

# Arts, Culture, and Community Outcomes

What Four LISC Projects Accomplished



CASE STUDY OF CULTURE IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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Commissioned by 



Penn Avenue: Mosaic sculpture *Octavia*, which sits  
at the center of The Octopus Garden; Pittsburgh, PA.  
Photo by Metris Arts Consulting



Gimaajii-Mino-Bimaadizimin: AICHO's Urban Garden that was set up behind the Gimaajii building in a vacant lot; Duluth, MN. Photo by Ivy Vainio

In Duluth, Minnesota, the Gimaajii-Mino-Bimaadizimin community center offers home to the homeless and a rich enveloping experience of Native American culture. In Richmond, California, the East Bay Center for the Performing Arts builds character, appetite for social justice, and sometimes future careers through multicultural arts education for youth. A stretch of Penn Avenue in Pittsburgh's Bloomfield-Garfield section has gone from vacancy, blight, and crime to an active mix of arts businesses amongst establishments that cater to neighborhood residents. And in Indianapolis's Fountain Square, residents have their pick of long-time 24-hour diners and haute cuisine, part of a revitalized entertainment-and-arts district seeded by strategic investments in arts spaces.

**These communities are part of the portfolio of investments of the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) that embrace arts and culture as integral elements of economic and social change.**

These communities are part of the portfolio of investments of the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) that embrace arts and culture as integral elements of economic and social change. In some cases, people's participation in arts-and-cultural experiences shape and affirm personal and community identity and character. In other projects, artists and arts businesses underpin increasingly productive local economies. At times, these two outcomes are intertwined, such as when local artists committed to community work create opportunities for participation in arts-related programs for longtime residents, especially youth.

This paper uses the four programs cited above—in Duluth, Richmond, Pittsburgh, and Indianapolis—to analyze what arts and culture add to community development efforts, particularly insights into how these programs had an impact on economic and social change. All of these programs are explored in more depth as case studies, part of a series on the intersection of community development with arts and culture, published by LISC and Metris Arts Consulting.<sup>1</sup> The series also includes papers on artists as leaders in community development and the economic benefits of arts-and-culture-led community development.<sup>2</sup>

In 2014, the Kresge Foundation helped LISC embark on a formal creative placemaking program. This initiative supports people's participation in cultural life in ways that advance community change, infuses the signs and symbols of community culture throughout the built environment, and promotes artists and arts establishments as a cornerstone of neighborhood economies. Over the years, many real estate projects supported by LISC had

included these benefits. But LISC decided to begin to explicitly and systemically support creative placemaking as a community development strategy for several reasons.

Community developers have long sought to advance twin goals of market renewal and community-building. The former stimulates flows of public and private capital needed to drive communities forward; the latter creates community power able to shape that future in favorable ways. Infusion of arts and culture into community development advances both these ends. Creation of small clusters of arts-and-cultural businesses helps drive market renewal, and residents' active participation in their culture builds local relationships and a sense of community. Ideally, each of these bolsters the other. Each new and thriving arts business contributes to a sense of community by offering cultural experiences that help bind people to one another, leading to more effective community action. A community with an authentic arts-and-culture environment is an engaging place for people to explore—attracting more retail, restaurant, and other businesses.

LISC believes it can do better work by acting more strategically in this domain.

LISC also sees creative placemaking as a pathway toward more equitable community development outcomes. Visible signs of community culture mark a place as belonging, in a sense, to those who live there, and help dispel the racialized and class-based stigma that often attaches to lower-income neighborhoods. Active community culture creates a social foundation for public advocacy. It offers an entry for resident artists' participation in a growing and diversifying local economy.

<sup>1</sup> See pages 2 and 3 for a list of case studies, which are available at both [www.LISC.org](http://www.LISC.org) and [www.MetrisArts.com](http://www.MetrisArts.com).

<sup>2</sup> The two papers are *More than Storefronts: Insights into Creative Placemaking and Economic Development* and *Not Just Murals: Artists as Leaders in Community Development*. Both are available at [www.LISC.org](http://www.LISC.org) or [www.MetrisArts.com](http://www.MetrisArts.com).

Although the benefits of creative placemaking are manifold, the mechanisms to accomplish these outcomes are not immediately straightforward. To draw lessons from the work, we looked for stand-out arts-and-cultural

projects from LISC's portfolio, mining its information systems of past real estate projects to identify 104 projects related to arts and culture that LISC supported between 1984 and 2017, ranging from artists' live-work spaces to community arts facilities to performing arts venues, amounting to some \$146 million in LISC's investment and a total value of just over \$1 billion.<sup>3</sup>

From this set of projects, we asked local LISC staff to identify those that, in their professional judgment, "may have been critical to the physical transformation of a community, strengthened its social fabric in demonstrable ways, or helped seed the emergence of a vital neighborhood economy." Based on staff recommendations, we used two rounds of selection to choose the top four:



Penn Avenue: The Irma Freeman Center for Imagination; Pittsburgh, PA.  
Photo by Metris Arts Consulting

**The Penn Avenue Arts Initiative (PAAI)** in Pittsburgh, a commercial revitalization program designed and implemented by a partnership between Friendship Development Associates and the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation. The Pittsburgh Partnership for Neighborhood Development invested directly in real estate projects along the Avenue and provided operating support to the partners.<sup>4</sup>



Fountain Square: Fountain Square Theatre Building; Indianapolis, IN.  
Photo courtesy of Linton Calvert

**The Fountain Square neighborhood** in Indianapolis, particularly three arts projects: the Fountain Square Theatre Building, the Murphy Arts Center and its studio space and related arts uses, and the Wheeler Arts Building, a live-work space for low-income artists. With support from the Southeast Neighborhood Development Corporation and other local investors, Fountain Square has been reestablished as a major cultural-and-arts destination in the city.<sup>5</sup>



Gimaajii-Mino-Bimaadizimin: AICHO's Director of Family Services Daryl Olson presents Dr. Robert Powless with a plaque honoring his contributions to the Native community; Duluth, MN. Photo by Ivy Vainio

**The Gimaajii-Mino-Bimaadizimin supportive housing and community cultural center** in Duluth, developed by the American Indian Community Housing Organization (AICHO).

<sup>3</sup> See our online portfolio at [www.lisc.org](http://www.lisc.org).

<sup>4</sup> See Christopher Walker and Rachel Engh, "Vacancy to Vitality in Pittsburgh's East End," Case Study of Culture in Community Development (Local Initiatives Support Corporation, Fall 2017).

<sup>5</sup> See Anne Gadwa Nicodemus and Rachel Engh, "The Many Sides of Fountain Square," Case Study of Culture in Community Development (Local Initiatives Support Corporation, Fall 2017).

Housed in an historic YWCA building, Gimaajii's social programming is infused with the symbols and practices of Native American culture and the center has become an important reservoir of support for Native American artists.<sup>6</sup>



Winters Building: East Bay Center's Winters Building, exterior; Richmond, CA. Photo courtesy of East Bay Center for the Performing Arts

**The Winters Building** in downtown Richmond, California, developed by the East Bay Center for the Performing Arts to house and expand its nationally-recognized youth arts education program. The center is founded on values of mutual respect, tolerance, multiculturalism, and commitment to social justice, and the renovated building and the programs operated there may help anchor a commercial strip recovering from years of disinvestment.<sup>7</sup>

Efforts in Penn Avenue and Fountain Square aimed primarily (though not exclusively) to encourage the economic revitalization of low-income commercial areas through investments in spaces for artists and arts businesses, as well as other supports. Gimaajii and the East Bay Center pursued community-building goals by encouraging more active participation in arts and culture. We explore these two types of outcomes in turn.

## Contributing to Neighborhood Economies through Support for Artists and Arts Spaces

Like many places where LISC works, the four case study communities have suffered the familiar plagues of vacancy, blight, crime, and other symptoms of disinvestment. The two most central to our story of economic outcomes, Penn Avenue and Fountain Square, had become isolated from their cities, and with fewer visitors, their commercial areas were dependent almost exclusively upon the dwindling purchasing power of nearby neighborhoods. In these moribund markets, property owners either settled for squeezing what little income they could from buildings too unprofitable for reinvestment or sat on vacant properties waiting for something positive to finally happen.

When local economic developers encouraged a new arts-and-cultural economy, the investment unlocked considerable value in both the commercial and residential marketplaces. On purely economic grounds, their initiatives were unambiguously successful.

On Penn Avenue, for example, the vacancy rate for commercial space declined from 48 percent in 1999 to 18 percent in 2012. More than 55 arts businesses located on the strip, along with many of the artists they employed, and other businesses followed as well, including a new supermarket, restaurants, and coffee shops. Fountain Square witnessed a similar resurgence, going from a place that people generally avoided to one that has become a music and restaurant mecca. Both areas generate income for the artists, arts businesses, and other commercial, retail, and entertainment establishments that are now open in the community, and both have forged ties to citywide and even regional markets, positioning them to capture a share of a growing local economy. And both have also seen an upswing in nearby residential markets, in part supported by government programs that provide subsi-

<sup>6</sup> See Rachel Engh and Anne Gadwa Nicodemus, "We Are, All of Us Together, Beginning a Good Life," Case Study of Culture in Community Development (Local Initiatives Support Corporation, Fall 2017).

<sup>7</sup> See Christopher Walker and Anne Gadwa Nicodemus, "Deep Roots Wide World," Case Study of Culture in Community Development (Local Initiatives Support Corporation, Fall 2017).

dies for home purchase and rehabilitation to encourage homeownership and/or housing affordability in low- and moderate-income communities.

Note that the two projects covered in this paper that are aimed primarily at community-building produce economic outcomes, as well. Although devoted to providing supportive housing to Duluth's Native American homeless population, the Gimaajii building acts as an anchor for the city's community of Native American artists, including a gallery space. The East Bay Center for Performing Arts prepares Richmond's youth for living productive lives after high school—which for some means higher education, a career in the arts, or both.

### STRATEGIES AND PROGRAMS BEHIND THE CHANGE

The economic results of the efforts in Penn Avenue and Fountain Square confirm the wisdom of traditional approaches to commercial area revitalization, specifically adapted to support arts-and-culture-led development.<sup>8</sup> The National Trust for Historic Preservation's Main Street Program and its local variants best exemplify this core approach, which emphasizes economic restructuring, revitalization of public and private spaces, local business promotion, and local intermediation.<sup>9</sup>

In our cases, community economic developers sought to restructure local commercial districts through creation of what regional economists would call an arts-and-cultural economic cluster. An economic cluster consists of common infrastructure, a pool of labor, a shared market,

and nearby suppliers, which together promote efficiency and innovation in an industry. Such clusters depend upon networks of relationships that smooth the flow of ideas, information, money, and political support. Researchers have established the value of cultural clusters to artists' creative and financial lives—as sources of information and referral, connections to gatekeepers such as gallery owners, and supports to creativity. Clusters can be essential to cultural vitality, which Maria-Rosario Jackson defines as "evidence of creating, disseminating, validating, and supporting arts and culture as a dimension of everyday life in communities."<sup>10</sup>

The power of an arts-and-cultural economic cluster can be seen in Indianapolis, where the developer of the Murphy Arts Center in Fountain Square purposely rented out ground-floor space to establishments that would serve the needs of artists leasing studios upstairs. Owners of arts businesses along Penn Avenue told us about how they frequently shared resources and the valuable relationships they had formed. In Duluth, Gimaajii became an important node of Native American artists' social and economic networks, where the exchange of ideas and information helped reduce barriers to their participation in the wider art world.

Subsidized real estate investments shoulder much of the burden of traditional commercial revitalization efforts, and the same holds true for arts-and-cultural cluster formation, especially in its early stages. To drive cluster formation in Fountain Square, the community developer Southeast Neighborhood Development, Inc. (SEND) understood the centrality of developing artists' space, with major rehab projects in the Murphy Arts Center and Wheeler Arts. As pivotal was early siting of several

<sup>8</sup> This is more fully explored in Christopher Walker, Anne Gadwa Nicodemus, and Rachel Engh, "More than Storefronts: Insights into Creative Placemaking and Community Economic Development" (Local Initiatives Support Corporation, Fall 2017).

<sup>9</sup> "The Main Street Approach: A Comprehensive Guide to Community Transformation" (National Trust For Historic Preservation, n.d.)

<sup>10</sup> Maria Rosario Jackson, Florence Kabwasa-Green, and Joaquin Herranz, "Cultural Vitality in Communities: Interpretation and Indicators" (Urban Institute, 2006), <http://www.urban.org/url.cfm?ID=311392>.

anchor developments along Penn Avenue, Pittsburgh Glass Center and Dance Alloy, both of which are regional draws that signaled to observers across the city the establishment of an arts-and-culture node in the neighborhood.

In the Penn Avenue Arts Initiative, the community development partners custom-packaged public subsidies and bank financing for specific buildings and uses along the corridor and marketed them to prospective artist-buyers. They recognized that the Avenue's narrow three-story buildings, unsuitable for modern retail, might hold special appeal to artists, able to work on the ground floor, live on the second floor, and rent out the third. Flexible financing from Pittsburgh's Urban Redevelopment Authority and creative loan products from local banks made these specialized packages possible. But space development alone was not enough. The case study communities suffered the stigma that too often attaches to low-income and minority communities—a perception sometimes validated by actual physical disorder and crime, but otherwise distorted by race and class prejudice. Typical commercial revitalization programs seek to alter such perceptions through neighborhood marketing, with varying degrees of success.

Penn Avenue and Fountain Square demonstrate the power of cultural amplification in marketing efforts to reshape both residents' and outsiders' perceptions of a community. The arts-focused Unblurred: First Fridays events on Penn Avenue called attention to a new and growing availability of arts and cultural experiences in a neighborhood outsiders once shunned. (Organizers also cleverly used these events to promote the availability of local buildings and subsidies to artists.) First Fridays at the studios in the Murphy Arts Center in Fountain Square drew hundreds of participants, who then also patronized other nearby businesses.

These practices exemplify the crucial role played by intermediation—the brokerage of relationships that make possible efficient flows of money, technical expertise, information, and social and political support. Artists returned distressed properties to productive use and people recognized the value of hitherto disparaged neighborhoods only because smart, dedicated, and hard-working people cooperated to produce this result. SEND could attract bank money early on when individual investors couldn't. Its support for visibly viable early projects induced others to buy into an emerging community with real economic potential. PAAI partners Friendship Development and Bloomfield-Garfield achieved the same result with guided access to real estate they controlled, custom-fit subsidy packages, and newly-recruited artist-buyers who began filling out the empty spaces on the Avenue.

This infrastructure of cooperation also includes those who play informal roles in helping artists as entrepreneurs navigate their economic lives. For example, the developer of the Murphy Arts Center in Fountain Square charged below-market rents because he was committed to the community of artists he helped nurture. BOOM Concepts on Penn Avenue supports emerging hip-hop artists in Pittsburgh with a venue, advice on career advancement, and information about sources of local support. To establish a viable arts-and-culture cluster in these communities required a full mixture of community stakeholders to invest in, coordinate, market, and advocate for this change.

#### TALLYING THE BENEFITS

Thanks in part to a broadening awareness of our country's racial and economic disparities, practitioners have come to ask harder questions about who benefits from community revitalization work. In many markets, rising

## LESSONS FROM THE PROJECTS

**Arts and culture projects intended to revitalize derelict commercial areas can be effective in resuscitating moribund commercial and residential markets.**

**Investments in artists' spaces nurtured emerging arts-and-cultural economic clusters, in which arts businesses draw on a common market and shared networks of information and material support.**

**Packages of government subsidies and private finance custom-designed for artists and arts businesses can enable artists to take an ownership position in a commercial property market poised for growth.**

**Community organizations mobilize finance and organize cooperative efforts to coordinate business activities, market an emerging cultural district, and sometimes, explicitly pursue equitable outcomes.**

**Efforts to include artists working in the cultural traditions of nearby low-income or minority communities came late to revitalization efforts, making for only partial success in achieving equitable outcomes.**

**Projects aimed to build communities through participation in arts and culture helped dispel the racialized and class-based stigma that attaches to marginalized communities.**

**Cultural communities that affirm personal and community identity, as well as mutual respect, cooperation, and multi-culturalism, contribute to both personal and civic well-being.**

**First-class renovations of historic spaces put to community use accord respect to those who may not often receive it in the broader society, and help create positive narratives of community strength.**

pressure on housing prices and rents has made a much trickier business of developing commercial and community facilities in low-income neighborhoods. Where neighborhoods once changed only slowly, this work clearly benefitted long-term residents. In these cities now, a shifting social, demographic, and economic mix makes this assumption unworkable. Community developers must explicitly consider who will reap the primary benefit of their work.

Some of the equity issues raised by people in the communities we visited are familiar ones. Commercial district improvement influences the residential marketplace, for good or for ill. In Pittsburgh, much of the impetus for the PAAI came from the Friendship neighborhood on one side of Penn Avenue, a whiter part of the community that was in the process of slowly gentrifying. Predictably, with the dramatic improvement of the commercial strip, housing prices rose, though accounts differ on whether and how this affected property values on the other side of the Avenue, in the African-American Garfield community. People in Fountain Square tell a similar story of nearby residential market renewal founded on early sweat equity by the newly arrived and investments backed by subsidies via government programs. Census figures show that property values in some parts of the neighborhood substantially outpaced those of other areas of Indianapolis, and several stakeholders we interviewed aired concerns that long-time residents could no longer afford to live there.

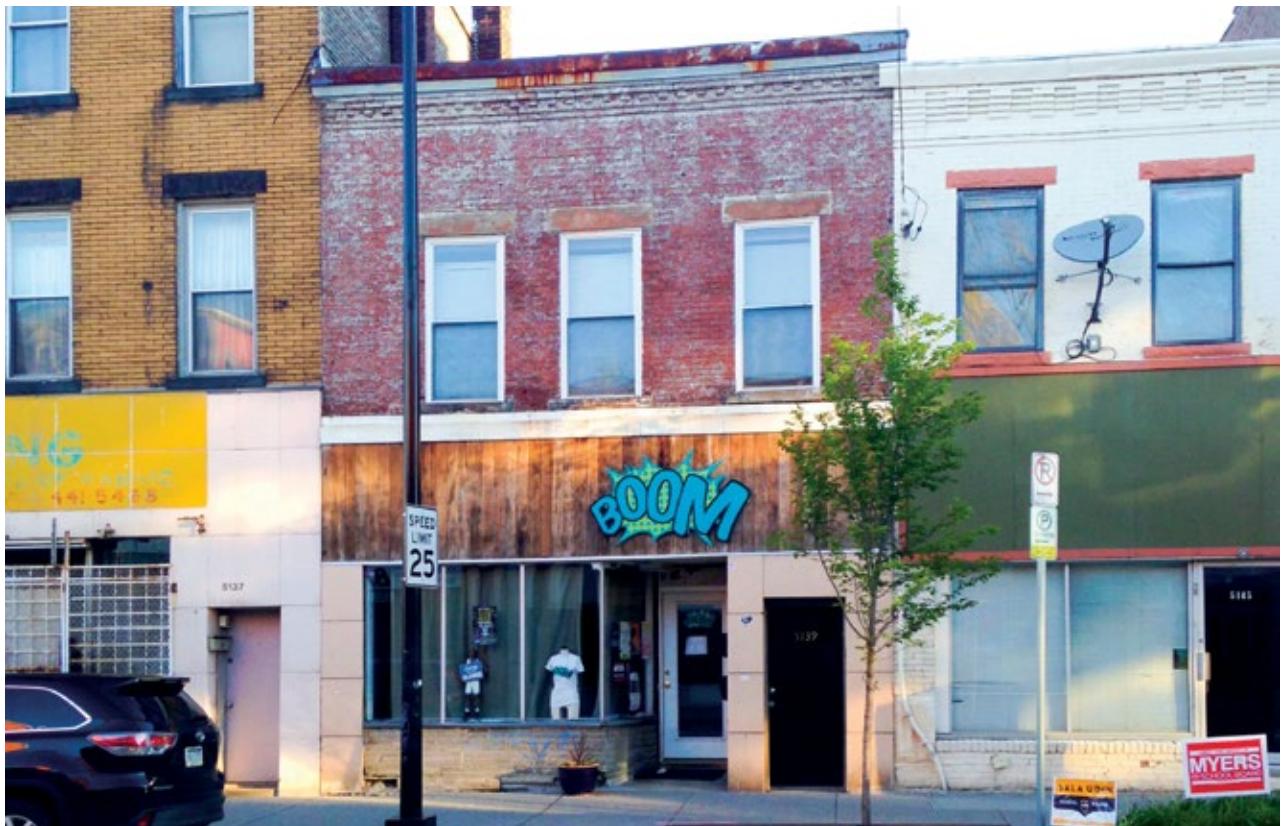
The benefits question becomes acute in the context of culturally-infused community revitalization. Culture structures individual and community identity, raising the question of whose identity is affirmed. And whose community it is. Embrace of arts and culture in revitalization leads very quickly to considerations of equity, sometimes understood in terms of social, economic, and cultural inclusivity.

In both Penn Avenue and Fountain Square, individual artists contributed to the resurgence of both the commercial district and the surrounding neighborhoods. Penn Avenue's program designers explicitly appealed to artists' interest in acquiring an ownership stake along the street, hoping to ward off future displacement and encourage active participation in a renewal process that would benefit the artists directly. Our interviews turned up strong evidence that this approach worked as intended.

What did not work as well in either of these case study communities was the inclusion of artists working in the community's own cultural idiom, whether African-American on Penn Avenue or white working-class Appalachian in Fountain Square.

In the latter instance, it's not clear that community leaders involved in the commercial district's renewal considered cultural equity as a matter of importance, or if they did, that they were equipped to pursue it in any meaningful way. By contrast, the Penn Avenue Arts Initiative embraced equity as a goal, but leaders' view of it was admittedly limited, defined only in terms of community outreach, particularly to African-American youth. Artists moving onto Penn Avenue accepted support in exchange for a commitment to engagement, which fostered an ethos of service within the arts community. But a deeper conception of equity as cultural affirmation for the black neighborhood of Garfield, which practically speaking means work by African-American artists, was not aggressively pursued. Some ten years into the initiative, local foundations began to direct support to black artists and arts organizations, which has begun to have the desired effect.

Although practitioners in and supporters of the Penn Avenue work expressed disappointment in their results from a cultural equity point of view, they learned several lessons.



Penn Avenue: BOOM Concepts; Pittsburgh, PA. Photo by Metris Arts Consulting

In part because a neighborhood is a complex ecosystem subject to the actions of myriad actors inside and outside the community, community developers often work without a clear conception of the final set of outcomes they may achieve. Their goal is to create specific positive changes that can, it is hoped, catalyze improvement. But equity requires more on this score. PAAI practitioners admit that they did not have a good metric for judging the fairness of the outcomes they would produce. They did not aim explicitly to create a substantial complement of black artists and arts businesses, and until they changed course, they wound up primarily with white artists.

Moreover, Penn Avenue's boosters sought in good faith to encourage artists to contribute to community well-being but did not have clear understanding that not all artists are adept at community work. So-called social practice art—making art with and for the community in ways that advance social change—requires talents and skills that not all artists possess. As this form of art-making becomes more widespread, community developers should recognize that it is both a powerful

community-building strategy and an activity that requires forethought and professional capacity.

Overall, Penn Avenue community developers did change course around equity, aided by a combination of economic power and commitment to inclusion. The project had started with a social vision for a revitalized commercial area that would rely on arts and culture to bring together black and white residents and those who were better-off and those who were less well-off. As it became clear that the developers had fallen short of their goals, they took steps backed by local philanthropy to more actively pursue racial and cultural diversity among those occupying storefronts along the strip. Because PAAI partner Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation (BGC) remained an important landowner, it was able to fill its properties with artists and arts businesses more reflective of the community's culture. In addition, BGC put the brakes on prioritizing new artists' spaces, seeking instead to incubate or attract community-serving businesses, like a new supermarket.



Fountain Square: Public art atop the Murphy; first installed in 2007, this was the first public art project of the nonprofit arts collective Department of Public Words; Indianapolis, IN. Photo by Metris Arts Consulting

We do not mean to leave the impression that the work done in Fountain Square and on Penn Avenue had only economic value. Promotions, events, and local festivals encouraged residents to take pride in a neighborhood pulled back from the brink. Some of the artists and arts businesses in both communities worked with residents to celebrate the history and culture of their neighborhood. In these secondary ways, community-building has been a part of the legacy of the work in these neighborhoods.

## Community-Building Outcomes

Compared to the case studies in Penn Avenue and Fountain Square, the sponsors of Gimaajii and the Winters Building set out specifically to advance community-building ends by building cultural strength in the communities they serve. Through arts and cultural participation, they sought to counteract racialized and class-based identities for individuals and communities

by creating affirming narratives, a kind of vaccine against a variety of personal and community traumas: homelessness and residential instability, violence, deportation, income loss, family disruption. These chronic conditions can eclipse very real personal, social, and cultural riches. The American Indian Community Housing Organization in Duluth developed Gimaajii as a supportive housing facility for homeless families, infused with a commitment to cultural expression through the buildings' interior design, including work by Native American artists, and gallery and performance space. The East Bay Center for the Performing Arts in Richmond, California, developed the Winters Building to house a nationally-recognized performing arts education program committed to values of mutual respect, multiculturalism, and social justice. Both focus on youth, placing, in the words of one Gimaajii interviewee, “a bet that youth will grow up to form the core of a healthy community.”

## HOW ARTS AND CULTURE PROVIDE SOCIAL BENEFITS

Both of these projects aim specifically to help individuals and families. The East Bay Center in Richmond uses arts education and performance, and Gimaajii envelopes its housing and social services in a rich arts and cultural environment. Both recognize the unique power of arts and culture in the formation and affirmation of individual identity, agency, and character.

The East Bay Center emphasizes mastery of performing arts as the foundation of self-respect and individual agency, to which it adds the performance of pieces from many world cultures, in community venues, which builds both confidence and respect for differences. Speaking about the value of cultural participation to youth at Gimaajii, one interviewee noted that “their whole identity is based on labels they get from different services. To give those kids their own voice and have it be self-determined and not driven by circumstances is really powerful.”<sup>11</sup>

These individual outcomes lead to community ones. In both cases, arts and cultural participation becomes a form of community-building, not just for the participants of the East Bay Center and Gimaajii programs but for the broader community. In both instances, the buildings and programs both became a node of recognized excellence within a community often disparaged as second-best. The East Bay Center is a point of pride for many in Richmond—one person told us that the center is one of the few examples of a program that has not closed

or left the city.<sup>12</sup> Gimaajii’s welcoming spirit, cultural ambiance, and well-designed spaces attract visitors from throughout Duluth, both Native Americans and others as well. This community-wide recognition for both programs builds bridges of mutual respect and collaboration across racial and ethnic boundaries.

Cultural experience, then, provides a kind of glue within and across communities in several forms: social cohesion, sense of belonging, place attachment. This experience is not independent of the community associated with the building and program. Gimaajii affirms the value of “treating people with dignity and respect” that is part and parcel of the encounter with arts and culture.<sup>13</sup> The East Bay Center’s commitment to social justice pervades the corps of students and teachers and extends outward through public performances, often directly connected to episodes of social action (like the community’s annual Ceasefire march).

## THE FACTORS THAT MAKE IT WORK

As a community development organization, LISC believes in the power of physical environments to change people’s lives. Part of this power lies in the community meanings that physical spaces acquire.

The Gimaajii Center is housed in a beautiful and historic YWCA building, portions of which were redesigned and reconfigured to house a community cultural center, nonprofit offices, and common areas that exude welcome. The East Bay Center renovated the old Winters Building in downtown Richmond to create multiple performance

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<sup>11</sup> Karen Diver, personal interview, interview by Anne Gadwa Nicodemus, April 26, 2017; Rachel Engh and Anne Gadwa Nicodemus, “We Are, All of Us Together, Beginning a Good Life,” Case Study of Culture in Community Development (Local Initiatives Support Corporation, Fall 2017).

<sup>12</sup> Donnell Jones, personal interview, interview by Chris Walker, April 10, 2017; Christopher Walker and Anne Gadwa Nicodemus, “Deep Roots Wide World,” Case Study of Culture in Community Development (Local Initiatives Support Corporation, Fall 2017).

<sup>13</sup> Daryl Olson, personal interview, interview by Anne Gadwa Nicodemus, April 24, 2017; Engh and Gadwa Nicodemus, “We Are, All of Us Together, Beginning a Good Life.”



Winters Building: First day of East Bay Center's Young Artist Diploma Program Summer Intensive (2016); Richmond, CA.  
Photo courtesy of East Bay Center for the Performing Arts

spaces and rooms for private and group instruction. Both are first-class renovations that accord respect to those who seldom receive it, and reinforce participants' sense of pride and accomplishment. They preserve spaces well-known to the community at large and adapt them for uses that are not for an elite, but for those historically marginalized. Those who once were hidden become visible.

Community developers also believe in the power of organized communities to shape their future.

In these two case studies, the organizations that developed the buildings and operate programs from them are committed to culture and its power to change lives. Community development initiatives can connect to or build on arts and cultural programming in many ways. But only when the programs are a pathway toward social cohesion, respect for difference, and social justice do they truly serve the bedrock goals of community development.

This does not happen only in neighborhoods. To provide a range of social and other supportive services, most of these programs require multiple partnerships among

organizations, particularly for youth-serving organizations, which must necessarily take on the multiple influences that impact families, both within the home and outside of it. This responsibility might be what leads organizations like AICHO and the East Bay Center to become involved in civic leadership in ways that other programs may not. Arts and culture appeal across race and class lines, as well, another reason organizations working in these realms can become important players in the civic arena.

The community development projects that LISC supports with its focus on creative placemaking contribute to the uplift of the individuals directly involved, bringing a mixture of excitement, pride, income, respect, and inspiration. These programs are also an important asset to the communities where they are located, both economically and in terms of social benefit. At their best, they also should be counted as an asset to the broader civic life of their cities, preparing future leaders for active involvement and helping lay a foundation for economic growth based on arts and culture.

With residents and partners, LISC forges resilient and inclusive communities of opportunity across America—great places to live, work, visit, do business and raise families. Since 1980, LISC has invested \$17.3 billion to build or rehab 366,000 affordable homes and apartments and develop 61 million square feet of retail, community and educational space.

Launched in 2009, Metris Arts Consulting believes in the power of culture to enrich people's lives and help communities thrive. We believe those benefits should be broadly shared and inclusively developed. Metris seeks to provide high caliber planning, research, and evaluation services to reveal arts' impacts and help communities equitably improve cultural vitality. To accelerate change, we seek to share knowledge and amplify the voices of those closest to the work.

Cover: Winters Building: One of East Bay Center's resident companies, Iron Triangle Theater with their original production *Lost Secrets of the Iron Triangle* (2013); Richmond, CA. Photo courtesy of East Bay Center for the Performing Arts

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