During the school year, Nina was primarily responsible for the AP, helping with logistics, helping to facilitate the art activities and discussions, leading an extra session at the club, and leading the final formal AP session.

Other staff members at Jordan were aware of the MFA partnership and annual Artist Project, though for the most part they were not really involved. Patricia and Leah both recalled that Alice would regularly discuss the partnership in staff meetings. Alice’s teen staff helped out regularly with the program, but other organization staff were not very involved. It is apparent that Alice is central to the partnership. Patricia also noted that this is how partnerships are often dealt with at Jordan – one staff member becomes the primary liaison for logistics and content for a particular partnership. When asked about whether the CAI partnership has spread to other areas of the club, she replied, *“I don’t think that it has. I think it’s the nature of our*

*club. Alice is in charge of that and was so good at doing all that...*" After meeting with Rob and Francisco from the MFA this summer, Leah has started talking with other staff at BGCB, such as directors of operations, technology directors, and school club directors, about how the partnership could be integrated into programs other than arts.

### Arts Programming at the Club

Art has a strong presence at Jordan. Each group rotates through the art room daily during the school year and art is included in summer programming. In addition to visual arts, an average of 15 performing arts classes are offered per week during the school year, including ballet, tap, and theater, with biannual recitals. Night programs are sometimes offered related to the arts, such as classes on photography and street art. Other one-off programs are periodically offered, like an art field trip class. In the past, children have had an opportunity to participate in art programs with partners such as Starbucks, the Institute of Contemporary Art, and Young Audiences.

The staff at Jordan are philosophically committed to including arts in their programming. Their Art Director feels that art is *"a vital part of kid's lives"* because *"I think some children need a different way of seeing things."* Another staff member commented that it is *"important to offer a creative outlet for our members"* while another noted that art is about showing children *"their potential to create"* and that it is a vehicle she uses to help these children understand other cultures. Staff also stated that children have little opportunity to do art in schools and that by offering art every day at the club, they can make a difference to the community.

### Description of the CAI Program at Jordan

The Jordan Club has been participating in the CAI program since its inception in 2001-2002. While their participation centers around the Artist Project, according to staff there are several program components outside of the project. The club attends perhaps 2 or 3 non-AP related events each year. For example, in response to a communication from Francisco about an exhibition at MassArt on Mexican street art, Alice took a group of teens who were doing a street art workshop with her to the exhibition last winter. She has also given tickets to the teen staff a few times to take the younger children to the museum. Also this year, the MFA arranged for a comic book artist to do workshops at each of the Boston Boys and Girls Clubs, including Jordan. Jordan does not appear to have frequently used the Artful Adventure program separately from the AP – they did no extra AA visits this year. Last year however, they did an extra month of activities at the museum after the Artist Project. Also, they distribute free tickets offered by the museum to kids in the AP and families attending Art parent nights.

In addition to the more traditional AP and AA sessions, Alice has extended the MFA partnership to include Camp Harbor View (CHV), a summer camp launched in 2007 operated by BGCB where Alice serves as Art Director. Before they started working with campers this year, Nina, Jordan's current Community Liaison, and MFA staff led a session for CHV counselors, essentially going through the same kind of activities they would be doing with the children. Alice indicated

she was hoping this would help the counselors feel more comfortable in helping kids during their art projects.

### Artist Project: *Heroes*

Jordan participated in 5 formal Artist Project sessions on 5 successive Wednesdays from January 9, 2008 to February 6, 2008. The first session took place at the club; the second session took place at the SMFA and MFA; and all remaining sessions were at the MFA. The sessions lasted for about two hours or a little more in the evening, after regular After School hours (6pm-8pm for first session at the club, 6:45pm-8:45pm or 9pm for the other four sessions). In addition to the formal sessions, Nina also led one session at the club for the *Heroes* Project participants. Alice conducted related activities with the larger after-school group, including a hero collage activity and monument-making project. Alice also created a bulletin board focused on heroes in the art room at Jordan. Children, staff and parents from Jordan attended the exhibition opening in May. There were 11 children total who attended, 6 who had done the *Heroes* Project and 5 who had not. There were 2 parents at the reception, with Alice and another Jordan staff member. An additional mother and child who had participated this year arrived at the end of the reception.

### *Participants*

Alice approached children who she thought would be interested, would be able to commit to doing the project for 5 weeks, whose parents would support their participation, and who she thought would work well as a group. She specifically targeted their Junior group (ages 9 and 10, though some turned 11 during the year). Eleven children participated, 8 girls and 3 boys. Attendance was very consistent, with only one or two children missing each session and no child missing more than one session. Most of the children were of Hispanic background, with one of Caucasian, and one of Cape Verdean background. There were a mixture of children who had done the AP before and children who were new to the project. Every now and then some of the children would speak in Spanish with each other and one girl wrote in Spanish when describing her hero's qualities. However, none of the children seemed to have trouble understanding the activities and discussions due to language problems.

### *Staff Facilitation*

Shirah led the first 4 sessions. Nina, Jordan's Community Liaison, attended 4 sessions and helped with logistics, assisted in facilitating the art activities and discussions, and led an extra session at the club and the final formal Artist Project session. Various MFA interns also helped out during sessions including Jake, who assisted during each of the sessions at the MFA. Shirah, Nina, Jake, other interns, and Alice would work with the children one on one during the activities, talking with them about their work and helping them. There were usually 4 or 5 staff members (including Alice) to about 10 children.

This year, Alice played a key role in the Artist Project. Not only was she on the artist selection committee, she worked hands-on with the children, managing behavior, explaining activities and concepts, helping them with their projects and leading discussions. She also drove children to the museum and was a chaperone for their museum visits. Alice knows each child personally and was able to give direct suggestions about how this year's program benefited them. She also kept communication channels with parents open, talking to them as they came into the organization and reminding children to talk to their parents about the program. Her collaboration with the artist, Shirah, involved discussing parent-community involvement in the project, project concepts, implementation plans, as well as ideas for continuing to work on the project outside of the formal MFA sessions. Of all the Community Partner staff from other clubs who chaperoned the AP sessions, Alice was the most involved in helping children and facilitating the art activities and discussions. Her commitment to the program was so profound that one of the AP participants actually chose Alice as his hero.

### *Project Details*

The children from Jordan completed portrait busts of personal, historical, or social heroes, ranging from Rosa Parks, to one of their parents, to Picasso, to Alice. They all used symbols to indicate specific qualities of their heroes, and those present at the final session were able to articulate what symbol they had used and why. In addition, the children showed prior knowledge about the MFA, about art, and about working with clay. During the initial AP session, Alice commented that *"quite a few of you have been there before."*

## **B. Impacts of the CAI on the Community Organization and Its Staff**

### Staff's Attitudes towards the MFA

Former and current staff members from Jordan characterized their relationship with the MFA in positive ways and believed that the museum, particularly as represented by Rob Worstell and Francisco Mendez-Diez, was both open and dependable. Like staff from Yawkey, they valued the museum's quality programming. They commented that the MFA is willing to learn from the past, is interested in building a mutually beneficial partnership, and is committed to serving their community.

Alice felt the museum is a good resource noting, *"Any time I need anything or have a question resource-wise, Francisco's great. It's not something I probably utilize as much as I could, but I definitely have and there's never been a time that they haven't been able to help."* This dependability of the MFA is also important to Alice: *"I never worry about anyone showing up or the quality of what they're doing."* Alice also felt that Francisco has gotten to know her: *"...Francisco knows how I am, gives me that space and that room to be able to really put my voice in, which is nice and I appreciate that too."* Their previous Community Liaison, Christie, also played an important role. Alice talked about how they worked well together and how some of the girls who did the project last year liked Christie and the project so much that they asked

Alice if they could go back to the museum. This initiated another month of activities at the museum and they were able to include some children who hadn't done the AP that year. Alice has worked with other partners on art projects (Starbucks, the ICA, Young Audiences), but she agreed that the relationship with the MFA is unique.

Leah responded that the relationship *"feels like a partnership"* that *"works both ways."* She also mentioned Rob and Francisco specifically: *"They're just amazing, easy to talk to, very open and available."* Later she added, *"They've been an amazing partner, just open and receptive to feedback too, so it's not 'This is what's on the table, this is the agenda', but really we've got some input on the process."* She perceived that the MFA is committed to serving their community: *"...They're really, really trying to make this museum open and available to all communities."*

At the same time, the staff at Jordan also made some suggestions about how the partnership could be enhanced even further for them. Alice pointed out that *"every year...is new challenges, new project, new artist."* She discussed some negative interactions with museum guards, some lack of clarity on professional development eligibility for staff, a wish for further information about the projects ahead of time, and some ambiguity of the role the Art Directors play during the AP. Patricia mentioned that *"one of the hardest struggles we've had were with the teaching artists"* and trying to find someone who is a great artist and who works well with children in their particular after school environment. That said, staff clearly perceived that the MFA is willing to listen to ideas and make changes. When discussing the program, Alice said, *"It's an ongoing conversation and the museum is always...Rob and Francisco are both very open and very dedicated to learning from past years and moving forward in a positive way and that's never wavered, ever."* In a later interview she added, *"I do feel like there is a very true desire that they have to see this through and to have this continue, which is great."*

#### Staff's Perceptions of the Program's Impact on their Work

Alice is an artist; she attended the SMFA, she knows the MFA very well, she has been an art educator for years, and she has worked in this particular community for quite some time. Even with this depth of experience and expertise, she felt that the CAI has made a difference to her, both personally and professionally. First, the program allowed her to connect with children in ways she might not be able to do otherwise. Like Ralph at Yawkey, she felt that the CAI allowed her to spend more one on one time with the children, which she describes as her *"favorite part of the day because I can have personal conversations and I can work one on one with them."* Second, Alice also felt that the program supports and extends current programming at the club, helping her to give *"the children as many different notions of where art could take them"* and *"expanding their idea of what art is."* It also helps reinforce the idea that art is useful not just for its own sake, but *"art as a wider lens for politics and religion and community and ideas... It's something I think they're getting by going to the museum."*

Third, Alice felt strongly that the AP has had an effect on her own practice: *"It always makes me think about how I'm teaching."* She said that participating in the CAI and working with artists

and other art educators, beyond the youth educators she usually works with, has given her ideas about new ways of approaching things or explaining things. For example, she liked an activity Shirah led combining working on clay heads with the game musical chairs: *"It's nice to see how different people approach the kids and the way they deal with certain situations that come up over and over again while teaching art."* She also appreciated how the program has allowed her to experience the MFA in new ways, saying that *"more than anything I feel like I know the museum better."* Specifically, the program exposed her to resources she was not previously aware of, like the artists talks, and got her into the museum more this year as well: *"... I am more in the museum loop than I would have been otherwise. I'm not sure I would have sought that out very much because it's kind of expensive also."* Finally, Alice felt that the CAI also keeps her more closely connected to the SMFA than she may have done otherwise as an alumna.

Alice was quick to point out that while the CAI has heavily impacted her work, she is not sure the program has had much impact on other staff at Jordan: *"There really hasn't been too many people really involved with it, at all."* She suggested this may have something to do with *"figuring out the relevance to other staff and how they could utilize it and how it could help them in something that they're doing."* She was open to the idea of finding ways to include other staff.

In talking with other staff, however, there was some preliminary evidence to suggest that the CAI has broadened their experiences with the MFA and enriched their role as educators within the club. For instance, although Patricia is a performing artist, she admitted that she probably would not have visited the MFA as much if it had not been for the CAI: *"Because I've had to go, or have helped out, I think that made me look at things differently too."* While at the museum, she was interested in the art that she saw – *"I think I went with them to see the actual pieces and how they drew it out was really interesting to me—how they did the sounds..."* – and in the ways in which exhibitions were tailored to children on field trips – *"to see these children realize their different potential in a different medium is always rewarding."* For her, *"seeing the children have fun and seeing the children enjoy it and get something out of it is probably what I enjoy the most."*

Leah suggested that the program may have made a difference to BGCB Art Directors by giving them an opportunity to work with artists in partnership with the MFA on the AP. On a personal level, she is a member of the MFA, however she admitted that *"it was something that wasn't on the forefront of my thinking, but then it started to be. It actually just became more available to me, because I realized and saw all of the great things that were happening there within the community, let alone the incredible exhibits they have there."* Seeing BGCB members participate also made her proud and happy on a personal level: *"I see them enjoying themselves, having fun, getting into the process, committing to the process, feeling proud of the end of result and that makes me proud...puts a smile on my face."*

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### Staff's Perceptions of the Program's Impact on the Organization

Physical evidence of Jordan's participation in the CAI greets visitors as they enter the art room. A sculpture produced during the first Artist Project sits outside the art room door; inside, framed images from the Animation Artist Project hang on the walls. According to staff, the sculpture has generated interest among visitors and members. Alice reportedly uses it as a "prop" to talk about the MFA program with prospective families and children: in the words of Patricia, *"The sculpture's been there and a lot of people when they take tours, like prospective members, parents, prospective funders...that's something they see right away and they ask about."* Although the Jordan club has always had a long waiting list, Alice believes that the MFA partnership strongly appeals to prospective parents who are particularly interested in Jordan's arts programming.

Jordan staff were quick to clarify that even without the CAI, they would still take the children to visit the MFA. Even before the CAI started, Alice recalled taking groups to the MFA through the Artful Adventures program. In the words of Patricia, *"I feel like she [Alice] is the sort of person that would have made things happen regardless if there was a project demanding that, like she was taking children to the MFA before it started, but not obviously to the level of collaboration."* As was the case for Yawkey, at the Jordan club the CAI seemed to enhance and enrich what they already do relative to arts programming, moving their programs to *"a different level"* to use Leah's words. When asked how she would describe the CAI, Alice said it *"expanded what the club is offering and is able to offer."* Specifically, she felt that the program helped the club to expand children's development in and through the arts: *"It extended what I was already doing in a new way and it was free and it was nice and they just showed up and did the workshops and it was easy."*

According to Alice, building strong partnerships is also an important BGCB organizational goal, including partnerships that extend through the club network: *"Any partnership that can break the barriers of one club is also definitely sought after."* Another goal they have is to bring the children together from different clubs more: *"It's also very much about the children meeting other children from different communities within Boston."* The MFA project, especially with the annual reception open to all BGCB members and families, helps them achieve this goal as well.

The CAI program also allows the club to reach out to children in important ways. For example, Alice talked about how one of this year's "red flag children", a kid that other staff are hesitant to have in their programs, was enrolled in the Artist Project. Alice was able to let other staff know that this child was doing really well and being responsible in this project: *"All staff can't outreach to all children and they're not going to connect with all children."*



## C. Impacts of the CAI on Children and Families

### Children's Perceptions of Program Benefits for Them

Five children aged 10-11 years were interviewed as part of this study: Jonathon, Junior, Jaylen, Isabella, and Elizabeth. All of the children expressed an interest in art independent of the *Heroes* project. They all talked about doing art at home and doing art in school, though mostly only once or twice a week. Isabella and Elizabeth said their favorite activity at the club was art and Isabella talked about liking clay in particular. Elizabeth and Jaylen talked about taking other art classes on weekends or after-school. There was also a range in their exposure to the MFA. Both Isabella and Jaylen reported going to the MFA with their families, before their participation in the AP. Isabella in fact said she had been to the MFA a lot. They also both participated in the AP last year. For Jonathan, Elizabeth, and Junior, their first visits to the MFA were through the CAI program – Jonathan did last year's AP, Elizabeth attended some AA-type sessions at the MFA last year, and Junior's first visit was for the *Heroes* project. None of these three children had been to the MFA with their families, though Junior and Jonathan talked about potentially going in the future.

All children reported positive experiences during their museum visits. When asked how she felt at the museum, Elizabeth said, *"I felt like I had a lot of energy, like a lot of surprise in me, 'cause of the painting and the artists that I loved like um, Vincent Van Gogh, I love his stuff."* Junior, the only one who had not been to the MFA before, described the museum as *"awesome."* He said he chose to participate because he likes going on field trips and *"'cause it would be my first time going to an art place."* Indeed, prior positive experiences influenced their decision to participate in the *Heroes* project. When asked about whether he liked being in the museum, Jonathan said yes and explained that he decided to participate this year *"because I have fun, 'cause I always have fun like going to the Museum of Fine Arts, I like going there."* When Isabella was asked how she feels at the MFA, she said *"I'm excited 'cause I want to see all the pictures and the statues and stuff. And I'm happy because we're just there and it's fun to be there."* There was evidence that they remembered prior visits, that they recognized and were interested in specific pieces of art, and that they were getting to know the MFA. Jonathan, Jaylen, Isabella, and Elizabeth all described some of the activities they did at the museum last year as part of CAI programs. Jonathan described the museum as having *"...sculptures and different kinds of art from different places, like Africa, China..."*

When asked about how looking at art in a museum is different than looking at art in a book all the children articulated reasons why they prefer looking at art in person. Junior said he would prefer seeing a painting *"because you can see more closely than a book."* Jaylen described the differences between looking at something in a book vs. at a museum as, *"it's different because like you can actually see it like in 3-D and in real life. In a book or on the computer, you can just see it like flat – you really don't get to see anything, like you can barely see the details, like up close, you can really see it, like really good – it looks really better than it does on a computer or book."* Elizabeth talked about being able to understand a painter's intentions better in person explaining that *"you can tell what he's doing"* and later *"the painting would be more better"*

*because you could see what he's trying to explain to us, what he's doing, how he's feeling."*

While they all enjoyed visiting the museum and seeing art in person, some children expressed frustrations about having to be on 'good' behavior in the museum.

Some of the children also seemed to learn and enjoy things about the *Heroes* project in particular. Jonathan said *"that we got to play with clay and I like playing with clay."* Isabella agreed, explaining that she likes clay because *"you can just do like anything with it."* Jaylen on the other hand talked about liking the fact that this project allowed her to make choices saying, *"I liked it because you got to choose your own hero."* Jonathan also talked about learning some things about Alice, whom he chose as his hero. He learned that she does not like clay that much, but loves painting. Elizabeth seemed to connect more with the hero concept as well. She said one of the reasons she wanted to participate was because she was excited to share information about her hero: *"I want to do that project to tell the people who's my hero and why he's my hero and how did he become a hero."* Some children expressed frustration over not having enough time to do their project.

When the children were asked about whether they thought their experience with the AP changed their ideas about art and museums, Jaylen talked about how being at the museum and working on the *Heroes* project helped her understand that not all art has to be realistic: *"Before I came to the Boys and Girls Club, I would just think like art was like paints and just making people or animals and how people would draw things that like a real thing and when I came here and the art museum, I noticed that you don't have to make it like the exact picture, you can just do it like in different ways that you want to."* Junior, who had not been to the museum before, was able to articulate some more hands-on things he learned. He said, *"I can do things with clay much better than I used to do"* adding, *"now I can draw better, and I don't mess up as much,"* a skill which he attributed to both the *Heroes* project and working with Alice.

#### Parents' Perceptions of Program Benefits for Children

The mothers of Isabella, Jaylen, Elizabeth, and Junior were asked to discuss their children's participation in this year's Artist Project. The interview was conducted in English, which may have been challenging for some parents. All of the girls' mothers talked about their daughter's love of art; Junior's mother pointed out how happy the museum program made him. Parents reported that all four of the children do art of some kind at home, and some have extended their participation in various art programs, e.g., enrollment in special art classes in school, attending Somerville Open Studios, etc. Due to her participation in last year's Artist Project, Isabella and her siblings enrolled in summer courses through the CAI scholarship program; in addition, Isabella uses her digital camera to take pictures at home, inspired by last year's AP. All of the mothers felt the CAI helped their children to extend and enhance their existing interests in art.

When asked about why it may be important for their children to participate in the program, parents spoke about the value they place on the program, the museum visits, and doing art. They agreed that in some ways, the Artist Project fills a gap that is not filled by school. Jaylen's

mother talked about how *“sometimes the schools are kind of limited on what they offer.”* Isabella’s mother talked about the museum offering a *“different style of teaching,” “more pushing towards getting their own self expression”* and that *“in the school they have to do it, at the museum they choose to.”* Parents felt that making art in general is important for their children. Jaylen’s mother talked about it being an *“outlet for that individual child to be able to express themselves.”* Elizabeth’s mother talked about it supporting their imagination. Isabella’s mother talked about art being useful for many things saying, *“art is everywhere, in every subject, everywhere in society, in architecture, in building, construction, whatever field they choose, there’s art there, so I think it’s a good thing.”*

Parents felt that participating in the CAI has had a positive impact on their children; specifically the sense of pride they feel, increased self-esteem, and happiness expressed by their children as they do art. According to Isabella’s mother, *“I know Isabella feels very proud”* and talks about framing some of the work she does. She also said, *“I feel it boosts her self esteem too.”* Jaylen’s mother agreed, and added that her daughter has a tendency to be shy, but this program is *“something that’s helping her come out of her shell.”* Junior’s mother talked about how Junior would go to the museum with Alice *“and he comes home so happy,”* adding *“I believe it is good for him.”*

When Elizabeth’s mother was asked why it might be important for her daughter to go to the museum, she said that *“I like to keep her busy doing things that is good for her.”* For some parents, a visit to the museum was seen as a special event. Isabella’s mother talked about children enjoying it as a night out: *“They like that, they feel like they are very special.”* She added that *“I think for them to go to the museum, it’s like going in to a palace”, “It’s just like transporting them to another world...”* Jaylen’s mother also said that her daughter *“enjoys spending time with Alice, so I can only imagine that going to the museum is reinforcing that...”*

Overall, parents clearly perceived that the CAI was a valuable experience for their children. Jaylen’s mother summed it up in this way: *“Because of them feeling important, selected, participating, interacting with adults, doing projects, expressing themselves with the art, I think that it’s a very, very, very positive program.”* Isabella’s mother felt the program has long-term effects that are hard to identify now: *“It’s hard to see the effect that this program has on a kid on the short term, but in the long range, it does have an effect. Because we can see little glimpses now, how they are taking interest, how they are looking forward to the program. So the real impact, we’re not going to know it now, but it’s going to affect whatever career they choose, whatever path they want to follow.”*

#### Staff’s Perceptions of Program Benefits for Children

Alice felt that children and families *“absolutely”* benefit from Jordan’s relationship with the MFA: *“... It has something to do with the longevity of it”* and the small group of children who do the project each year *“are very changed and very influenced by it.”* Patricia agreed, saying, *“I think that it’s made a difference in the children that have participated and I think to an extent, the larger community.”*

Staff reported that the CAI was an opportunity for children to get out of Chelsea. Although the MFA is only 7 miles from the club, most children do not visit. According to Patricia, these children rarely leave Chelsea; as such, *“the exposure of seeing outside of Chelsea is a big deal and very important for them.”* Staff also felt that the program exposed children to the museum. In Alice’s words, *“One of the goals always with this project has been to make the children feel comfortable in the MFA. And I definitely think a lot of the children that are doing the project right now, did it last year. And so that comfort level and them remembering what was up on the wall when we walked in.”* Alice hopes this experience will also make them feel *“more comfortable in their futures”* and about leaving Chelsea.

Staff also talked about how the program instilled a sense of pride in participating children. Patricia explained that children in the AP feel privileged to go to the museum and participate in a special program: *“I think that the element of their project being able to be seen by not just Chelsea or not just the club, not just parents, brings a new element to that...For these children to know that other people are going to see it, to see other people actually see it, I think that’s an element that obviously wouldn’t otherwise exist – that’s exciting for them and important for them to know that they are appreciated beyond Chelsea and beyond their parents, to know that they can be a part of something greater. I don’t know that they actually think that and know that yet, but I think somewhere in there, it’s there.”*

Alice agreed that the program allowed her to connect to children in a way she would not be able to do otherwise: *It “ups the ante...which I feel like is a great way to make kids grow naturally.”* She reported, *“I’ve never been let down by a kid in that way when I give them that.”* In particular, Alice described one boy who did the Artist Project this year. He did not do a lot of art when he was in the art rotation, but he had expressed interest a few times; through the project, she saw him *“shine a little bit.”* Alice described this boy’s involvement further: *“I’ve just been amazed with him this whole time.” He has always been introverted and has a difficult family life with an abusive, alcoholic father, whom his mother left recently...His mom has been so appreciative and so happy that [he] is involved in it [the Artist Project], which is great....His actions are being rewarded in some way and I think it’s something that probably he hasn’t had too much in his life.”* Later she went on to say, *“He’s really surprised me... I think there’s a lot of very true creativity in him, which has been really exciting to see... I know he doesn’t get support in a lot of other things, so I think it’s a great thing for him to feel supported, and feel like he’s good at something.”*

Leah talked about the CAI helping children with career exploration, among other things: *“It encompasses more than just art. It’s learning, it’s educational again, it’s career exploration, without them really even knowing it. It’s kind of gaining a sense of other cultures, other values. It’s so much more than just what some may typically think of as art. It’s sculpting, expressing themselves, learning about other cultures, values, beliefs, people.”* She thinks the fact that children and staff get to work with artists is a special opportunity. Nina, Jordan’s Community Liaison, agrees that it might be good for children to meet professional artists and visit the museum school, because it gives them the idea that they could be an artist when they grow up.

She thinks that the children enjoyed the program and had fun in the museum, and that talking about the artwork may also help them learn to be analytical.

### Potential Program Benefits for Families

There is some initial evidence to suggest that the CAI may impact the families of participating children as well. For instance, all children interviewed reported talking about the *Heroes* project with their families in some way. Two of the mothers interviewed, Jaylen and Isabella's mothers, also talked about having conversations with their daughters about heroes as a result of the program. In addition, after last year's Artist Project, Isabella's mother enrolled her and her siblings in summer courses at the MFA. This family already visited the museum independently, but her mother said they would not have been able to afford the classes on their own.

Alice reportedly distributed the free museum tickets given to the club, and during their interviews, two children talked about sharing these tickets with family and friends. In addition, families were invited to the annual exhibition opening. This year, 3 parents attended the *Heroes* opening at the MFA. At the opening, some of the children also showed off their heroes to their parents and some of the heroes were family members.

As discussed earlier, staff felt that the CAI provided families with an opportunity to come to the museum – something they likely would not do on their own. According to Patricia, *"Many of these parents are working more than one job, their priorities are necessities..."* Leah agreed, speculating that the CAI may make it possible for their families to go to the MFA when they might not go otherwise: *"The museum opened their doors and made it available to them, provided them the opportunity to get out there..."*

## **Case 3: Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center**

### **A. Overview of the Community Organization**

#### Community

The Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center (BCNC) is a community organization that serves a wide population through a variety of programs, from early childhood to adult education. It is located in the heart of Boston's Chinatown neighborhood. It is the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest Chinatown in the United States, and is a commercial and cultural center for the Asian population in the Boston area. According to the 2000 census profile, almost 70% of the population is Asian with more than half being foreign born as compared to a quarter citywide. Of the total population, 62% speaks an Asian language, with the younger population having better English-speaking skills than the older population. Compared to Boston citywide levels, the median household income in Chinatown is lower, the poverty rate is higher, the education for adults is lower, and the unemployment rate is higher.

## Center Programs

BCNC has programs for children, youth, and adults, including immigrants. Among other programs, they offer childcare, family services, recreation, summer programs, and ESL courses. Programs are offered 6 days a week. BCNC is one of 46 organizations that are part of the Boston Centers for Youth & Families, operated through the city of Boston. The BCNC was also active in the design of Josiah Quincy School (JQS) where its Red Oak After-School Program resides. Although BCNC joined the full CAI partnership in 2005, they have been participating in the MFA's Artful Adventures (AA) program since 1989, as part of their commitment to include arts in their programming. With the CAI, the MFA has participated more deeply in programming at the community center itself. In the past year alone, the MFA and BCNC have collaborated on several new initiatives through the CAI.

The Red Oak After-School Program, which is the department that works most closely with the CAI, serves children aged 5-13 years, who are grouped according to their age and ability level. There are six age groups and each group has 2 leaders, with roughly 20 children in each group. In November 2007, enrollment was at about 120 children. Programming starts with a snack and then moves through different blocks, like gym, swimming, homework, arts and crafts, etc. Each group has a leader responsible for leading the daily programming, including lessons offered as children finish their homework. Fridays they offer enrichment or "club" activities, like juggling, music, science, and art. During the school year, Red Oak operates Monday through Friday from 3:00-6:00pm. Full-time programming also occurs during school holidays and over summer vacation, offered 8:30 am - 6:00 pm. They use a sliding scale fee and also offer subsidized slots. There is a waitlist for the program. Children are primarily, though not entirely, from the JQS. The Red Oak program serves a primarily Asian population, with some African American, Latino, and Caucasian children. Many of the adults and parents involved in Red Oak speak Chinese, and some are not as fluent in English. Many of the children speak both English and Chinese fluently.

## Staff

**Jason Chu**, Education Director, Red Oak, is the BCNC staff member who has worked most closely with the MFA in the past year. He started at BCNC almost two years ago as the Education Coordinator at Red Oak; recently, he was appointed Education Director. He grew up in Western Massachusetts, but now lives in Chinatown. While he does not have formal art training, he has a personal interest in the arts; he plays more than one instrument, sings, and recently took up acrylic painting. He has a Master's degree in Special Education and is certified as an elementary school teacher. Jason does not directly teach the children in the Red Oak program; rather, he mentors the group leaders, fills in for them at times, manages partnerships (like the one with the MFA), deals with the After-School curriculum, and coordinates and schedules programs like the weekly enrichment clubs. He started working directly with the MFA about a year ago and meets with MFA and BCNC staff about the CAI. He handled the selection process for the *Heroes* Project participants, coordinated logistics for the *Heroes* Project, chaperoned two of the sessions himself, and attended the opening. In addition, Jason coordinated the Friday Artful Adventures club and spoke about BCNC's partnership with the

MFA at the MFA's Community Forum.

**Giles Li**, Arts Coordinator, BCNC, has worked at BCNC for almost 2 years and has a background as a writer and performer. He is responsible for providing expanded arts and enrichment opportunities for the entire BCNC community, from toddlers to senior citizens. Giles has been involved in the CAI program this year, managing tasks such as arranging for MFA instructors to lead AA classes and coordinating MFA participation in BCNC events.

**Joseph Wu**, Family Services Director, BCNC, manages family services at BCNC. He was trained as a clinician and was doing child therapy before he joined BCNC in 2002. He coordinates services for families, such as seminars and training in areas like the American education system, special education, healthcare, and children with special needs and disabilities. He also organizes field trips and group activities for families. Joseph also started working with the MFA CAI program this year by coordinating the Special Arts classes and the Family Day/ESOL tour as well as helping with translating for his group.

**Elaine Ng**, Executive Director, BCNC, was appointed to the position a couple of years ago after working at the agency for 13 years. Elaine participates in planning meetings and discussions for CAI programs.

**Sadada Jackson**, the Red Oak Program Director, has helped coordinate aspects of Red Oak's involvement in MFA programming this year and attended the *Heroes* Project opening.

**Cynthia Woo**, BCNC's MFA Community Liaison, started working with BCNC as an intern in the winter of 2007, and officially became their Community Liaison in the fall of 2007. Not only did she help manage logistics and help with art activities and discussions during this year's Artist Project, but she also regularly taught a Friday art club at BCNC and was an instructor for the Special Arts classes. Cynthia had a consistent presence at BCNC and attended many meetings with BCNC and MFA staff.

**Kristyn Novotny**, MFA, led regular Artful Adventures classes as part of this program.

Various staff members from Red Oak chaperoned the *Heroes* Project sessions and the regular AA visits to the museum. Red Oak instructors also helped Cynthia with her Friday AA club.

### Arts Programming at the Center

BCNC places great importance on enrichment and the arts in serving their constituents particularly immigrants, children, and families. According to Elaine, *"Art has always been a very large piece of the Asian culture, as it is for many cultures. And for our organization, we try to have more of a focus, a deliberate intentional focus on the arts, because once people immigrate to this country they become so focused on survival, that they lose sight of the beauty and the strength of your culture, as well as being able to appreciate other people's culture. And art is a perfect lens for that. We think of it as an important tool for allowing our population to find the*

*connection back to their cultural roots, and appreciate the arts, not just in the Asian culture, but as a way to integrate other cultures into their experience and into their acculturation process as a way to understand the world around them. And just to beautify their lives.”*

BCNC offers arts programming in a variety of ways. First, the Center has an Arts Coordinator, Giles Li, whose job is to provide expanded arts programming for the community. He runs a new series of after-school programs for Josiah Quincy School students that include weekly art, performing arts, and recreational classes. In the Red Oak After-School Program, while art is not formally a part of every day’s agenda, there is a focus on art. As their Executive Director, Elaine Ng, described it, *“our After-School program has always had a large art focus ....”* Group leaders offer art activities during their lessons, there is an arts closet where instructors can get supplies, and art is included in the enrichment programs or “clubs” they offer on Fridays. Art sessions are also offered during their summer programs. This summer, BCNC will have two arts project blocks during the week, the children will work with some artists in residence, and they plan for the children to work on a public art project. BCNC also offers cultural, performing, and visual arts classes in its Sunshine Saturdays program for children, youth, and adults. Elaine noted that *“for our organization, we try to have ... a deliberate intentional focus on the arts...”*

Both Joseph and Jason talked about art giving children an opportunity to express themselves, gain social skills, and create something tangible they can share with their families. Jason says art is *“very hands on and it gets their creativity going too.”* When asked about why this type of expression is important, he describes the tangibility of art, how it is *“very material. It’s very visual and visible.”* Joseph added that art can help children learn social skills, learn to express themselves, work with their hands, follow instructions, and can help parents and children communicate. Specifically, he mentioned children with special needs noting that art can be *“a medium for them to learn social skills and also learn to express themselves... it can be therapeutic, in a way, that could help them to develop skills, like motor skills or attention skills, organizational skills...”* adding for *“a lot of children with difficulty expressing themselves through words”* art can *“provide a medium for them to communicate.”* Giles felt that art can also help stimulate collaboration and commitment. Making art is also a hands-on opportunity and staff described how it can be a mechanism for communication between children and parents. Joseph said that *“I would like adults to learn to enter a children’s world through art, instead of just expecting them to act like more adults.”*

With these attitudes towards art, it is no wonder that offering arts and enrichment activities is important to the organization and that this is one reason they value the MFA’s partnership. Elaine specifically spoke about the idea of offering a “balanced” after school-program that included academics and art: *“Because it is an after-school program and we are an immigrant-based community, we also have to focus on academics and achievement and recreation because our goal is to have a balanced program. But art has always been one of those pieces that enables us to have a balanced program.”* Jason explained it as trying to *“incorporate as much enrichment programming as we can,”* as opposed to only focusing on homework or academics. He went on to add that the MFA has helped them to make the argument to parents that *“...play and enrichment actually helps them out in their academics.”*



### Description of the CAI Program at BCNC

Although BCNC joined the CAI program in 2005, they quickly integrated the program into the center and have made extended use of the museum partnership and resources. In the past year alone, the MFA and BCNC have collaborated on several new initiatives that were leveraged through the CAI program. In fact, Jason described the partnership as spreading like “wildfire.” First of all, the Red Oak After-School program participates in the annual Artist Project and exhibition openings; *Heroes* was their third Artist Project. In addition, Red Oak participates in regular Artful Adventures visits, sending groups of children to the MFA, especially during school vacation weeks. These are led by various MFA instructors on various themes. During one AA session this year, approximately a dozen children and two chaperones from Red Oak toured the museum looking at pieces from various times and cultures focused on celebrations and then, working on the floor in one of the galleries, made and decorated their own little dragons which were used to celebrate Chinese New Year. Jason also distributed free museum tickets to families who asked for them, and used the tickets as incentives or prizes during Center raffles.

Starting this year, Cynthia Woo, their Community Liaison, provided an Artful Adventures Club for Red Oak children on Friday afternoons. Friday was their “club” day, when they offered various enrichment opportunities for the children. The children picked out the clubs they wanted to do and ranked them. They limited Cynthia’s AA Club to 13 children, including children from their Group 3 and higher (age 8+) for the most part. They offered the clubs in cycles of about two-months at a time and did at least 3 cycles of the AA Club. Cynthia led activities focused on things like African art and masks, color and lines, collages, print-making, and making clay pinch pots and animals. These sessions took place at BCNC and did not involve field trips to the museum, though Cynthia did show slides from the MFA collection at times. The children’s attendance in this club was consistent throughout the cycle and some children reportedly attended more than one cycle of this club.

Red Oak also invites the MFA to provide art activities at various events throughout the year. For example, while parents attend seminars at BCNC or meetings at JQS, the MFA has been invited to provide art activities for children. Cynthia said they usually leave the content of the art activities up to the MFA instructors, but limit the number of participating children to approximately 25. Art activities include projects such as wire sculpture, jewelry making, and crown making. BCNC has also invited the MFA to provide art activities during special events, like the opening of their new art center and BCNC’s annual Oak Street Fair.

As a center, BCNC has organized family days with the CAI for at least two years. This year the Family Day was organized by Joseph. It took place on a Saturday in May and about 15 families participated (a little over 30 people, roughly half adults and half children). In a prior year, a museum tour was conducted for parents in Chinese, but this year they selected guides that were trained to give ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) tours. The families were a mixture of families from BCNC, including those from Red Oak and those who participate in BCNC’s family services programs. The MFA arranged for a bus to pick the families up at BCNC and bring them to the museum. During the first hour, the adults were split into two groups and

given tours of the museum by ESOL guides. There was also at least one person in each adult group who could translate between English and Chinese. The children were also given tours of the museum. The group reunited about an hour later and split into 3 groups that did an activity for about an hour with an MFA instructor in the museum (making an instrument, creating a still life or landscape, or making an imaginary creature). Then the group left on the bus.

Joseph worked with the MFA this year in helping to design and implement a set of classes for children with special needs. Working closely with Agnes Wong, who leads a separate group which is tied to BCNC for families with children or adults with special needs or disabilities, Joseph met with other staff from BCNC and the MFA and discussed how the MFA could provide arts enrichment programming for families at BCNC with special needs. They decided to offer an initial set of Special Arts classes in April and May led by Jennifer Mills, an MFA instructor with expertise in this area. Agnes Wong and Cynthia also served as instructors. About 12 children participated, including children with special needs and their siblings. There were 4 classes offered, the first 3 at BCNC and the last one at the MFA. In an additional session they led an evaluation discussion of the program. They decided to offer similar classes this summer. They have done two more sessions, with three classes per session, 2 at BCNC and 1 at the MFA.

This year, BCNC also worked with JQS to provide after-school programming for JQS students (those not enrolled in Red Oak). This program was organized by Giles, and offered as part of a grant given to BCNC and the JQS. The first session started in January, and lasted 9-10 weeks. Each class was offered once a week. There was a nominal fee for each 9-10 week session, but it could be waived in special circumstances. Through the CAI, an MFA instructor, Kristyn Novotny, led weekly Artful Adventures classes as part of this program. In the first cycle, Kristyn led the class for about a dozen children, grades K-2. In the next cycle, starting in April, they decided to offer two AA classes, one focused on grades K-1 and another on grades 2-3, though there was flexibility with the ages. One class had about 7 or 8 children, the other 10 or 11. Most of the classes took place at BCNC, but Kristyn took each class on 2 field trips to the MFA.

As is evident in the descriptions above, Cynthia Woo, BCNC's MFA Community Liaison, played an important role in the CAI program this year. She started working with BCNC as an intern in the winter of 2007, then officially became their Community Liaison in the fall of 2007. Not only did she help manage logistics and help with art activities and discussions during this year's Artist Project, but she also regularly taught a Friday art club at BCNC. She was also an instructor for the Special Arts classes, during many of the special events, and helped to coordinate this year's Family Day. When she was unable to help with a suggested program, she connected BCNC to other MFA staff, like Kristyn who was able to teach the JQS after school art classes. Cynthia had a consistent presence at BCNC and attended many meetings with BCNC and MFA staff.

Finally, staff from BCNC have participated in special events and lectures at the MFA. Jason attended this year's MFA Community Forum and spoke about BCNC's partnership with the MFA. He also attended a free Community Day in June when the MFA re-opened an entrance to the museum and met other staff from BCNC there. Giles attended various lectures and events

at the MFA. However, none of the staff that were interviewed indicated they had been able to take any MFA studio classes. Jason expressed an interest, but was not able to participate due to scheduling conflicts.

### Artist Project: *Heroes*

BCNC participated in 5 *Heroes* sessions on 5 successive Fridays from March 28, 2008 to April 25, 2008. The first session took place at BCNC, the second session took place at the SMFA and MFA, and all remaining sessions were at the MFA. The sessions lasted for about 1 ½ to 1 ¾ hours in the afternoon (from about 4pm -5:45pm). There were no extra sessions offered during the *Heroes* project, but Cynthia discussed heroes and worked on clay projects with the children in her Friday art clubs; some of these children continued on to do the *Heroes* Project. Children, staff and parents from BCNC attended the exhibition opening in May, including 7 children who did the *Heroes* Project who came with their parents. Most of the children came with a parent, and several families brought siblings as well. Jason and Sadada attended from the BCNC staff, along with Cynthia.

### *Participants*

Jason and other staff determined that they would target children aged 8-10 for this year's *Heroes* project, ensuring that the concepts introduced would be understood. They also wanted to recruit young children in order to encourage repeat participation in the project again next year, allowing an opportunity to build on this year's curriculum. Jason encouraged parents to talk to their children to make sure it was something they were individually interested in. Staff also emphasized consistency and tried to choose children who could commit to all 5 sessions.

Eleven children participated, including 6 boys and 5 girls. Attendance was consistent, though one boy dropped out after the second session due to scheduling concerns and there were 3 children who missed the final session. Most of the children were of Asian background; three were African-American. For some children, this was their first exposure to the MFA. Two others had done the Artist Project before according to staff, or other programs at the MFA through BCNC and the CAI. During the project, several of the children spoke in a Chinese dialect with each other; it is possible that at least two children had some trouble understanding and expressing themselves in English.

### *Staff Facilitation*

Shirah led all but the first *Heroes* session. Cynthia attended 4 sessions and led the first session, introducing the children to the concept of heroes and working with clay. She helped with logistics and facilitated art activities and discussions in the other sessions. Cynthia also led some projects related to heroes and clay during her Friday art clubs. Various MFA interns and instructors also helped during their sessions. The staff to student ratio (including BCNC staff) ranged from about 3 staff to 10 children to 6 staff to 10 children. During the activities, Shirah

and the MFA staff worked one on one with the children, talking with them about their work and helping with techniques.

BCNC staff mostly played the role of chaperone during the *Heroes* sessions. They helped get the children where they needed to be and monitored behavior. There was no one staff member that consistently chaperoned and multiple people at BCNC were exposed to the museum and the program. In the last session, Fred Bennett (BCNC, Co-Director Adult Education) and Maya Honda (BCNC board member) were also given the opportunity to observe.

### *Project Details*

Observations of *Heroes* sessions showed that participating children were often boisterous. Most were familiar with the MFA, and said they had visited before. Some had also worked with clay before, and were familiar with art vocabulary such as “symmetry”, “3-D”, and “self-portraits.” The children seemed genuinely engaged in the project and the concept of heroes. They made various heroes including Barack Obama, George Washington, Harriet Tubman, Martin Luther King, Jr., Grant Hill, Michael Jordan and some mothers and fathers. They rarely incorporated symbols into their work, but the concept of symbols was not heavily emphasized in their sessions.

## **B. Impacts of CAI on the Community Center and Its Staff**

### Staff's Attitudes towards the MFA

Staff at BCNC thought of their relationship with the MFA as a true partnership. In the words of Elaine, *“the MFA actually is one of our strongest partnerships. It's a two way exchange. There's respect on both sides and also accommodations on both sides to make a project work.”* Jason described it as *“a true partnership,”* one in which *“we're really trying to help everyone as a whole.”* He added that in order to develop a common purpose, both sides have focused on open communications: *“We are very intentional about working with the children and the families. And we actually take the time to really meet and to really discuss and communicate what we want, you know, for the program or for the MFA, because it is a partnership, so it's not one sided.”*

As was the case with Yawkey and Jordan, several BCNC staff pointed to the MFA's openness, flexibility, and accessibility. Elaine said, *“I think the MFA has demonstrated a different level of accessibility to the communities in Boston. And, that speaks volumes...”* Jason added, *“I felt like there was a really good connection with the MFA and our program about actually being very intentional about bringing in the community.”* He cited the MFA's Community Forum as an example of their emphasis on the community. Giles appreciated that the MFA has reached out to small groups within their community: *“I guess it's kind of surprising that an institution as big as the MFA would take the time to reach out to groups of 5, 10, 15 people at a time. I think that is nice... it shows dedication to making themselves open to everybody.”*

Again similar to Yawkey and Jordan, BCNC staff talked about the quality of the MFA's programming, staff, and expertise. Giles described his confidence in MFA programming and AA instructors: *"I don't need to check up on them or do references to see where else they've taught ... just because I trust the people that have been at the MFA. They've all been great... It's kind of an easy – it's a partner that's easy to work with and you know there's going to be high quality."* He felt that there is *"instant credibility"* when the MFA is involved. Elaine noted, *"We love working with the MFA. I think Francisco and his team are wonderful. He is the heart of that program, from our perspective. When we started working with him, our relationship with the MFA really deepened."*

Staff at BCNC described how their relationship with the MFA has deepened over the years and when asked how and why this partnership has thrived in a short time frame, they explained that the newness of the staff may have played a role in their success. Giles suggested that *"because I didn't have any kind of preconceived notion of how that partnership is supposed to go, I wasn't limited by my past experiences with it..."* Jason described his experience in acquainting himself with the MFA as a new staff member, thinking at first about the "free stuff" the partnership offered, then coming to feel that the MFA was more like a committed partner. He also reiterated the importance of talking to staff and sensing the MFA's level of commitment to the partnership and to spreading it: *"It fits a lot better in terms of Red Oak and after school programming..."* Staff frequently talked about meetings with Francisco, Cynthia, and their colleagues at MFA as an important part of the planning process for their collaborative programs.

### Staff's Perceptions of the Program's Impact on their Work

Most of the staff members interviewed at BCNC had only been involved with the CAI for less than a year. Despite the short time frame, they all felt that the program had impacted their practice, and given them ideas and opportunities for further leveraging their relationship with the MFA.

While Jason described himself as a frequent MFA visitor, he felt that participating in the CAI exposed him to the museum even more, helping him to think differently about visiting the museum: *"It has actually brought more attention to stuff that I would like to do."* In addition, he reported that the CAI has changed some of his ideas about the MFA and what it offers to the community: *"I didn't know that MFA was so community driven"* and *"I didn't know the extent of that kind of generosity that goes to the families and the children and the free programming."* The program has also given him an opportunity to connect with other people and organizations that do similar work. For example, he enjoyed the *"community aspect"* of the *Heroes* opening and seeing all of the other children and groups who had worked on the project. He was also asked to do a presentation on the MFA/BCNC partnership for the MFA's Community Forum. Jason was quick to admit that he rarely engages in public speaking, and so this opportunity allowed him to practice that skill. Jason admits that the MFA is one of the *"top things on my mind to put into everyday curriculum as much as I can."* He also thought it may have influenced his own use of art activities when he works with the children.

Giles had also visited the MFA previously, both personally and professionally for conferences and events. When asked if the CAI impacted his work, he expressed a greater desire to go to the museum as a “regular” visitor, though admittedly he has not yet had time to make the trip. Similar to Jason, Giles felt that his perception of the MFA shifted through his work in this program: *“I knew there were obviously a lot of good things going on there and there was a lot of people who were welcoming there but I don’t think I quite understood the commitment there was to bringing in people that are not what you normally think of as museum goers.”* Giles is responsible for incorporating more arts into BCNC’s programs. Although he did not necessarily feel that the partnership changed his professional practice, he felt it changed *how* he feels about doing his job: *“...Having good partners makes things easier or makes things more enjoyable to do.”* Elaine confirmed this report: *“I think it’s helped Giles because it’s given him more resources, you know as the person responsible for creating more intentional arts engagement.”* Recently, Giles attended at least two professional development programs at the MFA, and felt they were both positive experiences: *“...I’ll usually leave feeling pretty energized.”*

Joseph is a member of the MFA, and reports that he visits the museum frequently. Even still, he felt the CAI helped him to deepen his relationship with the MFA. During the Family Day in May, he said he learned new things from watching others point out relationships between paintings. In addition, he felt that the CAI museum visits helped him to bond socially with the parents he works with, beyond just interacting with them at his workshops. In his words, it gave him a chance to be *“part of the group. I feel like I’m part of the parents’ group.”*

Although Elaine does not work directly with the CAI program at BCNC, she felt it had changed her perception of the museum *“for the better.”* As a Boston native, she explained, *“...I’ve gone to the MFA and it’s a formidable institution. And I think having this initiative has really made the MFA much more open. I don’t consider myself an expert in any art form or able to appreciate art more than at its basic level. And I think a lot of people feel that way too and having this program has made the MFA a lot more welcoming.”*

### Staff’s Perceptions of the Program’s Impact on the Organization

As was the case with both Yawkey and Jordan, BCNC staff felt that the CAI has helped them to extend and enrich their arts programming. According to Elaine, *“Arts and enrichment is an area of programming that can easily be missed when dealing with survival issues... I think having the museum, having the MFA’s program be a part of the community has enabled our agency to expand the breadth of our programming, and to also incorporate arts more actively into people’s lives without making it an additional step to participate in art activities.”* Giles agreed that the partnership *“just adds more things that we can offer”* adding that while there are other art institutions in Boston, the MFA partnership could not be easily replaced.

More so than at Yawkey and Jordan, BCNC emphasized the role that the CAI has played in their other partnerships. For example, JQS and BCNC are very closely linked historically, with BCNC starting as the Quincy School Community Council and the Red Oak After-School program still housed within the school itself. BCNC has used the MFA partnership to provide programming in

events and initiatives they undertake together. BCNC and the JQS in fact applied for funding together for the after-school classes started by Giles this past winter. Elaine described the way the three organizations working together as a “triad relationship” has bolstered the partnerships between BCNC and JQS, BCNC and MFA, and MFA and JQS. Through its efforts to continue providing rich programs for its constituents, the BCNC has successfully received funding from the Linde Foundation for an initiative to provide more arts programming for the Chinatown community. Elaine described the timing as “fortuitous” because the MFA partnership gave them more resources to accomplish their goals and deepen their partnership.

Finally, BCNC staff felt that the CAI program generally increased enthusiasm within the organization for the arts. They believed that the initial exposure to the MFA fueled further interest in the museum, and in art-making. As an example, Joseph explained that leading up to the Family Day there was a significant wait list for families to attend; following the event, both parents and children indicated an interest in future tours and programs: *“Many of them are seriously thinking about taking them back to the MFA in the summertime, which I’m so encouraged about. I think not only just the Museum of Fine Art, but I think they were also thinking about the Museum of Science or ... other kind of museums, so we can expand their horizons, so it’s not just only MFA.”* By having their first experiences through CAI programs, the MFA is quickly becoming a key factor in BCNC’s community development, education and cultural outreach.

### **C. Impacts of the CAI on Children and Families**

#### Children’s Perceptions of Program Benefits for Them

To find out how children thought about their experiences in the *Heroes* project and the museum, six participating children were interviewed – Johnny, Kevin, Lydia, Virginia, Jenny, and Kelly. All of the children were 8 or 9 years old. They created portraits of their father (Johnny), their mother (Jenny & Kelly), Obama (Lydia), Harriet Tubman (Virginia), and Grant Hill (Kevin). Some were more talkative than others, potentially because of language issues. They had a variety of backgrounds in art and visiting the MFA.

The children had different motivations for doing the project this year, and half indicated that their participation was based on their parents’ decision. Johnny said that he learned about the project this year because *“my dad...want me to have fun, and my mom, so I can learn things...”* and later talked about his mom wanting him to go to the museum *“to learn.”* Lydia, too, talked about doing the project because her parents signed her up. Kevin said he decided to do the project *“because I thought it was a lot of fun”* and added that he was interested in learning more about art. Similarly, Virginia said, *“Because I love art,”* particularly designing things and making things up. Kelly said she participated in *Heroes* because *“...when Jenny was going, I decided to go with her.”*

When asked to discuss the project, children emphasized different aspects of it. For example, Johnny talked about sculpting; Lydia talked about drawing; Kevin remembered working in

particular on a 3-D nose; Jenny remembered looking at art; Virginia talked about a profile activity and sitting next to Lydia; and Kelly talked about seeing other busts. Kevin said that what he liked best about the project was *"...looking at the museum and discovering all of the details"* explaining that he *"could learn how to make art by looking at the details."* The children expressed minor dislikes about the project, most of which centered around their frustration of not being able to make things look "real." For instance, Lydia said she did not like her final piece: *"Well I didn't really like how it looked though"* even though she said her mom thought it was good. Jenny did not like making her head because she *"did not like the look"* of it.

There was some evidence to suggest that for these children, the *Heroes* project not only provided them with new learning opportunities, but changed their attitudes towards art, heroes, and their friends. Johnny said the project and sculpting his face made him feel like an artist: *"I think I feel like I'm an artist, doing things."* Lydia said that she learned to *"always try your best"* and *"don't get upset if ... it looks bad to you"* while doing the project. She also said that before the project she thought art was boring as compared to making up games and science, but this project helped change that idea. She attributed this to the fact that this was *"my first time with clay."* Virginia said that the project changed the way she thinks about art because *"it made me love to copy now"* and that *"it makes me get my drawing better."* She said she might have learned a little about clay, and talked about learning techniques to make texture and added that *"...when I go to the arts museum I keep on learning new arts to make my art more special and smarter and prettier."* Kelly said she learned something about heroes; that *"heroes are not like a Superman and stuff. They're like different people that help you and care about you."*

All of the children who went to the opening party had positive memories of sharing their artwork with their families and seeing everyone else's work. Lydia remembered showing her family her piece and that her mom said *"You're an artist today"* which she said *"made me feel happy."* Kevin said he went with his mom and that she said his piece was good. He also liked it when his mom took a picture of him and his sculpture. Kelly remembered going to the party and that *"There were a lot of people"* and that *"There were many heads that other people made."*

When the children were asked to describe their experiences at the MFA, they talked about particular pieces of artwork they saw during their visit. Many children marveled at the size of the institution using the term "big" in many of their descriptions. Johnny said, *"It's big. It's a museum. It has cool things, like mummies and Asian things. Even tools – long, long time ago tools."* Lydia said, *"It is very big and there's lots of things that artists created"* and *"beautiful artwork"* made by hand. She also talked about liking how artists make things: *"...Because it's very interesting how you can do it by hands that it becomes more than you realize."* While a couple of children thought their museum visit was a little boring, others were excited by their experience. Johnny described his visit as fun: *"I see the sculptures. And when I go somewhere that I never been before, I feel fun."* He went on to say, *"If you look in a book, it doesn't make more sense. You really wanna go inside there and walk and see those sculptures and things, and pictures."* Virginia said looking at art in a museum was different than looking at it in a book



because *“it looks so real and much more 3-D than in a book.”* Kelly explained, *“When I usually see art, it’s different colors, but in the museum, I saw art and they were like not just the plain old colors, they were like mixed and blackish and whites. They look really cool, the art that I saw.”*

### Parents’ Perceptions of Program Benefits for Children

Four parents were interviewed, including Johnny’s mother (Jennifer), Kevin’s mother (Li Ping), and Lydia’s mother (Elleni) and father (Tesfaye). All parents were asked to discuss their children’s interest in art and MFA visitation history, potential impacts of the *Heroes* project, and whether and how they value the program, visiting the MFA, and making art. The interview was conducted in English, which may have been challenging for some parents. However, all were excited about the program and felt that their children enjoyed it and got something out of it.

Parents reported that although none of their children had done the Artist Project before, most had engaged in arts-based activities, especially at home. Elleni, Lydia’s mother, explained that her daughter loves art and that she has an uncle who is an artist and has shown her his artwork and materials: *“She tries to copy what he does.”* Both Lydia and Kevin’s parents mentioned the value of the children doing things with their hands. Li Ping thought that art-making was important for Kevin, again because *“he uses his hands to do something.”* Elleni agreed, and added that the program offered them an opportunity to do something outside of school. Lydia’s father, Tesfaye, commented on how schools might *“just introduce”* children to art, but that *“this is really a chance for the children to get a good experience of doing things with their hands. So I think for these children to do this kind of project is very enlightening for them and an introduction to other stuff than mostly academic.”* He also felt that *“in general, just introducing them to the art world is really very good for Lydia and you never really know where that will take her but to introduce her and to open up her eyes I think is very important.”* This notion of giving children an opportunity to explore, learn and express themselves was described by Johnny’s mother, Jennifer, who said, *“He can kind of express his feelings and be doing things.”*

Parents valued that through the project, they were able to see their children’s art work, and talk together about it. Jennifer said, *“Yeah, they talk about more and every time they go, they learn different things and then they get a chance to bring stuff home and they will show me. ‘Do you know how to make this?’ I said, ‘No.’ So like we have more time and we have more topics to talk about between son and mother relationship.”* At the *Heroes* opening event, parents reported their children were proud and eager to share their hero portraits with them. Li Ping said she enjoyed going with Kevin and that he was proud to show her his artwork. Elleni thought that *“Lydia was so excited about the project that she did”* noting, *“She was showing it to me and like, “Ta-da,” and she was very, very, happy and very proud.”*

Parents also felt that going to the MFA was valuable for their children. Elleni talked about the MFA exposing Lydia to artists and different kinds of art: *“I really like the idea of Lydia going there. First, she loves it so much and second, it’s an exposure, to show what people can do. She*

*probably sees different arts ... It's good you know, to, I guess to explore it..."* Tesfaye also talked about the children having the opportunity to see different kinds of art and that this might inspire them. Li Ping agreed that the MFA is a good place for Kevin. Jennifer, who has also done other programs at the MFA, talked about how both *"BCNC and MFA, great, they have a really good connection, so really good, really successful program and works for children and benefit for the children."*

### Staff's Perceptions of Program Benefits for Children

BCNC staff felt strongly that the CAI has had an impact on participating children and families. According to Jason, the program provides *"an opportunity just to experience something that they may not have had the opportunity to do ... a lot of the children in Chinatown stay in this neighborhood, so they don't really get to go out past this little block that we have."* He spoke about the parents' work schedule and income being an issue that prevents them from *"seeing what's out there in Boston"* including the MFA. More specifically, he felt that the MFA trips expose children to different cultures: *"You have new galleries that are actually very fitting to different cultures... you also have different themes and countries, so that we expose them to the rest of the world that they haven't seen as much... That's something you don't really get in this community. It's just Asian culture. And just making it very available and as part of this partnership is really great exposure for the children to experience something new...In academics, and just the everyday lives and just their life skills...I think it opens a really big door for them that may have been closed to them."*

Staff also provided evidence that children were developing creatively and socially through the CAI. Cynthia speculated that children might have become more willing to talk about art. Jason felt that children had learned about the concept of heroes. Joseph emphasized the opportunity that the special needs children had to actually make something: *"...something real, something that's out of their own hands..."* More specifically, he talked about the artwork giving children a chance to create and tell stories saying, *"I think that part really helps children with special needs to learn and also to stimulate their thinking."* Giles felt that Kristyn's art classes at JQS gave children the chance to develop their social skills and relationships outside of a school setting: *"They encourage a lot of sharing and cooperation and collaboration and I think that's something that's pretty pronounced when I observe those classes."* He went on to say that Kristyn's classes *"are among the best in seeing relationships develop between children in new and kind of exciting ways."*

The Artist Project, together with other museum programs, provided children with repeated exposure to the museum and to art making activities. Cynthia pointed out, *"I certainly feel like they are comfortable being in the museum by now. Because when they're here, even I noticed this last year, they had recall of what they'd seen before."* That said, Cynthia also described the challenge of making sure programs are interesting and different enough that children are not thinking, *"Oh, we did this before..."*

## Potential Program Benefits for Families

BCNC has worked hard to involve not just children in the CAI, but their extended families as well, in keeping with the organization's mission to serve the whole family. When asked if the CAI had impacted families, BCNC staff pointed out that many parents visited the museum for the first time through this program; in Joseph's words, *"I was with one parent group and 90 percent of them said they've never been to a museum."* Jason also talked about how the CAI exposed parents to the MFA: *"It gives even more chance for children to participate in these kinds of activities but it also, especially for the parent events, the parents get exposed to things that MFA will do for children ... the fact that they can ask for tickets to the MFA whenever they want to go with their families and so in that aspect it's ... influencing the families as well."* Joseph talked about how some parents were asking questions about things like materials and colors, and also talked about some of the families learning museum etiquette during their visit, explaining that some of the adults were observed trying to touch or lean on artwork. He described how children and parents were doing art together during the Family Day activities, and that experiencing the museum together may give rise to at-home discussions: *"They can share their own thoughts about what they think art is to their children, kind of like a way to stimulate the children's learning."*

In addition to exposing families to the MFA, staff felt that the CAI helped parents to better appreciate the value of arts education for their children. Joseph said, *"I think in terms of art, I think Chinatown community has a lot to offer, and I think the partnership really helped us help our immigrant families to realize the importance of art."* He went on to talk about how parents *"...may have traditional ideas what education should be. We would like to encourage parents to think in a broader sense that incorporating art into education is as important as studying English."* He thought the CAI had helped *"...our parents to appreciate art and creativity as part of the children's development. I think that the partnership is enlightening in a way that it helps parents to see that particular value."*

## **Case 4: United South End Settlements**

### **A. Overview of the Community Organization**

#### Community

The United South End Settlements (USES) is located in Boston's South End neighborhood. The South End is a diverse neighborhood, ethnically and socio-economically, and has the city's largest African-American, Latino, and Caribbean populations. In 2000, the population of the South End included 45% non-Hispanic white, 23% Black or African-American, 17% Hispanic or Latino, and 12% Asian-American. However, USES does not only serve constituents from the South End. According to recent demographic data, 60% of the children in their after-school program come from the South End, with 17% from Roxbury, 15% from Dorchester, and the rest from other Boston area communities.

## Center Programs

USES serves a range of constituents with a variety of programs. They serve children, adults, and the general community through programs such as their Early Childhood Education program, After-School program, the Children's Art Centre, the Timothy Smith Computer Learning Center, and Camp Hale, a summer camp in New Hampshire. They also provide senior services. USES has its roots in the settlement house movement and in 1960 it was incorporated into its current form. They have a long history of serving the community through education, childcare, arts and cultural programming, and healthcare.

USES has operated an after-school program for over 30 years and this is the department that works most closely with the CAI. Their After-School Program serves children aged 5-12, who are split into 4 groups according to age. Each group has a group leader and the program enrolls 52 children. The After-School Program operates Monday-Friday, 2pm-6pm, during the school year, with all day programming during school vacations. The program continues through the summer as the Summer Day program, an all day summer camp, operating 8am-6pm. There is a \$23/day fee, but they offer subsidized slots and other tuition assistance as well. Staff develop curriculum for other activities, based on a monthly theme, such as health and wellness. They serve mainly a low-income African-American population, but there are Caucasian and Latino and African immigrant children as well. Children come from a variety of different schools and neighborhoods.

## Staff

**Jerrell Cox**, the After-School Site Coordinator and the Group Leader for the youngest group of children, has been with USES since 2003. Jerrell started with USES as a camper and eventually became a counselor at Camp Hale, a New Hampshire summer camp run by USES. He joined USES as a Group Leader in the After-School program and was later promoted to Site Coordinator. He grew up in the nearby neighborhood of Dorchester and has always enjoyed working with children and giving back to his community. He has *"always loved art,"* taking courses through school and visiting the MFA for field trips. He is the primary liaison between the USES After-School program and the museum, and coordinates many of the administrative tasks involved in participation. Because the AP and this year's summer AA sessions focused on the older group of children, Jerrell has not been involved in hands-on chaperoning of children for the AP program. He has been to the MFA for some AA visits that included the whole After School group. He has also participated in some professional development trainings through the CAI and in this year's MFA Community Forum. He attended one on behavior in After-School programs and one on team-building.

**Jasen Beverly** is the Group Leader for Group 4 in the After-School program and has worked with USES for 4½ years. He served as a chaperone for this year's AP and AA.

**Robyn Carter**, Senior Director of Youth and Family Programs at USES, has been with the organization for 2 years and supervises the managers of all of the youth and family programs,

including those that work with the MFA. While she does not participate directly in any of the MFA-related programs, she attends some of the meetings that staff hold with the MFA and attended this year's Community Forum.

**Emily Stewart**, Coordinator of the Children's Art Centre and a working artist herself, coordinates the MFA's involvement in community festivals and CAC's summer and school vacation art programs. She has been working in this capacity for approximately one year.

**Nina Reck**, MFA Community Liaison for USES, started working with USES last summer. She helped with the logistics, discussions, and activities during this year's Artist Project. She also led the sessions in the summer, participated in last year's arts festival, and led the AA for the CAC groups this year.

While Jerrell served as the primary liaison with the MFA, other staff participated in the MFA programs. For example, the group leaders of the older groups often participated as chaperones for the Artist Project.

### Arts Programming at the Center

USES holds as part of their mission to enhance children's learning in and through the arts. Staff at USES felt that art helps children with self-expression, to learn about themselves, and differentiate themselves from others. Jerrell talked about art being *"...a form of expression, one that I think is very important. When the children go to the museum and they can explore art and experience the museum, and then they come back, and they take some of that art, those ideas, and they make them their own, it's just like anything else."* Jasen echoed this idea about how children can use art to express themselves, noting that science is something you have to learn, *"but art, it's just – it's how you feel."* Jerrell also talked further about the importance of children expressing themselves through art: *"The children enjoy artwork...they enjoy expressing themselves. They enjoy the hands-on touching different materials"* adding, *"...they can find out a whole lot about themselves by just practicing art and just really sitting down and just drawing on a piece of paper however they feel."*

When asked why offering arts programming is so important, Robyn discussed art helping children to learn more broadly: *"I think because the research shows that art is such an important part of a child's learning experience and that children who are exposed to art, they do better in math, and all different areas of what people think of as traditional academics."* She added, *"I think that they're doing more than just developing their artistic ability....I think that there's a social-emotional piece. Like I said, I think there's brain-development pieces that may translate into other more traditional academics. I think that there's definitely a self-awareness and self-esteem piece in there. So those are all goals for our children, that they're developing into positive citizens and learning about their own self in space and kind of in their environment."*

As did staff at Yawkey and Jordan, Robyn also spoke about the gaps in what schools and families might offer children in terms of arts experiences, which USES could help fill: *"In most of the schools that most of our children go to, their art programs have been the first to be cut when funding is cut..."* and *"...most of the other schools are void in that creative part of their learning."* She also mentioned that some families might not be able to provide as much access to arts: *"I think that a large population of our families are working families who for whatever reason either don't, or may not think to round out their children's learning by bringing them to the museum or adding that extra creative piece."*

#### Description of the CAI Program at USES

USES joined the CAI program in 2005. However, they started using the MFA's Artful Adventures (AA) program many years prior to that and they continue to do AA programs, both at the museum and at the center, with their entire set of children. Children from the After-School program have participated in three annual Artist Projects. They have primarily targeted children from their older groups (Group 3 and 4, ages 8-12) and have participated in the *Blue Print Voyage* project, *Giant Inspirations*, and the *Heroes* project. They try to have 10-13 children participate each year.

The After-School Program, through Jerrell Cox, the After-School Site Coordinator, works most closely with the CAI. Their current Community Liaison, Nina Reck, has also led activities for their Summer Day program, a continuation of the After-School program. Recently, she led weekly Artful Adventures sessions at USES, focused on various materials and techniques. Last summer, sessions were offered for both younger and older groups and for the first sessions they worked on artwork for a parent auction. This year, Jerrell asked Nina to do the sessions again and she developed the content for and led roughly 8 sessions for 12-20 children from Group 3 and Group 4. Each session involved looking at and discussing slides from the MFA collection, then doing a related activity. For example, they looked at Meso-American art and then did a gold foil activity. The sessions did not include any field trips to the MFA. For USES, many of these programs, like the AA at the museum and during the summer program, are program-wide – all of the children in the center or in particular age groups are invited to participate.

Jerrell has distributed the free museum tickets offered through the CAI to families. When he receives information from Francisco about arts and MFA events, he posts it on his information board for parents. He has also forwarded emails about grants to their fundraising department. Jerrell and his staff have participated in some of the professional development/training sessions offered through the CAI at the MFA. He attended one on behavior in After-School programs and one on team-building. Robyn Carter, Senior Director of Youth and Family Programs, and Jerrell also participated in the Community Forum the MFA hosted in June this year. However, no staff or children seem to have used the studio classes offered through the CAI, or at least not in the past year.

USES' Children's Art Centre (CAC) also takes advantage of the CAI. In the last two years, the MFA has helped provide art activities during community festivals presented by the CAC. For

example, this year the MFA participated in the Arts in the Park festival in August, held in a public park in the South End. Numerous other organizations participated, including the Institute of Contemporary Art and Let's Gogh Art; activities included African Drumming, live animals, face painting, Spanish activities, and chalk drawing. MFA staff led a doll-making and flag-making activity. Last year, there was an Around the World Theme and the MFA led a Chinese scroll-making activity. The content was developed based on the festival theme as determined by USES staff. The CAC also offers arts programming for children during school vacations and the summer. This year, Nina led AA sessions for 2 groups of children from CAC, one during April vacation focused on Egypt, and one this summer focused on Japanese art. These are not the same children who did MFA activities through the After-School program this year, but there were some children who participated in both visits.

In the last year, Nina Reck, USES' Community Liaison, has played an important role in extending arts programming at USES. She helped with the logistics, discussions, and activities during this year's Artist Project. She also led the sessions in the summer, participated in last year's arts festival, and led the AA for the CAC groups this year. This summer she also met with staff from USES' Artful Transformations program. USES and MFA staff had met earlier to discuss how the MFA might be able to provide resources for this program, which focuses on helping girls with clinical emotional and behavioral issues. This summer, Nina helped develop a plan for a weekly program to start this fall. There will be a small number of girls, accompanied by staff from Artful Transformations and 2 MFA instructors. The plan is for half the sessions to take place at the museum, half at USES. Artful Transformations staff will help select participants and if the program goes well, they may offer it again in the spring.

This summer USES' new Vice President of Institutional Advancement also met with MFA staff, in part to discuss the MFA's involvement in a potential future USES committee focused on serving the community through the arts. Therefore, while USES' core participation in the CAI is through their After-School program, focused on the Artist Project and summer AA, the CAC also participates and the partnership is growing.

#### Artist Project: *Heroes*

USES children participated in 5 *Heroes* sessions, taking place on 5 successive Thursdays from January 31, 2008 to February 28, 2008 (with a make-up session on Thursday, March 13, 2008, for the children who could not attend the final session in February). The first session took place at USES; the second session took place at the SMFA and MFA; and all remaining sessions were at the MFA. The sessions lasted for about 1¾ to 2 hours in the afternoon (from between 4:00 and 4:30 to between 6:00 and 6:30 except for one session during school vacation week which took place a little earlier in the afternoon). There were no extra sessions offered during the *Heroes* project (the 6<sup>th</sup> session was a make-up session). Children, staff, and parents from USES attended the exhibition opening in May. There were 7 children who had done the *Heroes* project, two of whom brought their brothers. There were 4 mothers who attended (including the mother of 3 of the participants) and Jasen attended from the USES staff.

### *Participants*

Each year USES targets their older groups (ages 8-12 years) for participation in the Artist Project. Jerrell said that they let the children know that “*something’s expected of them*” and “*they’re asked to make a commitment and make sure that they follow up with their group leaders and the artists if they plan on dropping out.*” This year, they invited all of the children from Group 3 and 4 to learn about the project in the first session, which took place at USES, and then asked them whether they wanted to commit to the project. Permission slips were then sent home for the group of children who wanted to continue participating in the project.

Ten children from USES joined the *Heroes* project, 5 boys and 5 girls. All of the children in Group 3 and Group 4 were invited to the first session, with about 11-15 children participating. Most of the children were of African-American background, though several were Latino. Three of the boys had done the previous Artist Project, and some had done summer AA sessions with Nina. Three of the children who did the *Heroes* project were siblings (twin sisters and a brother).

### *Staff Facilitation*

Shirah led all five of the formal sessions. For the make-up session, she divided her time between USES and the Yawkey Club. Nina also attended all five of the formal sessions, but not the make-up session. She helped with logistics and facilitated art activities and discussions. Jason, an MFA instructor who is a Community Liaison for another club, helped lead a discussion of heroes in the 3<sup>rd</sup> session and led the make-up session. Various MFA interns and instructors also helped during the sessions. The staff to student ratio was fairly high (varying from almost 1:2 to almost 1:1), except for the first session where there were 3 staff for 11-15 children. During the activities, Shirah and the MFA staff worked one-on-one with the children, talking with them about their work and helping with techniques and any problems they were having.

Jasen served as the USES staff chaperone for each *Heroes* session. He mostly helped with managing behavior, especially during gallery visits and discussions. The *Heroes* project provided an opportunity for Jasen and the children to build on their relationship, for Jasen to get to know some of the children in the younger group, and an opportunity for him to make art for himself.

### *Project Details*

The children made mostly personal hero portraits—three sculpted their mothers, one did his father, and one did a veterinarian. Another child worked on a portrait of a sports hero; another on Ruby Bridges. One boy made a very creative portrait of a friend and one girl did not do her own portrait but rather helped a friend with hers. They incorporated symbols like glasses, football greasepaint, and experimented with the features to convey information about their heroes.



## B. Impacts of the CAI on the Community Organization and Its Staff

### Staff's Attitudes towards the MFA

In talking with staff about their perceptions of the MFA partnership, similar themes emerged to those identified in the three previous case studies – Yawkey, Jordan, and BCNC. USES staff described their relationship with the MFA as flexible, noting that the museum seemed happy to share resources, was easy to work with, provided open communication, and was committed to serving the greater Boston community. When asked to describe the program, Jerrell stated, *“I think it’s a great program...it’s very helpful when planning projects or figuring out what we want to do with the children; and they’re great communicators. They’re always willing to be flexible...And give us their time or their staff or the museum.”* According to Robyn, *“The MFA’s just, I think, an easy partner to work with...”* and *“...I’ve always found them to just be there, be willing, be interested and it just seems to make sense and I think it’s just a good resource for us.”*

Staff also talked further about great communication between the MFA and USES, and in particular the role of Francisco Mendez-Diez, MFA’s Manager of Community Arts. Jerrell appreciated the consistency of having Francisco as part of the ongoing partnership saying, *“...the people that I’ve worked with from beginning to end have transitioned out except for Francisco. You could say he’s been the rock.”* He added, *“I think he’s really passionate about what he does; and that’s what I like about Francisco...and he’s very committed to the museum and to the youth...and to having them exposed to art...”* Robyn talked about how *“Francisco is wonderful at always keeping me invited and involved”* and said that *“Francisco is a wonderful communicator, so I feel like he definitely holds up his end of the bargain and I think he is very good at introducing our staff to his staff...”*

Staff at USES also appreciated the MFA’s interest in serving the Greater Boston community. Jerrell noted, *“All the times that we can visit the museum – it’s just – I feel like we have like a lifelong membership, as long as we have this partnership. They’re very open, and the children can learn about art.”* Robyn talked about how she has perceived the MFA reaching out to the greater community: *“I’ve always understood the outreach program at MFA to be – that there’s an interest there to make sure that all of the children – children and families in the surrounding area know about the museum, are comfortable in the museum, know how to access the museum and use it as a resource for – both for parents and for their children.”* She talked about how this might be particularly important for art museums: *“The MFA I think has to work a little harder to break down barriers, because I think that it’s seen as a little bit more of an elite institution, and I think that in recent years it seems like they’ve been trying to do that. Particularly through the community-based organization that I think are a little bit less intimidating to inner city families.”*

### Staff's Perceptions of the Program's Impact on their Work

On the whole, USES staff felt the CAI provided a useful resource for them in their work. According to Jerrell, *"I think that it's been very beneficial to me, because anything for the children, anything for my program, anything for my staff, I appreciate."* Jerrell specifically emphasized the benefits he derived from the MFA professional development sessions: *"I think that any training that I go to is beneficial to my development as a professional."* He noted that the MFA team-building training inspired new ideas for his program: *"For the after-school one, that was great because it talked about behavior in the museum and children; and it fell right in line with what I already do. So it was perfect."* He also talked about museum trainings helped him to see that not all children may enjoy doing art, and that *"just the exposure to it is most important."* Although Jerrell had visited the museum as a child, he felt that participating in the CAI helped him to reconnect to the MFA: *"Whenever I go to the museum, it will inspire me. I'll go home and paint or something like that."*

For Jasen, who does not have a background in the arts, the CAI program provided his first exposure to the MFA. Through this experience, he has become more curious about exploring the museum further on his own. Jasen noted that the thing he found interesting about the MFA was *"the way that they tell stories through their art and just the things that they leave behind."* During the *Heroes Project*, Jasen worked on his own clay head while chaperoning. He said he had not done a project like that before and talked about being proud of his work. Professionally, Jasen talked about getting some new ideas for activities: *"Yeah, you always get new ideas from any of the partnerships you do or any trainings you go to..."* Also, since he worked with the oldest group of children in the After-School program, he agreed that chaperoning the *Heroes Project* gave him a chance to get to know these younger kids: *"Getting used to them early ... Seeing what they like, what they don't like before they actually come to the group."*

Robyn felt that participating in the CAI program impacted her attitudes towards the museum. She grew up in the suburbs of Boston, and has visited the MFA many times. When asked if participating in the partnership changed any of her own ideas about the museum, she responded, *"absolutely."* Specifically, she talked about learning more about what the museum offered and its outreach: *"I feel like I've learned throughout this process a little bit more about what's available for children and families, which has been great for me to be more aware of. And I've been really pleasantly surprised by the kind of outreach that I think the museum is trying to do."*

### Staff's Perceptions of the Program's Impact on the Organization

Similar to Yawkey, Jordan, and BCNC, USES staff felt that the CAI program extended the organization's arts programming in valuable ways, providing them with richer and deeper capacity in this regard. Robyn talked about the MFA being a special resource: *"We're able to offer different activities and kind of arts instruction and arts exposure that we would want to do otherwise, and that we do do in different ways. But I think having ...the museum to do what it*

*does really well is a wonderful resource for us.” She explained further: “...A benefit for us is then also being able to take the children outside of our building and expose them in ways that we just wouldn’t be able to, since the museum... [it] offers a very different level and scale of exposure and kind of sophistication than what we might be able to do in our own four walls...” Jerrell talked about the CAI program offering exposure to real objects and artwork at the museum. However, he also emphasized the benefits of having MFA instructors provide programming at USES: “You know, sometimes it’s good – great to get the kids out of the building. But when we can bring instructors, experienced instructors here, to come facilitate an art activity, it’s just like another enrichment class. Whether we’re doing painting or we’re doing sculpturing ...The children seem to enjoy it.” Robyn also felt that the CAI provided more opportunity for family involvement than any other program at USES, stating “...there’s a connection with family – between the families, the program, and the museum that would be different than any other cultural institution that we’d be involved with.”*

Another way staff talked about this program making a difference was through supporting strong partnerships and USES community connection goals. Jerrell said that when he describes his program to parents, he mentions their partnership with the MFA and other organizations like ReadBoston. When asked whether having strong partnerships was important to USES, like it is to other organizations in the CAI, Robyn agreed: *“I mean we’re a community-based organization, so it feels obvious that our relationships within the community are really important.”* Going further, Robyn talked about how connecting people and institutions within their community is another organizational goal at USES, which the CAI fits into. She commented, *“One of our big goals of the organization as a whole is to just in recognition of the vast diversity in the community is to be a bridge to connect people...they may live next door to each other, but there may be so many differences between themselves and the people next door that they may not ever talk to each other...we try to give families and kids ... some common ground with each other, and I think that we can do that with the museum too. If there’s a lot of people who may not really get out of ...their neighborhood – whatever is in their circle, but to add the museum into a part of their life, especially for kids who may not ever have been taught that the museum was a resource for them, I think it’s really important.”*

### **C. Impacts of the CAI on Children and Families**

#### Children’s Perceptions of Program Benefits for Them

Eight children from USES were interviewed to better understand how they thought about their *Heroes* experience – Jeremiah, Mahki, Neyt, Areana, Breana, Malik, Nevaada, and Yazmine. They had varying reasons for participating in the Artist Project, ranging from thinking it would be fun based on prior experiences, to liking art, to having a parent decide. Yazmine said she did the project *“because I have a lot of heroes.”* When asked what kind, she said *“I have my mom, my dad, well actually my whole family,”* and then added *“Like Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, and the Army people that are fighting war for our country.”* Neyt was ambivalent about participating in the project, saying his mother had enrolled him and *“she wanted to keep me occupied and doing stuff.”* Nevaada, Malik, and Jeremiah talked about the project seeming fun.

Nevaada said she wanted to do the project this year *“because I want to have fun there and I love the Museum of Fine Arts because I went there before and I had so much fun.”* Mahki talked about doing it *“because art is one of my favorite subjects.”* Areana said she decided to do it *“so everybody can see it,”* while Breana was unsure why she participated in the *Heroes* project.

Mostly, children described the project as “fun,” though they had different reasons for this perspective. Most really liked working with clay, and the opportunity to make a work of art. Through the CAI, children felt they came to see art differently, and learned more about how to work with clay specifically. For instance, Jeremiah said, *“Before [the project, I thought] art, I thought it was like kinda boring. And then I learned that it was pretty fun. [Also] I thought clay was boring... clay was gonna be hard, but then I learned that it was fun.”* Yazmine explained, *“Like how I can – how you can make your art anything. It doesn’t have to be like you have to draw something, like you can make anything in your own way. You don’t have to go to the basics and stuff. You can add detail and be creative.”* Malik said, *“Three years ago I didn’t really think art was that cool, but I knew how to draw, but I didn’t draw a lot. But when I saw other people’s paintings and stuff, I wanted to do the same thing.”* Neyt commented, *“I looked at it [the art] from a different perspective, looked at how to do more 3-D stuff because when I was doing the clay face, it looked very 3-D. So it changed my perspective and my point of view.”*

In addition to learning more about working with clay, some of the children felt the project helped them to learn more about themselves. Jeremiah said he learned that *“That if I work hard, I can make something. ‘Cause when I worked harder on the nose part... I accomplished it.”* Yazmine noted, *“I think that – because I didn’t really know I had that side, the artist side that I could be creative and stuff, but now that I’ve been to the Museum of Fine Arts, it’s really showed me that I’m really creative.”* Neyt noted, *“Yeah it brought out a lot of talent in me because I thought I was never good at clay. I was really bad at it. [But at the exhibition] I noticed that a lot of people were looking at mine, so it changed my perspective of the more creative you are, the more people are gonna probably attract to it.”*

A few children described how the project changed the way they thought about heroes. Yazmine said, *“You know how Superman and Spiderman and Batman – they don’t have to be those. They can be like every day heroes like policeman and fireman and people like that.”* Malik said that he learned that *“heroes don’t have – not all heroes have superpowers,”* and that heroes can include people like *“the President... and people that do stuff for their community.”*

Some children also felt that participating in the CAI changed their attitudes towards the museum. Neyt said he thought the museum would be boring, *“and then after I went it got a little more fun because I went to it so many times. Because I haven’t been there in a while, it’s more fun now.”* Malik also talked about seeing art that surprised him in the museum: *“It’s really fun and it was art hanging everywhere, even in the front... It was like art that you thought could never be made.”* Many of the children were excited to visit the MFA and particularly about the opportunity to make art in the studio. Yazmine said, *“I feel that when I went to make the project that this was cool because I’ve never really had this experience to do it, so just going into the museum was pretty fun.”*

Being able to look at art up-close at the museum also gave children a new perspective and appreciation. Yazmine said looking at art in the museum was special because *“in a book they don’t show you all the details to it. So in a museum you can see it up front for your – with your own eyes and speak for yourself.”* Malik described the diversity of the art collection and things he was able to see saying, *“Pictures aren’t only up; there’s like vases and mirrors and stuff.”* Mahki referred to a silver sculpture noting that *“it looks more realistic and I want to see the whole thing, not just in a picture”* and talked about better understanding the scale of the art in a museum: *“I want to see – because say somebody never saw how big it is, they would probably thought it was as big as a table or something.”*

### Parent’s Perceptions of Program Benefits for Children

Parents were also interviewed, to gain additional insight into program benefits for their children and to understand how the CAI may have impacted parents themselves. Six parents participated in a group interview, including Yazmine’s mother (Kathleen), Neyt’s mother (Gigi), Nevaada’s mother (Sabrina), Mahki’s mother (Tamare), Malik, Areana, Breana’s mother (Toni), and Jeremiah’s father (Mekonnen).

Some parents valued an arts education for their child; others were not as committed to this idea. Jeremiah’s dad said he thought art was important for Jeremiah because of the connection between thinking and art. Malik, Areana, and Breana’s mother talked about art providing a way for children in the city to get things out: *“Well, I think especially with the children living in the city, that sometimes they don’t get to get it out as far as physically, so sometimes the art kind of make up for that.”* Neyt’s mother echoed this sentiment: *“...He is always with a pencil, he starts making little notes, after the notes he has to make details of the trees and the skies and I think it’s great. Even though he doesn’t express himself with words, he does it with a picture.”* While Yazmine’s mother thought art was not terribly important for her child’s education, she acknowledged that *“it is a way for her [Yazmine] to express herself...”*

When asked about the value of visiting art museums, parents were again divided in their perspective. Those who saw it as valuable pointed to things like learning about other cultures, broadening their horizons, and learning about art. Mahki’s mother thought going to art museums like the MFA was valuable because *“they learn and see different cultures and just the different – being able to see from different artists, different points of view, different styles of art, just seeing different things from different countries and different cultures.”* Nevaada’s mother agreed that children can learn about different cultures in museums, and added, *“Not only that, but there’s different types of art so they get to learn about everything.”* While Neyt’s mother did not necessarily feel museum-going was important, she agreed that the overall notion of exposing children to art was beneficial: *“...It’s good to bring different activities to him, that way he learns how to express himself. I don’t think you basically got to go to the Museum of Fine Arts to learn that, but it’s good to bring it to them.”*

Parents clearly felt that the Heroes project was a positive experience for their child; their children enjoyed the project, found it exciting, and presented their final project with pride. For

instance, Nevaada's mother said, *"She was very excited, you know, to tell me what she did. So she was excited – she was really happy 'cause she's still talking about it."* Neyt's mother made a similar comment: *"He was so happy and psyched and everything when he went over there."*

When asked how their children may have benefited from the Artist project, parents pointed to opportunities for them to refine their personal and social skills. Mahki's mother talked about the project helping Mahki to overcome his shyness: *"I think that these different activities and being involved with the Museum of Fine Arts, it's allowed him to become more socially active because this is something that he's really interested in, you know, so it actually kind of – it's bringing him out of his shell."* She added, *"I feel that it's very important because not only do they – they get to use their imagination and creativity – it brings out – it just brings out their character, you know?"* Nevaada's mother said the program may have allowed her daughter to develop her creativity: *"I think it brought out another side of her because ...She loves to write, so this was different for her."* Jeremiah's father talked about how projects like this can let parents and children find their talents: *"It's good and it's challenging – just to see if there is a hidden talent in your kid, that's how we know... when they get a chance to do this, see how good they are and something like this is a good thing and it just pulls something out of someone."*

Another benefit identified by parents was that of exposure, a theme that emerged from the data at Yawkey, Jordan, and BCNC as well. Parents talked about valuing programs like this because it exposed their children to new places, adults, and ideas and got them out of their regular "circle." Areana's, Malik's, and Breana's mother said, *"I think the more things they're involved with, the more doors will open up in their minds...art I know for a fact is, what I do is a form of art, and it helps them just to not stay so closed in."* She also talked about the program being important because it gave them a chance to meet new adults and be exposed to different ideas. Neyt's mother echoed this sentiment: *"When you break them off the circle to do something else, it actually – you see a difference in them. Instead of the same routine, sometimes they get bored or they don't want to go, whatever the case may be, but when you break off that little routine you notice a difference."*

### Staff's Perceptions of Program Benefits for Children

USES staff believed that the CAI has positive impacts on participating children. Reinforcing comments from children and parents, staff talked about how the program exposes children to the museum. Robyn commented, *"I think that a large population of our families are working families who for whatever reason either don't, or may not think to, round out their children's learning by bringing them to the museum or adding that extra creative piece."* She added, *"[Children at USES] grow up with us too, so they get exposure when they're younger and they start to develop relationships with museums, so I hope that that's a benefit to the museum. But if it's not, we still benefit."* Jerrell noted that the program *"gives the children an opportunity to step out into a place where they wouldn't usually visit."* He acknowledged that the museum environment was sometimes challenging for children to navigate, but concluded that the more children are exposed to museums, the more they will respect it and understand how to be more responsible in their behavior and attitudes: *"It's still about cultural confidence and getting*

*them to, you know, really respect it and understand it or at least give it a try... So, for that, I feel like the museum has been great."*

Beyond exposing children to the museum, USES staff felt that the CAI gave children opportunities to learn art vocabulary and techniques. Jerrell noted that the program affords children a new way of talking about their art work: *"When they think about art, a lot of them – a lot of times they're not as – they don't know how to explain their work."* He added, *"Whether they're going to be professional artists [or not], in the future, at least they know how to express themselves on paper; and they have fun with it. So, hopefully, you know, they can use that as a tool in the future."*

Jasen talked about how children can learn more about history from being in the museum: *"It's history and art. It's things learned from art. Like when they ... made all these things back [in the] 18<sup>th</sup> century...and now people look at them, and it's telling their story from when they were alive."* Robyn also discussed how art can be a vehicle for learning history for kids and families: *"...There's a lot of history that can be learned through the visual arts, and I think that the MFA is trying to teach some of that to kids and families in a family-friendly way."*

Finally, staff pointed to the sense of pride they saw in the children as a result of their CAI experience. Robyn noted, *"I do think that it's beneficial because the children get really excited about the projects that they've worked really hard on, and then I think that there has to be some kind of a natural transition of that excitement to families."* Jasen, who attended this year's Heroes opening, noted that *"all the children that did the projects, they all liked having their final product up in the museum for other people to see"* and *"They were all proud to see that what they had worked on was actually going up..."*

### Potential Program Benefits for Families

For the most part, parents felt the program was beneficial for their children but not necessarily for them as a family. A few parents noted that the free tickets to the museum made the MFA affordable to them, but it was not clear that any parents had actually used the tickets. In the words of Malik's mother, *"You know, I mean if I'm going to take all 8, plus me 9, but they're not absolutely going to have a good time, it's pointless to go. Because you know, I'm going to spend all that money and the only ones that are probably going to pay attention is Malik."* Robyn noted that while families may not visit the museum on their own, they become more aware of the museum through the CAI program: *"I think that by parents getting to meet people from the MFA here or through events that we might bring them to the MFA – you know it makes people in the MFA more real to them, and I think it makes the museum a little bit more real."*

USES staff acknowledged that family involvement is something they are struggling with, and working hard to increase. Jasen has been trying hard to get more parents to attend the opening reception and show an interest in their children's efforts. He was unsure why parents were not attending: *"Children work hard on their pieces; and then they're put up; and other people come and see them; but ... what is it if your parent doesn't come..."*

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## CONCLUSIONS

Across all four case studies, data clearly show that the Community Arts Initiative is achieving its primary goals. Each community organization has not only embraced their partnership with the CAI, but integrated it into their organization's culture and operations. Staff report that the program has extended and enriched their capacity for arts programming, and children and their parents can give multiple examples of how the CAI has exposed them to art and art museums, enhanced children's art-making skills, and contributed positively to children's personal and social development.

### Structure of the CAI at Community Organizations

The CAI has been well integrated into each of the four community organizations studied here, albeit in slightly different ways. At the both of the Boys and Girls Clubs, the program has been integrated into regular after-school arts programming, with the Art Director leading program efforts. Jordan has a 6-year history with the CAI, and focuses the program mainly on the annual Artist Project. Yawkey is much newer to the CAI, with a relatively new Art Director as well, but over the last year their CAI program has included not only the annual Artist Project, but also Artful Adventure ceramics sessions led by the MFA Community Liaison.

At the other two community organizations, the CAI has also been integrated into after-school programming, but in slightly different ways. At BCNC, CAI has spread across various center activities to reach many different constituents. The partnership has spread beyond the annual Artist Project, and now includes new spin-off sessions such as after-school classes for children in the Josiah Quincy School, and a series of classes for children with special needs. BCNC also works hard to involve the MFA in center events, especially those designed to reach parents and families. At USES, the CAI takes the form of both the Artist Project and Artful Adventures (AA) visits at the museum and at the center. The Children's Art Centre also uses the partnership for AA and community events, and there are plans for another department at USES to start using the partnership this fall.

It is important to recognize that each of the four community organizations studied here have truly integrated the CAI into their programming, and into their ways of working. Previous research conducted by ILI would suggest that such integration not only takes years, but takes strong commitment and effort on the part of both parties (Luke & Adams, 2003; Luke, Bronnenkant & Stein, 2004). This finding suggests that the CAI is in fact a true partnership at these sites, something that is not easily accomplished but provides a necessary foundation from which to build to participant outcomes.

These subtle differences in program structure at each site highlight what staff from these community organizations value most about the CAI, namely its flexibility and commitment to working with them to serve their unique community. Although the program may take different forms across sites, the impacts of the CAI are fairly uniform. For that reason, we summarize findings in aggregate form across all four participating community organizations.



## Impacts of CAI on Community Organizations and Their Staff

During in-depth interviews with various staff at each community organization, we asked them what the CAI has meant to them and their organization; two themes arose again and again. First, staff told us that the program is entirely aligned with their organization's mission, and extends and enriches their ability to infuse the arts into their surrounding community. According to Elaine Ng, Executive Director, Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center, the CAI allows them *"to incorporate arts more actively into people's lives."* Staff also talked about leveraging their partnership with the MFA, since they felt the museum brings a certain credibility and legitimacy to their organization's efforts to promote learning in and through the arts.

Second, staff reported that the CAI builds their capacity for arts programming. In the words of Andrew Swain, Executive Director, Yawkey Boys and Girls Club, *"They fill the gaps for us in terms of programming."* Staff pointed to much-needed resources provided by the MFA through this program whether it was help installing a kiln at Yawkey or help facilitating arts activities for families during a special event at BCNC. All four of the sites clearly valued the quality of the MFA's resources and programming, and they greatly appreciated the role played by the Community Liaisons. Not only was the Liaison's expertise and skills valued, but more than one staff member noted how the presence of the Liaison freed them to work more one-on-one with their children, something they rarely have chance to do.

## Impacts of CAI on Participating Children and Families

Across all four sites, we interviewed children, parents, and staff about their perceptions of how the CAI impacts participants in their community. We were overwhelmed by the breadth and depth of stories told about how this program has made a difference in the lives of children. In particular, three themes emerged from our interviews. One, participants reported that the program positively influenced children's attitudes towards both art and museums. Parents and staff repeatedly used the word "exposure" to describe what the program did for participating children, explaining that most of these children had little or no opportunities to get out of their neighborhood let alone visit an art museum. As a parent from Jordan said, *"It's just transporting them to a different world."* Parents and staff told stories of how specific children came to see the museum as something fun and exciting; how they came to express greater interest in actually going to the museum; and how they came to feel more comfortable in the museum. This notion that an art museum program can benefit children by exposing them to art and art museums is in keeping with previous research conducted by ILI (Adams & Luke, 2002; Luke & Adams, 2003).

Two, participants reported that the program seems to enhance children's skills, related to creativity broadly and art-making specifically. In the words of a boy from Jordan, *"I can do things with clay much better than I used to do."* Children, parents, and staff all talked about how the CAI gave children a chance to work with clay, and to improve their techniques using

this material. Parents in particular felt that the program allowed children to express themselves and to experiment with different ways of doing that.

Third, participants felt that the CAI increased children's self-awareness. Parents and staff talked about how the Artist Project helped children to feel confident in their abilities to make art, and to feel a sense of accomplishment relative to their art work. To quote a parent from Yawkey, "*it helps her build her character, helps build self-esteem.*" Again, this finding is in keeping with previous research conducted by ILI, showing that programs like the Community Arts Initiative can enhance children's perceptions of themselves (Adams & Luke, 2002).

Whether the CAI has had an impact on participating families in the community is harder to determine. It is encouraging that each of the four community organizations studied here is making great efforts to involve parents in the program; however, research shows that parent involvement requires repeated attempts over time, and that it needs to fit with the realities of low-income, cultural minority parents' lives (Calabrese Barton et al., 2004). There is some indication in the data that parents of children in the Artist Project are not only aware of the project, but value it and want to support their child's participation in it. Many parents attended the celebration at the museum in May, and some said they have talked about the project with their child. If the MFAB truly wants the CAI to impact not only children, but parents as well, it may be that more targeted programming for parents is required.

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## Appendix A

### Data Sources

#### Case 1: Yawkey Club of Roxbury

##### *Initial Meetings*

November 9, 2007, Ralph Beach, Art Director, Yawkey Club; MFA & ILI staff

February 25, 2008, Ralph Beach, Art Director, Yawkey Club; MFA & ILI staff

##### *Observations*

March 6, 2008, Heroes Project Session 1

March 13, 2008, Heroes Project Session 2

March 20, 2008, Heroes Project Session 3

March 27, 2008, Heroes Project Session 4

April 3, 2008, Heroes Project Session 5

April 10, 2008, Heroes Project Session 6

##### *Staff Interviews*

March 13, 2008, Ralph Beach, Art Director, Yawkey Club

July 23, 2008, Ralph Beach, Art Director, Yawkey Club

August 4, 2008, Andrea Swain, Executive Director, Yawkey Club

August 5, 2008, Leah Reich, Associate Director of Program Services, Boys & Girls Clubs of Boston

April 24, 2008, Kathryn Smeglin, Yawkey MFA Community Liaison

##### *Child and Parent Interviews*

August 20, 2008, Derricka, Heroes participant; Cynthia, Derricka's mother and Yawkey Program Generalist

#### Case 2: Gerald and Darlene Jordan Club, Chelsea

##### *Observations*

January 9, 2008, Heroes Project Session 1

January 16, 2008, Heroes Project Session 2

January 23, 2008, Heroes Project Session 3

January 30, 2008, Heroes Project Session 4

February 6, 2008, Heroes Project Session 5

*Staff Interviews*

January 10, 2008, Alice Vogler, Art Director, Jordan Club

January 30, 2008, Alice Vogler, Art Director, Jordan Club

March 3, 2008, Alice Vogler, Art Director, Jordan Club

July 17, 2008, Patricia Manalo Bochnak, Performing Arts Director, Jordan Club

August 5, 2008, Leah Reich, Associate Director of Program Services, Boys and Girls Club of Boston

February 28, 2008, Nina Reck, Community Liaison

August 1, 2008, Nina Reck, Community Liaison

*Child Interviews*

February 6, 2008, Isabella, Elizabeth

March 24, 2008, Junior, Jonathan, Jaylen

*Parent Interviews*

April 2, 2008, Parents of Isabella, Elizabeth, Jaylen, Junior

**Case 3: Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center***Initial Meeting*

November 9, 2007: Jason Chu, Red Oak Education Director, BCNC; Giles Li, Arts Coordinator, BCNC; MFA & ILI staff

*Observations*

February 21, 2008, Artful Adventures session, BCNC Red Oak

March 28, 2008, Heroes Project Session 1

April 4, 2008, Heroes Project Session 2

April 11, 2008, Heroes Project Session 3

April 25, 2008, Heroes Project Session 5

May 10, 2008, Family Day with ESOL Tours

*Staff Interviews*

March 3, 2008, Jason Chu, Red Oak Education Director, BCNC; Sadada Jackson, Red Oak Program Director, BCNC

March 27, 2008, Jason Chu, Red Oak Education Director, BCNC

June 6, 2008, Jason Chu, Red Oak Education Director, BCNC

June 9, 2008, Giles Li, Arts Coordinator, BCNC

June 9, 2008, Joseph Wu, Family Services Director, BCNC

July 16, 2008, Jason Chu, Red Oak Education Director, BCNC  
August 12, 2008, Elaine Ng, Executive Director, BCNC  
May 10, 2008, Cynthia Woo, BCNC MFA Community Liaison

*Child Interviews*

July 21, 2008, Johnny  
July 22, 2008, Virginia, Kevin, Lydia, Jenny, Kelly

*Parent Interviews*

August 15, 2008, Parents of Lydia, Kevin, and Johnny

**Case 4: United South End Settlements**

*Initial Meeting*

November 30, 2007, Jerrell Cox, After-School Site Coordinator, USES; Emily Stewart, Youth Enrichment Coordinator/ Coordinator of the Children's Art Centre, USES; Robyn Carter, Senior Director of Youth and Family Programs, USES; MFA & ILI staff

*Observations*

January 31, 2008, Heroes Project Session 1  
February 7, 2008, Heroes Project Session 2  
February 14, 2008, Heroes Project Session 3  
February 21, 2008, Heroes Project Session 4  
February 28, 2008, Heroes Project Session 5  
March 13, 2008, Heroes Make-up Session 5

*Staff Interviews*

January 31, 2008, Jerrell Cox, After-School Site Coordinator, USES  
February 21, 2008, Jerrell Cox, After-School Site Coordinator, USES  
May 2, 2008, Jerrell Cox, After-School Site Coordinator, USES  
May 30, 2008, Jasen Beverly, Group Leader, USES  
February 28, 2008, Nina Reck, USES MFA Community Liaison  
August 1, 2008, Nina Reck, USES MFA Community Liaison

*Child Interviews*

May 28, 2008, Jeremiah, Mahki, Neyt  
May 30, 2008, Areana, Breana, Malik, Nevaada, Yazmine

*Parent Interviews*

May 28, 2008, Parents of Jeremiah, Mahki, Neyt, Areana, Breana, Malik, Nevaada, Yazmine