

Culturally Inclusive Fine Arts (CIFA)

A Non-Traditional Arts Program for Underserved Children

Demonstration Proposal March 2015

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*“I do not want ART for a few any more
than I want EDUCATION for a few, or
FREEDOM for a few.”*

William Morris

Our Vision:

If you asked most Americans; should all children be afforded a free and appropriate education under our nation's constitution, the overwhelming response would be yes. If the same question were posed with the word "Art" inserted prior to the word "education", the responses would not be so resounding. In 2001, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) was passed and for the first time school systems across America were mandated to educate children from the poorest neighborhoods with the same level of quality and success as children from affluent environments. The result of the new legislation required schools to prepare children for state assessments to demonstrate their compliance with NCLB. State assessments became the most important academic exercise in schools and districts during this period. The curriculum focus in schools across the United States was sequenced around producing assessment outcomes reflective of compliance with NCLB. Since Fine Arts was not the focus of assessments, funding for Fine Arts programming in schools was often redirected to support subjects that were assessed for NCLB compliance. In schools across America, especially in low performing schools; funding traditionally allocated to support extracurricular programs was redirected to support courses required for NCLB compliance.

In schools responsible for educating children from more affluent communities, the impact on Fine Arts programming was minimal by the end of the NCLB era. These schools continued their dance classes; their music programs continued to thrive; and traditional arts classes were as robust as they were prior to NCLB introduction. In fact, many school districts created arts schools and academies that again only provided opportunity for participation by those schools not forced to reduce or eliminate arts programming as a result of NCLB. The benefactors of these special art schools and academies were and more often than not remain children from affluent environments. Although this exclusionary practice was unintentional, it was accepted and continues to limit opportunities for the generation of children it was conceived to assist. In many cases, children from underserved communities do not even know opportunities for Fine Arts education exist or ever existed as a result of the curriculum practices employed in their schools to meet NCLB requirements.

According to United States Census data, the Austin metropolitan area is one of the fastest growing metropolises in the United States of America, yet 61% of the children who attend school in Austin Independent School District live in poverty. These are the same children who have routinely been excluded from Fine Arts education. With the increasing local population, the urgency to ensure all children of the Austin community are provided every educational opportunity possible to become productive citizens is upon us. Well intended school districts have located arts schools and academies in areas where feeder pattern and community support guaranteed program success but did little to capture the attention of students from low socioeconomic backgrounds. This lack of proximity and access created by these strategies resulted in the unintentional exclusion of children from impoverished communities. The Arts Schools and Arts academy are usually not located in low socioeconomic communities and the schools children attend from these communities often have limited Arts programming.

Our vision is to develop community and school centered programming that counter the exclusionary practices and cultural deficit children from low socioeconomic environments encounter when there is not equitable access to Fine Arts education. We propose to develop programs inclusive of every child's right to an education in Music, Dance, Drama, and Visual Arts provided in a curriculum that uses words, images, stories, individuals and institutions reflective of the culture and community

where children live. Our vision is uniquely different from other programs. We seek to employ inclusionary practices that increase Fine Arts participation by underserved groups. Our goal is to incorporate an innovative set of actions and strategies that embrace Fine Arts primarily as an entrepreneurial exercise rather than a cultural or talent enriching experience. We believe Fine Arts is a means to economic independence and a catalyst for community development. When children are provided a Fine Arts education that incorporates business and marketing acumen as a measure of artistic success to the same degree as an individual's talent in a particular genre; children are prepared for success on four fronts; artistic, career, collegiate, and community.

We can no longer afford to waste the talent and ability of the more than 50 percent of children who drop out of school from low socioeconomic neighborhoods. We dramatically need to reduce the tragic costs which occurs when young people do not possess the skills, values and habits that lead to productive lives. Over the past number of years many strategies and programs have been implemented in every city in the nation and yet the problem of low achievement and poor employment preparation for many students continue to contribute to the generational poverty that occurs in our most challenging neighborhoods.

The Culturally Inclusive Fine Arts (CIFA) program developed by Arts4UsAll will address the need created by NCLB. Moreover, it will provide a unique opportunity for children from underserved communities to have access to a one of a kind Fine Arts program that could be life changing and community altering. Although the cornerstone of The Culturally Inclusive Fine Arts program is to provide access and opportunity; the desire to become an effective learner and worker must come from within each individual. Each child must ardently choose to pursue his or her artistic pathway for success. Therefore, our vision and the main goal of the proposed program is to systematically integrate organizational structures, motivation, and developmental processes that help youth make empowering and beneficial choices while acquiring the knowledge, skills, and ability to become accomplished artist and arts entrepreneurs.

I. The Current Crisis:

The ideogram for crisis in Chinese is composed of two images- "danger and opportunity." This representation of crisis could not be a more appropriate way to describe the condition and plight of children from low socioeconomic communities and the schools that serve them. While the high school dropout rate for children in schools in middle and affluent America is on the decline; according to 2010 U.S. Census Bureau data, the high school dropout rate in schools that serve children from poor communities remain stagnant. Children from poor communities tend to be clustered in certain neighborhoods rather than being evenly distributed across geographic areas. This concentration of poverty is important because researchers have found that living in areas with many other poor people places burdens on low-income families beyond what families' own individual circumstances would dictate. Children born in these communities from birth are characterized as at-risk. They are doomed to be at-risk of dropping out of school, at-risk of incarceration, at-risk of premature death, and at-risk of starting families that perpetuate the poverty cycle. According to U.S. Census data 45% of Blacks, 35% of Hispanics, and 12% of Whites lived in these neighborhoods.

The concentration of poverty has contributed to the segregation of schools and crime. According to the Economic Policy Institute, in 1980, 33% of children in concentrated poverty areas attended schools that were 90%-100% non-white and in 2010 38.1% of children attended schools that were 90-100% non-white. Schools are more segregated today than they were in 1980. The more non-white students attending a school, the fewer the resources it has. More than two decades ago the William T. Grant Foundation published two reports *The Forgotten Half Non-College Youth in America* and *The Forgotten Half: Pathway to Success for America's Youth and Young Families*, that pointed to a major underlying problem--our inability to adequately prepare (unlike most industrialized countries) our young people for the workforce. Specifically, these reports called attention to the way our high schools short changes millions of non-college bound youngsters whose transition to adulthood is made more difficult as they search for appropriate productive employment and further training. As inner city high schools struggle with preparing their students for new high stakes tests, the chances that these schools (already besieged by problems) will have any creative energies left to motivate the large majority of students to prepare for study or work is bleak. Those who remain unmotivated have some grim choices. In 2015, The William T. Grant foundation published an updated report, *The New Forgotten Half Non-College Youth in America* that chronicles the same patterns as the original report. Young people are not being prepared for adulthood and youngsters living in poverty are besieged with environmental burdens that make their social cohesion preparation for adulthood at-risk.

Researchers have long linked poverty to crime. Studies have revealed that in geographical areas where there is a concentration of poverty, the crime rates are consistently above that of more affluent areas. The deepest contributor to youth being at-risk is the high unemployment rate of families living in poor communities. Joblessness destroys entire communities and whatever social cohesion that kept people living together in peace. The dangers children face as a result of poverty provides opportunity for long term systemic change. It provides opportunity for adults, adult driven institutions, and adult driven systems to implement structures and programs that combat the current crisis and eliminate the negative influences of poverty on the future success of children. We believe the current crisis with children from underserved communities is at epic proportion because the behavior of the adults toward children from economically disadvantaged communities remains unchanged over the past thirty years. We

believe a purely academic approach only perpetuates the current crisis and alternative approaches such as CIFA create opportunity.

II. The Current Opportunity:

Policymakers, educators, and economist all desire programs that can contribute to or aid in eliminating crime, social unrest, and poverty. Researchers have informed us time and time again that children from poverty have a unique set of needs that cannot be satisfied by participation in the general education curriculum in school alone. The opportunity to confront alternative methods for meeting the needs of children from underserved Austin communities and to engage adult driven institutions in different demonstrations is now. In 2011, The Harvard Graduate School of Education published the report *Pathways to Prosperity: Meeting The Challenge Of Preparing Young Americans for The 21st Century*. The report emphasizes that less than one in three children accomplish the dream of college graduation and only 40% of youngsters who complete college are male. The report outlines opportunities for institutions and adults to behave differently when addressing pathways to adulthood for youth.

Although adopting new standards in education and resourcing afterschool programs that do much of the same as day school is the mainstream approach in the school reform movement for preparing children for 21st Century America, we currently have millions of youngsters in need of a different approach right now. We believe the cultural infusion of Art is a unique approach that delivers a different opportunity and pathway for youngsters. According to a 2010 report published by Americans for the Arts, *Arts & Economic Prosperity IV: The Economic Impact of Nonprofit Arts and Culture Organizations and Their Audiences*, the Arts are resilient and can provide economic opportunities when other industries or institutions are weakening or becoming extinct. In 2010, nationally, the arts industry generated \$135.2 billion of economic activity—\$61.1 billion by the nation's nonprofit arts and culture organizations in addition to \$74.1 billion in event-related expenditures by their audiences. According to the report, this economic activity supports 4.1 million full-time jobs and generates \$22.3 billion in revenue to local, state, and federal governments every year— a yield well beyond the collective \$4 billion in arts allocations. The Culturally Inclusive Fine Arts (CIFA) demonstration by Arts4UsAll is a unique and different approach to supporting Career and Technical Education (CTE). ART4USALL recognizes the direct and indirect impact an arts entrepreneurial education and training program can have in underserved communities. The CIFA demonstration will provide youngsters the opportunity participate in an alternative pathway to adulthood considerate of collegiate preparation while promoting entrepreneurship if a youngster's formal education ceases before, during, or after high school.

Proposal:

We propose to establish arts-centered afterschool and summer programs throughout the Austin, Manor, Round Rock, and Pflugerville, Texas metropolitan area to serve students traditionally excluded from community and school arts programming. We propose to initially establish ***The Culturally Inclusive Fine Arts (CIFA)*** program in the city of Austin and strategically locate the demonstration program in areas with the highest concentration of underserved students. Although the priority population is underserved students, we seek to develop an inclusive arts program that ultimately serves all students in the metropolitan area. We seek to use art as a means of redirecting young people to positive opportunities who otherwise would have no extracurricular outlet or opportunity if the CIFA program by Arts4usAll did not exist.

Through an arts platform, we will use the most effective understandings of how to motivate young people to succeed despite their current condition. We will develop, organize, and implement the most effective after school and summer program the Austin metropolitan area and this country has seen so children are "turned onto learning" and acquire the skills and attitudes that will help them excel no matter how under-resourced their school or how demoralized their local community might be. Today, we have the most educated society known yet we have failed in our mission to provide all children appropriate access and equality to all forms of programming known to contribute to their increased success and productivity at both the school and community level. If we fail in this mission to properly prepare and educate young people neither our wealth nor our levels of education will be the central theme in the annals of future historians; all they will recall is our civilization was the first that failed to replicate its values and skills among the majority of its citizens.

We propose the stakes are too important to exclude any young people from exposure and skill development that will not only contribute to their individual success but to the advancement of the Austin community and society at large. The Culturally Inclusive Fine Arts demonstration we propose to establish over the next four (4) years will emerge as a national after school and summer template other communities can replicate to increase access to the Arts by underserved young people and add value to the community.

How will Arts4UsAll's Culturally Inclusive Fine Arts programs increase the opportunities of children in the Austin Metro area when public schools have declining enrollments and resources are being redirected to charter school programming? According to the Texas Charter School Association, Charter School Programs are growing by 25% each year and Charter Schools have captured over 12,500 students from the Austin area public schools to date with 72% of those students coming from underserved communities. The proliferation of Charter Schools in the area further exacerbates the need. Charter Schools have even wider resource deficits and are less likely than public schools to provide arts programming for children from underserved communities. Arts4UsAll will resolve the "Arts Gap" initially by establishing talent and interest search teams specifically aimed at identifying and locating children with a propensity for Art in any Arts genre. These teams will provide the foundation of children necessary to ignite and grow the program. We will find children who otherwise would not know or have a platform to develop their artistic talent through a team of arts professionals and educators with the ability to recognize talent and create programming to develop it. The talent team in our view will be different than traditional talent scouts and audition supervisors. The teams will be search agents with an education and entrepreneurial background skilled in identifying art potential in children who have had limited to no exposure to formal arts education or

training.

The teams in our view provide the antidote to the negative images of artist portrayed in the peer culture of low socioeconomic environments that prevent many young people from seeking opportunities in the arts. We believe as soon as we assemble groups of young people to participate and the team provides them with the tools to acquire economic and community success in their arts genre, the solidarity of the underachieving majority will be destroyed. In the African American community children are sometimes ridiculed and told they are "acting white" and often struggle between conforming to group norms and sometimes forego the acknowledgement of their talent for conformity. We know from commonsense and behaviorist such as Abraham Maslow that humans have a "hierarchy of needs" with food and shelter at its base and self-actualization at its apex. Between those lie safety, love, affection, a feeling of belonging and esteem. When prolonged failure, exclusion, and inability to develop natural abilities occur at school and the community; needs such as self-esteem are not met and the negative and virtually impossible cycle to break of underachievement is set in motion in underserved communities.

The Culturally Inclusive Fine Arts Program by Arts4UsAll will motivate youngsters to want to learn by allowing them to set individual goals and participate on a team to accomplish collective goals while contributing to their own individual goal attainment. Each child will work on Arts projects in a team environment under the education, mentorship, and supervision of professional artist and educators. The projects will encompass artistic skills and arts education requirements outlined in Texas House Bill 5, Texas Career and College Readiness Standards, and 21st Century skills that the SCANS commission and others have recommended as keys for success. Through this demonstration program model, mentors and professional will guide children to success with individual goal attainment and project completion while developing their skills as team members, entrepreneurs, and artist. Individual motivation through teaming (based on our long experience with teams in the military, entertainment, business, and sports) will be key to pushing the boundaries of what we know is possible in children when provided the opportunity, access, and appropriate environment to excel. The team will help generate a new sense of possible, a new demand for learning, and will inspire children to want to join The Culturally Inclusive Fine Arts Program.

I. The Program : Culturally Inclusive Fine Arts (CIFA)

A. Program Summary:

The Culturally Inclusive Fine Arts (CIFA) program by ARTS4USALL is a community based arts education program designed to identify, nurture, and develop the talents of children from underserved communities in grades Kindergarten through Twelve in the Austin metropolitan area over a four (4) year implementation cycle. Our aim is to provide a non-traditional product based arts education program through the Visual, Performing, and Commercial Arts platform. The program is unique in that it does not focus on the arts as a source of cultural enrichment only, but as a function of daily life and economic empowerment. The CIFA afterschool and summer program will provide children the tools necessary to be arts entrepreneurs, product developers, and performers.

The CIFA program will provide access to arts education and entrepreneurship to children who traditionally would not have the economic resources or know-how to participate in

such a program. Operationally, the program is conceived to increase the exposure, provide entrepreneurial skills, and develop the talents of underserved children through partnerships with local municipalities, parks and recreation departments, the arts community, and local school district(s). ARTS4USALL will enrich the community with a CIFA program not existent in the Austin-Metro area and prepare a cadre of youth to contribute both artistically, socially, and economically to the community.

B. Program Advantages: According the U.S. Department of Education and Department of Justice report on Safe and Smart After-School Programs, students enrolled in quality after school and summer programs (CIFA) as enrichment activities:

- Show better achievement in math, reading and other subjects
- Have increased community involvement
- More school engagement by parents
- Develop new skills and interests
- Have reduced dropout rates and improved school attendance
- Reduced retention in grade and in special education placements
- Have higher aspirations and a more positive outlook for the future
- Have improved social skills that support better interpersonal behavior
- Have reduced conflicts and better relations with peers and adults
- Have improved self-confidence through the development of caring relations with adults and peers

C. Key Program Objectives: The CIFA program will deliver service to school age children primarily attending schools in Austin and surrounding municipalities in geographic areas where there are high concentrations of poverty. The program will seek to accomplish the following objectives:

- Increase talent development opportunities for children with artistic potential of underserved communities who otherwise would have limited or no opportunity to do so in the traditional education system.
- Increase engagement and provide a bridge between children from underserved communities and arts professional with limited or no other platform to engage each other.
- Create nurturing learning environments via afterschool and summer programs where children can develop their artistic talent(s) in a product or performance based environment.
- Provide children with potential and artistic talent opportunities to use their talent for economic empowerment and community improvement.
- Contribute to the academic, emotional, and social productivity of teenagers who may otherwise engage in non-productive activities during the after school and summer hours.
- Provide communities and schools an arts education alternative in geographic areas where the arts programming is not aligned with values that capture the children's interest and participation.

II. Program Components and Overview:

Over a four (4) year period, the CIFA Program will offer there (3) major component areas with designated education, training, and entrepreneurial activities for each; (1) ***Visual Arts Development and Production***, (2) ***Performing Arts Development and Production***, (3) ***Business/Entrepreneurial Education and Development***. The components will be delivered in the form of courses, projects, products, and performances. Activities will be designed and formatted as modules for completion in the classroom, the community, at shows, and on stage. Mentorship and training will be provide be educators and arts professionals who have the skills, knowledge, and ability to provide instruction, model, and provide artistic guidance specific to the talents and abilities of the students. The components will be organized and delivered in an after-school and summer program model. The program will be delivered on a school campus or close proximity to a school to eliminate transportation requirements and transition time to the program.

The program will enlist three (3) full time employees to develop the CIFA to scale and nurture it's four (4) year implementation; (1)a project director, (2)a curriculum director, and (3) office assistant. Arts mentors and instructors and will be enlisted as employees and adjunct employees to instruct and guide children's' talents and abilities. Local municipalities and school districts will be engaged as partners for space utilization, technical assistance, and as sources of funding. The program's operational calendar will be organized around Austin ISD school calendar and school hours. The initial six months to a year of CIFA program operation will be devoted to research, program development, and organizing partnerships to ensure a successful launch and a high quality program is implemented capable of long term sustainability. Valid program results will not be expected until the conclusion of year three of program implementation. Metrics will be instituted and monitored to track program performance prior to the conclusion of year three of implementation.

In addition to the research and development phase. The program will be implemented in three (3) phases composed of sub-programs for each age group/ grade level defined by level of school designation. Upon full implementation the program design will facilitate students from all school levels working together in teams or in mentor- mentee relationships by the end of year four. **Phase One** (1) will be composed of programing conceived for high school students, **Phase Two** (2) will be composed of programming conceived for Middle School Students, and **Phase Three** (3) will be composed of programing conceived for Elementary School Students. Throughout the implementation phases and the duration of the CIFA program, program activities will be fluid to adjust for the most current educational, technological, and industry trends available to deliver real-time and relevant skills and experiences to the children.

1. Visual Arts Development and Production:

Participants navigating the Visual Arts components will receive instruction, guidance and talent development activities designed to develop or sharpen their skills and knowledge in the areas of Artistic Perception; Creative Expression; Historical and Cultural Context; and Aesthetic Valuing. The following activities represent the core activities for the Visual Arts component and are not reflective of the total complement of activities students will receive during program attendance through completion.

Component Activities:

- A. Visual Arts Career Exploration Workshops:**
- B. Computer Graphics Training**
- C. Computer Animation Training**
- D. Career Forums**
- E. Visual Arts All Stars**

2. Performance Arts Development and Production:

Participants navigating the Performance Arts components will receive instruction, guidance and talent development activities to develop or sharpen their skills and knowledge in the areas of; Dance; Music; Theatre; and Spoken Word. The following activities represent the core activities for the Performance Arts component and are not reflective of the total complement of activities students will receive during program attendance through completion.

Component Activities:

- A. Dance Classes**
- B. Acting Lessons**
- C. Script Writing Training**
- D. Spoken Word**
- E. Instrumental and Vocal Music Training**
- F. Performance Arts All-Stars**

3. Business/Entrepreneurial Education and Development:

Participants navigating the Business/ Entrepreneurial development components will receive instruction and guidance on how to build a successful arts and entertainment business. Students will be provided training in structuring a business, marketing, and product development. The following activities represent the core activities for the Business/Entrepreneurial component and are not reflective of the total complement of activities students will receive during program attendance through completion.

Component Activities:

- A. Small Business Management Training**
- B. Marketing Training**

C. Team/Community Building Activities

D. Internet Television Show

E. CIFA Book Project

F. CIFA Record Label

G. CIFA Print Company

H. CIFA Gallery

III. Implementation:

Program implementation will occur over a four (4) year period in three (3) phases with year one serving as the organization and planning phase, years two and three-implementation phase, and year four- operational phase. The program will run Monday-Thursday for 40 weeks in an afterschool model to include an eight week summer program. Saturday operation will occur for performances, product sales, and community outreach. Tentative afterschool hours will be from 4:00p.m. To 5:30p.m. Summer hours from 9:00a.m. To 1:00p.m. The program will follow Austin I.S.D. School calendar.

1. **Phase 1 – 6 mos. to 1 year (Organization):** CIFA organizational structure and infrastructure developed. Develop anchor programs at High School. Recruitment Phase.
2. **Phase 2- Years 2, 3 (Implementation):** CIFA curriculum and activities implemented. Program expansion to scale. Develop programs at the middle and elementary school level respectively.
3. **Phase 3- Year 4 (Operational):** CIFA program operating full scale. Students performing and creating products and services for sale.

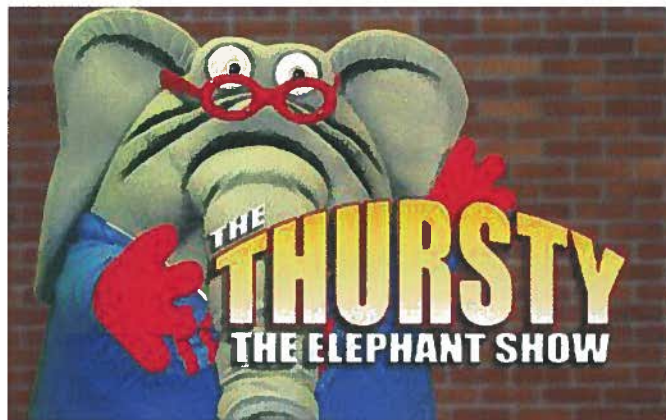
IV. Key Program Outcomes:

- Students will be prepared to pursue arts education, production, and performance beyond high school.
- Students will be able to work in teams during the design and development of projects and productions.
- Students will acquire artistic and business skills suitable for employment and community support.
- Students will be able to develop revenue generating Arts projects and productions.
- Students will improve and develop their individual talents to performance levels.
- Students will know the primary functions and operation of the music, theatre, and commercial arts industry.
- Students will become regular participants and performers in local and National arts programming.

V. Past Performance:

The Arts4UsAll CIFA program is a one of a kind demonstration project. We will set the standard for inclusive arts programs offered in underserved communities. The founder and co-founder of the CIFA program have a combined level of experience of over six decades developing programs, leading people, and providing opportunity for children from underserved communities. To that aim, the founder of the CIFA demonstration has past performance as a professional artist and an extensive track record as an arts professional motivating, engaging, and providing access to underserved children from the Austin community. Past local credits are:

- Created The Thursty the Elephant character and television show aired over Austin I.S.D. Television. to encourage students in the elementary school to read using various instructional strategies:



- Created the 4th grade Book Project at L.L. Campbell Elementary school where students published a book themed around the big ideas they learned in fourth grade. The book was distributed throughout Austin I.S.D.

