

VOLUNTEERS

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manager Grant Moore. They include an accounting student from Korea and a computer programmer from Mexico, both of whom work in the shop to improve their English, as well as students, retirees, working people and housewives. Some work one or two days a week, while others come in once a month.

Not all stores operate full-time. The International Bazaar in Montreat, for example, has been open for 13 years, but only from mid-April to mid-November, says Faith Buckwalter, a retiree from New York who volunteers in the store in the summer. The store is located at the Montreat Retreat Center, a Presbyterian conference center about 15 miles east of Asheville.

Merchandise is sold only on consignment, with management provided by SELFHELP headquarters in Pennsylvania. All profits are returned directly to the crafts groups. Last year, sales totaled \$170,000.

SELFHELP Crafts also has a small catalog sales business - about \$22,000 last year.

In North Carolina, stores are located in Asheville, Hickory, Winston-Salem, Raleigh, Durham, and Montreat.

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YOUNG

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Jayne VanGraafeiland, community service coordinator at Broughton High School, says student volunteerism is designed to help youngsters become good citizens.

In the 1995-96 school year, 1,500 students are participating in volunteer activities, helping staff members and adult volunteers for such agencies as the Red Cross, the Multiple Sclerosis Society and other charities.

Some teens in the program also worked during the summer as tutors for young children in YWCA summer camps.

Mary Cromer, volunteer coordinator for the Oberlin Road YWCA concedes that some of the student volunteers participated only to meet their graduation requirement.

But VanGraafeiland of Broughton High says the volunteer programs are an important opportunity to teach young people positive values.

"This is their first experience in contributing to the community," she says. "We hope that they will contribute and volunteer in the future."

Voluntarism also can pay off in the classroom. At Paisley Middle School in Winston-Salem, for example, a program known as Care that was launched in September 1994 has helped improve student performance.

School officials say voluntarism has helped students believe in their ability to do something useful - including their work in the classroom.

The Winston-Salem program received support from the federal Learn and Serve project funded by the Corporation for National and Community Service. The Integon Foundation, Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation and the local Kiwanis Club provided matching funds for the federal grant.

Nonprofit leaders who work with young people say it's important to sow the seeds of voluntarism early.

"There is still large gap in community services for kids 10 to 13 years old," says Marty Weems coordinator of the Peer Leader program in Durham County, which trains teenagers to serve as volunteer mediators working with at-risk peers. "I believe that we could get more results if we started earlier."

ARTS

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eral public or non-public," says Jeanne Butler, executive director of the Kenan Institute for the Arts in Winston-Salem. "That thinking has caused some confusion and frustration with some people."

Regardless of whether the gap between the public and the arts is real or perceived, arts organizations are working to find ways to connect to the broader society. For several years, arts organizations have been experimenting with ways the arts can be more useful, relevant and even utilitarian.

A USEFUL VEHICLE

The early results are promising. Art for art's sake has been transformed. Now, it's art for the sake of workplace survival and international competitiveness. In its new form, support for the arts is being presented to educators, legislators, school board members and donors as something with a much greater purpose than self-expression or reaffirmation of human nature. The arts have become a vehicle for teaching math or science and a promoter of life skills such as self-esteem, motivation and team-building.

The thinking goes like this: when you learn the arts, you learn to think like an artist. When you think like an artist, you are engaged in constant questioning, analysis and problem-solving.

"Whether it be in the form of deciding what sentence follows the next, what color goes best next to another one, or what movement in a dance has to be followed by the previous one, artists are looking at problems and coming up with solutions," says Richard Krawiec, novelist and founder of VOICES: A Creative Community, a Raleigh writers organization that works at homeless shelters, housing projects, prisons and literacy centers.

When confronted by arts programs deeply grounded in such basics, it's difficult to sustain the argument that funding for the arts is frivolous. These types of programs are increasing in popularity. They help create a separate and distinct image for the arts, one that enforces a message that the arts are as vital to the strength and identity of a community as any social or human service organization.

As arts organizations go about paying closer attention to how their image is shaped and perceived, it's likely that arts providers increasingly will be asking the public to accept art not for what it is, but for what it can do.

QUEST FOR FUNDS

The arts, of all nonprofit endeavors, compete head-to-head with the for-profit sector. In this case, the competition comes from one of the nation's premier industries: entertainment. Every time a local arts organization produces a work, it's competing in some way with Hollywood, Nashville or Broadway.

The leviathans of entertainment spend billions every year promoting their products and developing a sophisticated understanding of their audiences. Local arts organizations are just now appreciating the importance of market research and the need to be more "market oriented."

"One of the problems we face is that we have invested an awful lot of money into creating new products and creating institutions and have not invested the dollars in building the market demand for the products," says Robert Bush, executive director of the United Arts Council of Raleigh and Wake County.

Unlike companies in the for-profit sector, Bush says, arts organizations have not had the money to do the research and develop a sophisticated approach to their needs for audience development. Now, they must consider tricky business questions of supply and demand, such as whether ticket prices should be lowered to increase attendance and revenues. Or whether

fewer events should be scheduled at higher prices.

"We just have not, as an industry, addressed those kinds of issues," Bush says. "This is a real opportunity to do that and in the long run, if we do it correctly, we will be stronger."

MEASURING IMPACT

Artists in nearly all disciplines can now be found pursuing socially relevant goals, working, for example, with homelessness, the abused and the addicted. As the arts develops its own approach to these issues, however, its most challenging issue may prove to be the one thorny issue facing all nonprofits: How to prove that your work is having the intended effect.

Consider the manner in which one arts group is fighting homelessness.

At first glance, a skeptic might view teaching creative writing to the homeless as a dubious endeavor. But VOICES, the Raleigh organization, has put its finger on an important and complicated point about the homeless: They often lack basic decision-making skills and analytic skills to understand the personal and social forces that are preventing them from getting by in life.

So, at a VOICES workshop at a homeless shelter, participants will engage in writing a group poem, for instance, rather than simply learning "interviewing techniques" by rote and out of context. A group poem exercise, says VOICES founder Krawiec, helps participants develop the types of skills most valued in the workplace.

"People in the group have to listen to other people, they have to contribute to the group's work, and they have to respond to their suggestions in a positive manner," Krawiec says. "They have to come together and work collaboratively toward a common goal."

Unlocking creativity can have a powerful effect on people. For instance, Krawiec recalls one shelter workshop participant who repeatedly wrote angry manifestoes - not the reflective poems, short stories and journal entries that other participants were writing. The man was dismissive of creative pieces and using the imagination. Then, one day, another workshop participant told him that if he couldn't imagine, then he couldn't imagine his future. And if he couldn't imagine his future, then he didn't have one.

The next day, Krawiec says, the man returned to the workshop with a short story that depicted a character as being trapped in life. It was the first time he had written using his imagination.

"A week after that, he came back and he had found a job," Krawiec says. "And within a couple of weeks, he had found a place to live and he was out of the shelter. A year and a half later, he still had the job and he had received his two raises. He recognized what he was doing with his life. He had a place. He had imagined a future for himself and he had developed an ability to work toward that future. I believe it was through the process of doing this creative work that he had this breakthrough."

But seeing quick and dramatic results is difficult and rare. Overall, the transitory nature of the homeless makes tracking such cases hard.

"You have to be in the position two years later to bump into someone and see how it turned out," says Krawiec.

NEW STRATEGIES

A recent focus group study conducted for the Durham Arts Council and United Arts Council of Raleigh and Wake County, produced some startling preliminary results. The participants in the study did not consider the arts to be a part of the charitable sector. Further, they did not view the arts as having any sort of significant financial need.

The results illustrate just some of the challenges that arts leaders must confront as they direct their organizations through the next half of the decade. On many fronts, arts leaders say, there is a need to develop strategies that will enable the arts to help

define the community in which they exist and explore their untapped potential to leverage greater public support.

First, as arts groups set about bringing the arts to all corners of society, they need to be certain how to teach what it is they know. Being artistic doesn't mean, on its face, that artists can convey those skills to others. Likewise, teachers or social workers cannot necessarily deliver the artistic approach to their field without guidance. More collaboration, though not always part of the artistic repertoire, would seem necessary.

Second, arts groups and foundations need to rethink the organizational behavior that equates growth with success.

"As groups define success as growth, they end up growing beyond their means," says Nello McDaniel of Arts Action Research, a New York-based consultant that works with many North Carolina organizations. McDaniel says arts funders are often to blame for the preoccupation with growth.

"They encourage the growth and development of organizations, and yet more and more of these arts fun-

ders want new projects," he says. "They don't want to provide money for indirect costs or overhead. It's just 'Give me a new project and make sure it solves some major issue.'"

Finally, the road ahead will require seeking new sources of funding. Here, says Butler of the Kenan Institute, there are many opportunities, some requiring greater advocacy than others. For instance, she says, arts groups should consider special local taxes to fund the arts, though she cautions this approach takes strong local support.

Being intrinsically creative, says Butler, arts organizations need to consider the many opportunities the world presents them for partnerships - between small and large organizations within the arts, or partners outside the arts, or even partners outside the nonprofit sector. The Kenan Institute, for example, helps public schools incorporate the arts into the teaching of different subjects, such as math, history and English.

"But the partnerships need to be forged, not forced," she says. "If it's natural and it feels right, that's the key to collaboration."

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