

BUSINESS/ARTS QUARTERLY

The Journal of the BCA Development Corporation

January, 1999

INSIDE: Cultural Assets—A Roundtable Discussion

John McKnight—Co-director of the Institute for Asset Based Community Development at Northwestern University and co-author of *Building Communities from the Inside Out*—

The arts are local skills that can be developed for cultural, economic or educational uses.



**Holly Sidford—Arts Program Director,
Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund**

Part of the issue of building communities is building the cultural health of communities... We found a growing interest among community foundations in doing more work in the area of the arts in a way that would connect to community development issues. We said, *Bingo!*

**Gary Ivory—Director of Community Assets,
The Enterprise Foundation**

In working with the formal art community we've found a sometimes detachment from low income communities, a certain elitism, and a chasm deep and wide between what many of the arts organizations are interested in and the interests of younger people.



**Nick Rabkin—Sr. Program Officer,
John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation**

Creativity is a social resource....I think that by identifying elitism as an issue that John is putting his finger on the central problem of the arts in America.

**Kathi Pavlick—Vice President, Corporate Social Responsibility,
Chase Manhattan Bank**

Funders of community development will be skeptical at best and doubt the existence of these assets. Arts grantmakers won't register this as an arts activity. The challenge is how to open up the thinking of grantmakers.... Arts with a small a is all about people.



**Terry Lynn Holley—Director of Programs and Regional Development,
East Tennessee Community Foundation**

It became their economic development project. Through really looking at the assets in their community, they took and used their culture, their arts...

They've developed additional income and skill, and it's incredible what it's done in terms of pride for the people in that community.

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BUSINESS/ARTS QUARTERLY



THE BCA DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION was created by the Bronx Council on the Arts to further The Bronx' goals in community, economic and cultural development while accessing new resources and services and adapting them to the needs of our arts constituents. Together, BCA Development Corporation and the Bronx Council on the Arts will create an infrastructure contributing to the long term stabilization of the arts. The Development Corporation has implemented three initiatives: The Business/Arts Quarterly, The Business Center for the Arts and the Fine Arts Technical Services Training and Manpower Center. Lastly and perhaps most importantly, the BCA Development Corporation will design and implement new service models which can be replicated in other communities.



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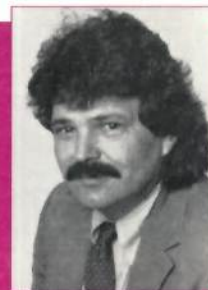
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THIS EXPANDED EDITION OF the Business Arts Quarterly focuses on exploring the role of cultural assets as economic and community development tools. The virtual Roundtable is based on Professor John McKnight's paradigm of Asset Based Community Development (ABCD). His notion of cultural assets complements other economic and community ventures and adds a framework for broad-based planning based on specific cultural values, strengths and art forms.



William Aguado
Chief Executive Officer
BCA Development Corp.

The policy arguments proffered in this Roundtable are not designed to replace other planning models but rather to add a dimension to existing community and economic development processes. By profiling our communities within the context of cultural assets as prospective building blocks, we are able to develop a better understanding of human potential and creativity. As such, cultural assets define a community's uniqueness and the "face" it presents to others.

Focusing on the potential and creativity in people adds texture and substance to the perception of the community while validating the roles and contributions of individuals. Cultural assets may not be a cure-all for society's needs but rather, a road map for more effective planning. These assets are a departure from the usual needs assessments formats that are normally utilized by planners to define a community. Cultural assets profiling and needs assessments can be complementary and need not be exclusive of each other.

The policy implications for the cultural community are significant. In light of the National Endowment for the Arts' publication *An American Canvas*, which concludes, "Sad to say, many American citizens fail to recognize the direct relevance of art to their lives," cultural assets can become a mechanism to build bridges between the arts and communities while fostering mutual recognition of each other's potential.

A better understanding by arts organizations of their constituents and communities served can potentially help to develop future audiences for the arts and at the same time become an anchor for the community as a component of local revitalization efforts. This initiative



Barbara Prete
Editor
Business/Arts Quarterly

would require recognition and acceptance of cultural assets as a strategy for audience development.

Further, the concept of cultural assets requires that a common understanding between arts organizations and their communities must be achieved. This will allow the arts organizations to shape their programs in a more meaningful and profound manner, leading to an appreciation of traditional—based on one's heritage—and contemporary art forms. As the recently appointed chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts, William Ivey, stated, "Heritage and creativity are not mutually exclusive."

Perhaps this assets approach to organizational development for arts organizations can lead to new strategies for earned income, audience development and improved marketing. We encourage arts organizations to begin a

planning process with an inventory of their own assets, both creative and organizational. This process, as with all of ABCD, is based on the premise that the "glass is half-full," replacing the half-empty lament so long heard in the community development and arts arenas.

We join the Roundtable participants in emphasizing the importance of cultural assets as a way of looking at communities and as a tool for both cultural and community development. Though it will not solve all problems, issues and concerns by itself, it can be the start of a more inclusive approach to cultural development, serving both the arts organizations' and greater community's interests.

Bill Aguado, President, BCA Development Corporation
Barbara Prete, Editor, Business/Arts Quarterly

Roundtable Discussion

*Exploring Directions and Options
for the Arts in Community and Economic Development*

ABCD—OPENING REMARKS

McKnight: From 1990-94 our program at Northwestern University visited older inner-city neighborhoods throughout the United States. Our purpose was to try to identify activities at the neighborhood level in which residents increased their economic, political or social problem-solving powers. We did this in 20 cities and a couple hundred neighborhoods through a grant from the Chicago Community Trust. The grant was to do a national study to determine what people were doing at the neighborhood level with their own resources to redevelop themselves to become more powerful.

After identifying cases where people were using their resources to increase their power, we looked at how they were doing that. What we saw was that they were looking at their neighborhood as having resources that they could mobilize, largely on their own, for this purpose. We call these resources assets.

We have been interested in identifying the kinds of skills that local groups have mobilized in behalf of the community's development. These may be cultural skills, economic skills or educational skills. The arts are local

skills that can be developed for cultural, economic or educational uses.

We found that the principal producers of community well-being were the local citizens, mobilizing their capacities and using their own associations as the principal vehicles for community development. Secondary resources they utilized were local institutions that supported citizen action. This differentiates from the usual understanding of neighborhood development, where the main qualities defining local residents are their needs, problems and deficiencies, not their capacities, skills and gifts (their assets). Also, the common view of community development holds that health and human service agencies are the primary developers, and if they have enough resources they can intervene in the lives of and "fix" people. Thereby a neighborhood will be produced. The difference is that by Asset Based Community Development we mean the process by which local residents as citizens, rather than agencies, are the principal architects and builders of their communities.

Holley: That's exactly what we're trying to do. We haven't used John's language in the RFP's we send out, but it's a way of inventorying what is already in existence

in the community—what kinds of assets, people's talents and gifts, can we facilitate communities to organize by making project support money available.

We don't define for anyone what their purpose is; they decide their purpose and what they're going to end up doing. The idea is that we support projects that open new doors or are more inclusive of people who have not participated in the same way or want to participate in some way.

McKnight: The common view is that there are probably two or three artists in any one neighborhood. Another view is that every neighborhood is filled with artistic assets. Our work indicates the latter. Our little neighborhood inventory (see insert) demonstrates what artistic capacities local people have.

Holley: The work John and Jody¹ have done is impressive in my mind. They've actually captured and put into writing some of the principles of what asset development is. I believe asset development is going on in many communities but it's never been measured and it's never been written into a set of tools. It's particularly exciting that they are coming forward with this information.

When we did our community assessment, we held focus groups, sent out surveys, convened town meetings and used a whole host of ways to gather information. We asked questions like, why do people participate in arts and cultural activities and why do they not participate. The answers were interesting. Some said it was too expensive to participate in the fine arts. Others said they didn't have the right kinds of clothes to wear to the symphony or the opera; that the transportation to get there and back was too difficult; that they were an organization that has a mainly Caucasian audience and haven't figured out how to do the kind of programming outreach to be more inclusive of an audience that may contain African Americans, Asians or Hispanics, etc.

Ivory: I very much agree with everything John McKnight says, especially with regard to indigenous

assets within communities, about resources that people bring to bear upon their life situations, and how the arts are one part of that.

Sidford: At Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest, in everything we do we start with the question, who is going to benefit and why and how do we know that they are even interested in the service we might be providing.

We don't talk about our work as community development per se, but obviously we're abutting many issues that relate to it. Part of the issue of building communities is building the cultural health of communities.

Pavlick: I support this assertion about the value of culture to community building. A core belief at Chase is that community development goes beyond bricks and mortar and adding affordable housing units to the market place or financing commercial and social service facilities. Successful community development is about the overall viability and livability of a neighborhood.

McKnight: The cultural life of the community expands by connecting people with all kinds of artistic talents to other institutions and organizations. For instance, if you had an arts inventory you could find a lot of people who could utilize libraries and parks to show their work, so that the cultural life of the community would be much greater than having only books brought in from the outside in our libraries and basketball courts in our parks. The same is true in terms of the organizational life of the community. You can begin to connect artists of all kinds to other organizations, e.g., there's no reason why churches shouldn't be using all the artistic resources they can. In this way the associational life of the community can be greatly enriched and culturally strengthened. There is also a special aspect having to do with the cultural renaissance and empowerment of ethnic groups.

ELITISM

McKnight: Rarely are neighborhood artistic capacities ever identified, inventoried or mobilized. One of

¹ This was all written up in a book called *Building Communities from the Inside Out*, co-authored by John P. Kretzmann and John McKnight, published by ACTA Publications, 4848 No. Clark Street, Chicago, IL 60640, 800-397-2282.) This book has become the most widely used guide to community development in the country. Over 50,000 copies have been sold. They're bought by the

neighborhood organizations and community development groups themselves, funders of all kinds—from the United Way to foundations, to governments, local institutions such as libraries, parks and hospitals, businesses and corporations. It is used by all of these sectors because it addresses them all independently.

the reasons is that, in the last century in particular, what I call popular artistic capacities have been devalued by the professionals who make up the arts elite. In a traditional society it was recognized that everyday life was created by local people and was to be aesthetically attractive. Modernization brought with it, among other things, the growth of the idea that only a few people have artistic capacities, and the way that we know that they are really artistic is when they are paid or recognized by galleries, museums or art critics "who know what art is." We don't realize how completely we have bought into the elite idea that there are few people with artistic talents. I think that's at the core of it. We think that artists produce art like doctors produce health. Most of our health is produced not by doctors and most of the artistic talent in the world is not held by artists.

Ivory: In working with the formal art community we've found a sometimes detachment from low income communities, a certain elitism, and a chasm deep and wide between what many of the arts organizations are interested in and the particular interest of younger people.

Rabkin: I think that by identifying elitism as an issue that John is putting his finger on the real central problem of the arts in America.

McKnight: In neighborhoods filled with artistic skills and abilities, the elite arts community has instead made it appear that artistic skill is scarce. So what the art elites have done is create scarcity amidst plenty. And not only have they made the arts look scarce, but also peripheral to neighborhood life. In certain communities, the arts are not thought to be peripheral. We noted that in Hispanic neighborhoods, artistic, historic and cultural assets were still recognized as central to the community's development. We need to look to those communities to see what is true of all communities—without a cultural center to hold people together

around common values, community development is never going to be very strong.

Holley: We have people here in the rural areas who have means. Their take on local culture is, we don't really have anything in this region that's professional, no opera like the Met or symphony like Washington or Boston, so we'll just have to settle for the stuff that's here. It's an elite message. What they are really saying is, you can call this a cultural experience, but you haven't really been there. They laughed at the people here who had been doing primitive art for many years and called it old hillbilly yard art, until somebody from the Smithsonian came out and put value on it, or the major museums sent their representatives and started buying it.

Pavlick: There needs to be education that leads to a greater acceptance and value of these talents and gifts.

Not necessarily with an economic value, but as a resource. This is a link to a more pluralistic notion of the arts that all art forms are special. What is the democratization of the arts and cultural equity about, if not about celebrating this rich artistic capacity? What is culture? According to the definition offered by the *New College Edition The American Heritage Dictionary* it is "The totality of socially transmitted behavior patterns, arts, beliefs and all other products of human work and thoughts characteristic of a community or population."

Sidford: In our work we find that many of the arts institutions are trying not to be elitist but responsible members of their community, actively engaged in the issues of that community. They need sustained and informed support, support that knows how hard this is. I think we have to reinterpret what the business of arts institutions is. It's not about preserving certain art forms for a small minority of the people to appreciate. It's about making the function of art more present in people's lives. It's not only the function of preserving

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—John McKnight

existing artistic objects but also the function of making art, practicing art, seeing art.

PROFESSIONALIZATION

McKnight: Most arts and most development organizations that have thought about the arts focus mainly on professional or quasi-professional artists. Largely untapped has been the identification and mobilization of the artistic capacities of local people. This is part of a professionalization of production that came out of mass production which started out by saying that you took out of the community the productive skills and gave them to managers and corporations. And that workers had no talents. That's what happened in the arts as well.

Rabkin: A weakness I find in John's concept of what ought to be done and what role funders might play is his either/or position—that either you've got professionally trained artists, or folks out in the community who are resources or assets of one kind or another. He doesn't say anything about paying the resources. In fact, most of these resources are artists who are struggling to make a living. It's not divided so simply between the community arts assets and the professional artists. In fact, frequently the community arts assets are professional artists.

McKnight: It isn't a matter of either/or, just that the major funding resources go to "professionals". To make any kind of a balance, we need much more arts money that recognizes and supports the artistic and cultural abilities of neighborhood people.

Sidford: The assets are all over. You have to look at the community assets and the professional resources. If you dismiss the professional resources as being anathema you miss a big part of what will help solve the problem. Curators, professionally trained artists, arts administrators, people with credentials within the institutions, are the professional resources. The more infor-

mal artistic assets in the community that John was talking about are the community resources. Although I completely subscribe to John's notion that professionalization is one of the real scourges of the late 20th century because the professionalization of anything, whether in legal, health, education or arts, has actually separated the public from the content that it

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needs, I don't think professionals are the enemy. I think that they have wonderful resources to bring to bear, particularly in the arts. But there has to be a mindset that says it's about sharing, not about lording over.

Holley: It's not about being credentialed. What it is about is the fact that everybody has something in them—whether it's storytelling, music, dance, an ability to do needlepoint, an incredible way to cook—what this is is inviting people to join in, to be a part of self-expression. For many of the local artists who volunteer and take part, it may be the first time they receive any recognition outside of their immediate family and next door neighbors, and the first time they realize that what they are doing might be appreciated by others.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

McKnight: Neighborhood people have all kinds of gifts, skills and capacities that are marketable—they may be able to build a house, sew a dress, or create a painting.

Sidford: I don't think that doing an inventory of people who live on the street and finding out that they're quilters, maskmakers, jugglers and dancers, that all those people should then rush out to try to find jobs in the arts. I don't think that's possible.

McKnight: As far as economic development potential, methods can focus on a community's effort such as a neighborhood consignment store for those people with artistic abilities that result in things that can be sold. Or

the focus can be on the individual and looked at as a micro-enterprise development strategy, developing those with artistic skills to become more marketable. Another method would be creating ways to market beyond the neighborhood, like a catalog for example.

Rabkin: I'm one of those people who has a high level of skepticism about the arts as a route of economic opportunity. I know too many poor artists to believe it.

Ivory: I agree that there is a lot of raw talent in low income communities. But I don't think that there is an understanding of basic rudiments of art and how you really do this on a professional level. How do you move it from raw talent all the way to a professional piece? I would think that there's a huge market out there for learning that. They do want to know. I think you would have to approach them through the window of something that really does reach and interest them. Presenting it by utilizing something that resonates with their culture is being culturally competent.

Another thing I want to stress is about art and market forces. There's a tremendous need to support artists by other means than through grantmaking. Artists can target markets for their work. And I don't think their market is any longer in the older families. I see a huge growth now in for-profit entities looking to urban markets as a niche because every other market is saturated. The only ones that are not are young people and are from the urban hip-hop generation or the young professionals. Both groups have a lot of consumer power and an identity that really needs to be tapped into. I think they are capable of supporting much more in new ways of expression than art is creating for them. A couple of things I think work. One is for the artists themselves to develop art as much more reflective of the basic attitudes of both young people and adults. They really have to tap into the various impulses of their targeted audience. Second, is that people who are the producers as well as the consumers within this target audience should have a say in what art is and what it is not, and what they're interested in in terms of purchasing. I

think we have to find a way. We have to tap into the up-and-coming group much as the Pew Charitable Trusts are tapping the younger age group to promote civic engagement. People trying to figure out how to tap this age group are doing it through a number of mechanisms. One is through music, by tapping into basic music forms as a way of engaging this group of young people, using MTV for example.

Pavlick: There's lots of talk on many fronts—the Ford Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation, etc. on the need to engender a civil society. That means to me that people are actively engaged in the society and have a stake in it with their values. That to me comes out of this kind of activity, i.e. starting with their own traditions.

Ivory: The Ten Point Coalition Leadership Foundation² project in Boston has engaged young people in doing productive things, e.g. to produce videos that they could sell in a market niche they helped to create. The Coalition wasn't just looking at ways that they could serve the young people or how they could get artists to volunteer. They were looking at a positive message—a product that could be marketed. I think you can develop products for reaching certain audiences and make a profit. There's a lot of interest in computer technology in the arts. That may be a promising way of entering this market. The Enterprise Foundation is at the forefront of using technology to reach an ever-increasing demand. I see art as helping to translate between older and young adults and a mode of expression for both.

FUNCTIONS OF ART IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

McKnight: The cultural use of artistic assets at the local level has special importance for building self-esteem, ethnic identity and renewal in communities.

Ivory: Art is a way of giving people a sense of rootedness in place, in community and in identity. Art is a way of transcending racial politics. Art is also the way that

² With the help of the Ten Point Coalition Leadership Foundation, with the Rev. Eugene Rivers, Boston went almost two

years without a single juvenile homicide. It's called The Boston Miracle.

people express their individual and collaborative identities. In our notion of community development all of the assets must be harnessed to bring about substantial change.

Rabkin: For communities to grow, the creative resources that are within them are their most valuable resources in terms of solving their problems. Creativity is a social resource. The arts are a pathway to developing creativity, and are an important one that's often overlooked. Artists are always using their imaginations. They think about how life can be different. This is a social value. Where do ideas about how things can be different come from in a society?

One of the things that is too often assumed about artists is that they don't have an interest in what goes on in communities. Artists make work about things. There are lots of artists out there who are looking for experiences to make work about. For those artists, communities provide enormously rich and fertile sources of inspiration. So it's not necessarily an either/or—working in communities or making fine art.

Sidford: So much has been characterized as either you get fine art or you get audiences; either you are maintaining your integrity or you are pandering. Nothing could be farther from the truth; it's a combination.

BRIDGING ARTS AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Pavlick: The arts have the ability to engage everyone and bring people together and to create community and enhance understanding. The strength of the arts with a small "a" is the validation that the Arts go beyond the boundaries of institutions. Arts with a small a is all about people.

Terry's work starts with individuals and rather than

offer a rigid program, it extends a great willingness/receptivity to embrace the activities as they are practiced. She starts where the people are; she goes to the people. Traditionally, the Arts with a capital A often exists under the assumption that when art is created and presented an audience will come. In Terry's example (see endnote) she accepts the activities but helps people to envision new ways to develop them so that they are interesting to other people and can be used to build community. This approach is not a didactic paradigm where for example, basket making is valued more highly than opera or vice-versa; high art vs. popular culture.

This approach defines culture and the arts as a continuum. It looks at community activity and institutional activity as a two-way exchange that may evolve. It can bridge the notion of Arts and arts.

Rabkin: I agree with the broad stroke that there is basically a fundamental disconnect between the arts as they are practiced as professional disciplines that produce high ticket consumer items and the power of the arts to help transform and improve community.

Holley: The culture in East Tennessee is very much interwoven with the arts. It might be seen in the way people prepare and serve food or as a way that people celebrate and capture their history, customs and values through storytelling and music. All of

these things are integral to a community. A lot of what they translate is not only history and values but also relationships between people, clans and environment. They speak to a way of life. The music here talks to the meaning in people's being. A lot of it is about work in the fields, in the coal mines. We're trying to preserve some of the cultural aspects that we are losing in this region that make it so rich.

Ivory: In this country we tend to lean towards being ahistorical. Art is one of the few areas that does preserve a sense of meaning and history and connectedness to the

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past, as well as point to the future.

Rabkin: The arts are not just about community. The arts are about many things. Artists break with tradition. Artists demonstrate their individuality and their creative flair. Art is both about community and individuality at the same time. That's a dialectic that's hard to get your arms around. It's an essential one to understanding the power of the arts.

Sidford: Culture is a core value. I believe that artistic creativity is a fundamental human function, whether it's dancing on Saturday night or singing in the church choir or drawing with your child or jotting poetry on the subway; it's a basic human impulse that we all do in one form or another, and if we did it more we'd be healthier. I don't think it's there for everybody to make a living in the arts. I do think everybody is going to be healthier if they are engaged in the arts in some way.

McKnight: The mark of a modern society is segmentation into categories, with a very small number of producers in each category. Traditional society is marked by the collapse of those categories, so that you have no line between the arts and say, eating—the way the spoon is decorated, the bread is braided. So when we value and buy their works, we should be mindful that they were created when art wasn't something that was limited to and produced by artists.

Holley: We've done a lot in this country to divide out the arts in our culture, even out of the school systems. People have separated the arts and don't see it as a piece interwoven with the strengths of a community. The arts are one of the threads that binds a community together.

McKnight: In the Hispanic communities still, even in the big cities, several cultural elements cannot be divided—the church, cuisine, history, literature, music, sculptural forms—all are together. The fiesta is a manifestation of this with its music, food, dance, decorations, etc. In some Hispanic communities, because the center of cultural life, i.e. the church, is still very important, culture, spirituality and the arts are much more central

than in other societies that have segmentalized and professionalized themselves.

Ivory: The Community Assets Division of the Enterprise Foundation focuses on issues of community safety, leadership development, supportive housing needs, community building in general and youth development. Within that context we have a great concern as to how the arts community, institutions as well as the artists themselves, can be involved in helping to rebuild communities. We see them as part of the fabric of doing that. While we have not

done this on a formal basis as far as having a partnership with institutions such as museums or other arts/cultural institutions, we see it as a vital link.

Community development people everywhere are looking at merger and confluence—different ways of influencing human behavior and influencing people's identity with place. We're trying to move in that way because people feel detached.

The Enterprise Foundation does not have an arts program per se. My program incorporates the arts because we are the closest to the neighborhood and work with other parts of the foundation. We work a lot with the other stakeholders in communities who have an interest in revitalizing neighborhoods. We have to start some kind of a dialogue going. I look forward to it.

Sidford: At Wallace we work through cultural institutions, parks organizations and libraries. We are trying to help non-profit institutions develop what we think of as bifocal vision, which means marrying a commitment to excellence in program and content in their field of work with excellence in community engagement and with excellence in understanding the role of the non-profit as a responsible community enterprise.

Broadening and deepening participation takes time. It also requires a change in the way an organization does business, trial and error, effort and more effort. While we think it is a growing phenomenon because there are more and more institutions interested in doing work this way, it's not the norm. It's not easy to change age-old patterns.

Broadening and deepening participation takes time. It's not easy to change age-old patterns.

—Holly Sidford

Rabkin: Seven—eight years ago at the MacArthur Foundation we were making investments in the arts and we were making investments in community development, and we sort of imposed a shotgun marriage. There was a mutual use and abuse—the community development people saw the arts as a possible market for large amounts of real estate they were sitting on; the arts people thought the community development organizations could solve their real estate problems. Real estate deals can't work unless the economics work, and generally the economics didn't work, so most of these associations that MacArthur helped start died on the vine, in some cases with pain and suffering.

John's idea is a little different, sort of artistic micro-enterprise. I haven't seen that work much anywhere. There's some of it going on now in Chicago, supported by the city.

McKnight: The usual barrier is that there is no vehicle at the neighborhood level that can connect the cultural assets to the schools, the associations, and to the economic potential.

Sidford: In our research we found a growing interest among community foundations in doing more work in the area of the arts in a way that would actually connect to community development issues. We said, bingo! In fact, community foundations across the country are the only foundation sector with a growing commitment to the arts, not by leaps and bounds but up from several years ago.

We're trying to help the community foundations to really think about how the arts connect to their other priorities. We gave planning grants to eleven of them to assess their communities. In many cases they do an asset map of artistic resources something like John is talking about. They look at not just the institutional assets but also at the artists and cultural traditions, etc. They look

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at strategies to pursue over the course of three—four years that would enhance participation in the arts in that community, connect the arts to other sectors in order to strengthen community development, and develop permanent sources at the community foundation to support this work over time. We want to leave a financial legacy.

Each community foundation is doing it in a different way. It is part of our design to recognize that each community is different and has its own assets and strengths. As Jody³ is wont to say, “The assets in the half of the glass that's full will solve the problems for the half of the glass that's empty.”

Holley: I do think there are lots of community foundations out there that really are looking at funding projects that support neighborhood involvement in the arts. We for one are one.

We're involved right now in a national initiative of the Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund called Community Partnerships for Cultural Participation. This grant has also been received by the Boston Foundation, Maine Community Foundation, New Hampshire Charitable Trust, Kansas City Community Foundation, and others. The point is, in their language, to broaden and deepen cultural participation, the theory being that not everyone is engaged in cultural participation. In my mind, it's not that people aren't engaged, it's just that we may not know how they are engaged. A lot of what we are doing is funding projects that look at such things as community animation projects, where there may be an artist that works within a community and helps individuals develop a play or song or other performance piece, murals, or whatever, to tell the story of their community. It might be to talk about issues of celebration, or the lack of economic opportunities. I'm half expecting to

³Jody is John P. Kretzmann, *ibid.* 1), co-director for the Institute for Asset-Based Community Development and keynote

speaker at the Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund's recent literacy conference.

get a proposal that will talk about pollution, water quality or industrial contamination.

Much of the work that we're trying to do is to look at all of the relationships again and try to fund those communities that deal with combinations of community organizations, art institutions and artists. The artists may be professional or unpaid, but must be people identified within the community as contributing through their art to community-building activities, cultural celebration, and those sorts of things.

Rabkin: These community "animations" that Terry refers to are usually celebratory representations of the stories, values, and aspirations of communities. We're talking now about people who are somehow marginalized—by race, class, or age perhaps. These representations are a very concrete form of community building in two ways: the process of making the work brings people together in new forms of productive social relations in which they validate each other as individuals. And, the representations claim space in the broader community—they defy the norm, which is to ignore these folks on the margin, and demand justice in some metaphoric way. For example, director Richard Geer went to a rural community in Georgia and developed a show based on oral histories of residents and performed by community members. He returns to this town every year to collect new stories, deepen the work, and remount the show. It has been performed at the Olympic Arts Festival and the Kennedy Center. It is the first civic activity that black and white residents have ever worked on together in this town. I'd call that community building.

I don't think this sort of thing happens simultaneously anywhere. I do think that cultural participation is low. Americans are discouraged in so many ways from developing their creative and expressive dimensions. It is little wonder that we are such couch potatoes. It takes enormously skillful and committed artists to make it happen. Few communities have resources like these artists—rich, middle class or poor. What they do have are the stories, the raw material of art. The stories build community only when they become public.

Holley: We are trying to work with communities

that bring together different kinds of partnerships. Not one-shot audience things like the symphony doing an outreach to one county, or only inviting public school children from the inner city to a dress rehearsal. But rather how they can develop programming where they can reach lots of different kinds of people and invite them to come in as participants.

Sidford: It's not about giving up the artistic choice. It's about maximizing existing artistic resources and the contact people have with them, making them stickier, more like velcro. Many people ping off the arts because they don't have any bridge—don't have any contact, don't have any way in.

Ivory: I see the art community as a stakeholder in community building efforts. What I don't see is what I think most people see: that artists because of their nature are totally caught up in the abstract world. Artists have to have a real place that really

supports their vocation and profession. It's critically important. So we have to find a way to make art somewhat self-sustaining.

I think sometimes that we get over ambitious when we think of how the arts community can serve this or that constituency and expect them to do things without enough compensation. That is a very negative way to think about merging the arts community and community development.

Rabkin: The Duncan YMCA in Chicago was selected by the Wallace Fund as a site for the National Writers' Voice project. When the guy who runs the Duncan Y saw what was going on he said, geeze, these folks who we serve, mostly poor and black, get off on this. Why haven't we done this before? Why aren't we doing more of it?

This approach defines culture and the arts as a continuum. It can bridge the notion of Arts and arts.

—Kathi Pavlick

Sidford: There are hundreds of Ys that have now embraced the arts as a fundamental part of the work that they do, and have as a result become catalysts for economic development, community development and artistic development in a way that wasn't true five years ago. The point is that it's not either/or, it's both/and.

Pavlick: The Wallace Funds have set a goal of building the cultural health of the community, having an impact on people and making the function of the arts more present in people's lives. It seems to me that this can be done simultaneously with the community as well as with arts organizations to create a continuum and a spectrum of arts with a small "a" bridging Arts with a big "A".

Holley: We worked with the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation to develop a grant-making program that focused on small grants that build capacity through project support in low income inner city neighborhoods. Our grants were primarily to help neighborhoods organize. Applicants have to be resident organizations. We emphasize that the neighborhoods be allowed to articulate the kinds of activities they wanted. In a listening project for example, we worked with local residents—an adult and a young person—who went out into the community to interview people to find out not only their perspective on violence in their community, but to find out, what their particular interests were in doing something about it. As a result, they have a task force and an after school program in which the kids want an arts program.

Rabkin: One of the issues in community development is that the word community can mean anything. Much of the practice of community development has been physical redevelopment. Communities are also other things, and much more complicated. For example, nobody really thinks of themselves as belonging to just

one community. Most people don't work in the neighborhood they live in, they work elsewhere. They may shop sometimes in their neighborhood, but they also shop elsewhere. People want these choices. But mobility is often lacking in the poorest neighborhoods while it is present in the so-called healthy neighborhoods. There's

a bit of a tendency to think of development of a community as an insular process. To me,

part of the process has to be to break down the insularity, particularly in poor neighborhoods, to help the people who live there to get out of them and find the resources that they need elsewhere if they don't exist in the neighborhood, and to find ways to bring people from outside their neighborhood in. For a neighborhood to develop, people from all over the city need to believe that it is a safe, welcoming place and that there are things of interest and value there to the whole community, not just that neighborhood. The arts have that potential.

The Mexican Fine Arts Center Museum is probably the most successful example of an arts institution as community builder in Chicago. Set in a neighborhood park deep in a Mexican neighborhood, its highest priority is serving the cultural and educational needs and interests of hundreds of thousands of Mexicans in Chicago. But it also serves as a cultural ambassador to the rest of the city, representing the Mexican community, and advocating for its place at the table.

...funders are going
to say it's too much work,
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leadership saying,
the arts aren't recognized;
people aren't interested;
the arts aren't relevant.

—John McKnight

ADVICE TO FUNDERS

McKnight: If it is assumed that in a neighborhood of 40,000 there are five artists, that's something that a funder or other interested organization can get their hands around. The alternative for funders that we have argued for is for them to take the position, we are going to give a neighborhood organization funds to do an inventory of all the people of artistic talents in the neigh-

neighborhood. This would provide a rich and diverse resource. It means that funders are going to have to come to grips with much more diversity and multiplicity, and come to grips with the fact that what they have is not scarcity but riches.

Many funders are going to say it's too much work, yet we hear all kinds of people in the arts leadership saying, the arts aren't recognized; people aren't interested; the arts aren't relevant. They have created the world they complain about themselves by taking an elitist view about who can do art.

We have led a lot of community foundations in how to begin to fund neighborhood grassroots groups. The consequence of them doing that as funders is that it makes them do much more work than if they could deal with one downtown agency and told them it would fix all the people on the west side of Chicago. We think we can do a lot with ABCD for a lot of neighborhoods. But if you really want to support the arts in a meaningful way on a local level, you have to work much harder. You have to know that art is not something that only five people within a square mile can do.

Pavlick: As John points out, grantmakers have an aversion to opening up program definitions further when there are many more requests for funding than can possibly be met. In most cases, grants for community development go to institutions rather than individuals, and these grants are needs based rather than asset based.

The community development funding agenda focuses on tangible results, such as the number of affordable housing units added to the marketplace, loans made, and mortgages closed, rather than the quality of life. I suspect that the funders of community development will be skeptical at best and doubt the existence of these assets. Arts grantmakers, on the other hand, won't register this as an arts activity. The challenge is how to open the thinking of grantmakers.

One approach would be to create a community development demonstration project using the arts relat-

ed asset based model. This demonstration project would select communities where foundations and banks have a substantial investment in community development programs such as grants, loans and homeownership assistance. Homeownership is a cornerstone for community development and this could play a role in weaving the social and cultural fabric of the neighborhood.

Local community based organizations that provide financial counseling for mortgage application can integrate an arts-related asset based inventory as a way of shaping services more effectively to clients. In this way all parties are stakeholders in building the community and building awareness of culture as a community asset, and it may prove mutually beneficial to all.

Rabkin: The kinds of art we've been talking about are the kinds of art I hope this foundation can support, by helping artists practice their work, calling attention to the value of it, and as a result helping to promote policies across the board—in the public sector and the private sector—that can institutionalize it and make it spread. It's time to rethink the old formulas.

Holley: How can we look at holistic funding given our limited resources? We're a small community foundation, but as an organization, we have assets too and can call upon them to help our grantees and act as a connector.

McKnight: We encourage all funding organizations to understand that neighborhood people are rich in artistic capacity. Funders who are interested in the arts for community, cultural, educational or economic development purposes could be advancing that cause by starting with the inventories. If you will look at the inventory (see endnote 2) you will understand the importance. This inventory identified more than 50 artistic skills in an 8-block area around an elementary school in a Puerto Rican community. The second step would be to encourage local action that would result in using that information.

To our readers: Your thoughts, ideas and comments on this subject are welcome. Please register them by entering our website: WWW.BCADC.ORG/quarterly

The challenge is how to open the thinking of grantmakers.

—Kathi Pavlick

ENDNOTES

1. Terry Holley's examples of utilizing the arts as assets for economic development:

These programs take place in our rural development program. It is important to remember that none of these things happen overnight. They all take time to get going. These took five—six years.

There's the Croker Creek community of about 600 people surrounded by the Cherokee National Forest. It's this beautiful setting where lots of people would love to be, but there are no jobs. It's very isolated. One road in, one road out. There are lots of people there who have very fine skills, like the weaver and split-oak basketmaker whose works are in the Smithsonian Institution.

Everyone sits around and whittles all day but nobody whittles anything they could sell. One of the things we did in partnership with them was make some grants. One was for them to do a survey of their community. They did it with the help of volunteers from the Rotary Club. They interviewed everybody in the community and asked them, what are the things you think would help in terms of increasing people's income here, what are the things that you could give to help accomplish that; what are the things that you would like to learn; and, in what ways do you learn those things best. This is an assets inventory but it doesn't necessarily look like the one in "Building Communities from the Inside Out" (see footnote 1). It was put together to meet the needs here.

They came up with a list of 100 projects. I told them it was too long and asked them if they could narrow it down. This process took a long time but they finally came back with one particular project for funding. It was to do a series of workshops on weaving, basket making, wood carving and log cabin building.

They wanted to be able to identify people in communities close to theirs whom they considered to be master crafters who would be good teachers. That's important, that the persons they chose to help them were people they, not someone from the outside, considered to have the proper credentials. Because it had small grant funding (maybe \$2,000 or \$2,500, including the survey and workshops) everybody in the community was invited to come.

What happened was that the men who sat around carving all day started carving hound dogs; men and women learned more about weaving and basket making. These became things they could sell because they were of better quality than what they started with.

As products came out of that community, people would see them and hear about the workshops. Tourists became interested

in taking the workshops. To help develop this market they promoted the workshops. Then they said, okay, we've got all these people coming in here, how are we going to keep them, and did another survey. It asked, who has an extra bedroom and might be willing to do a bed and breakfast; who likes to cook and is willing to sell dinner meals; who wants to come out and do music at night around the campfire for all those people who are coming in to camp; who wants to make a demonstration of sphagnum making, or whatever. At the same time, the people who increased their skills with the first round of workshops had their products in the general store there for people to buy. Then they developed a brochure and did some marketing by placing the brochure out on the interstates, into chambers of commerce in the region, and some other places. It became their economic development project. Through really looking at the assets in that community, they took and used their culture, their arts, and all the other things they could put together.

They've developed additional income and skill, and it's incredible what it's done in terms of pride for the people in that community. What is also really important is that they are saving those crafts, those skills and the traditional culture of that region. There are new generations now that are learning how to carve hound dogs, weave wall hangings and weave baskets.

Another story from the same general region involves the Tennessee Overhill Heritage Association. They work with a lot of small organizations in a three county area. Once they started to survey they began to notice that there were a lot of artists with things to sell, but no market in that area. They also found people who specialized in herbs, organic produce and local native wildflowers. With all of these people, unless you lived next door or close by, no one knew about their skills.

We helped them set up a cooperative out by the highway where they have exhibits, do bookings for their performing artists and mail order for their craftpersons (without a middleman.) They also did a directory which helps these artists get work elsewhere, including national tourism.

Another program was in a mountainous area in Granger County. It supported all kinds of artists spending eight weeks in the schools, where they worked to integrate the performing arts into the academic curriculum. At one of the organizing meetings with parents we were listening for answers to questions such as, what kinds of skills do you have that you can incorporate at home with your children because it's a great way for them to learn. It doesn't mean you have to play the piano or be an opera singer. We started to hear these great stories, "Well, the men sit out on the porch after supper and tell stories; the women sing spirituals while they are quilting together..."

2. This listing of cultural assets is the result of Professor John McKnight's Survey of the Artistic Abilities of the residents of an 8-block area in a lower income neighborhood in Chicago

MUSICIANS

- singers
- instrumentalists
- composers

THEATRE ARTISTS

- actors
- dancers
- mime artists
- puppeteers
- doll makers
- mask makers
- cosmetologists, face painters
- jugglers
- acrobats
- magicians

VISUAL ARTISTS

- painters
- silkscreeners
- muralists, spray paint artists
- sculptors
 - ice sculptors
 - garbage sculptors

FILM/PHOTO

- photographers, filmmakers
- video makers

WRITERS

- story tellers
- poets
- comic strip writers

NEEDLE WORKERS

- knitters
- needlepointers
- crocheters
- embroidery makers
- macrame makers
- lace makers

FABRIC WORKERS

- sewers
- rug makers
- quilters
- weavers

CRAFTSPEOPLE/MISCELLANEOUS

- dressmakers, tailors
- cooks, cake decorators
- gardeners
- jewelry makers
- model builders
- party favor makers
- doll house/miniature makers
- flower arrangers
- woodworkers
- ceramicists, potters
- mosaics makers
- calligraphers
- illustrators
- cartoonists, caricature artists
- glassblowers
- metalsmiths

HISTORIANS

- on murals
- on their countries of origin
- on local neighborhood history

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