

Sample Productions / Workshops / Events

[Printable version of this page](#)

LITERACY

Page to Stage

Children and/or adults of the community perform dramatized reading of traditional and non-traditional tales, diverse works of non-fiction and fiction. Participants paraphrase language of books into the vernacular and back into Standard English for comprehension. Program includes field trips to local libraries and cultural bookstores, picking out and purchasing books for the host organization's library.



Work with GED candidates ages 18-75 on bringing written material to life through expressive reading complements these students' standard curricula. Workshops include bringing musical and theatrical elements to parent-child group math and English games, children ages 6 through 9. Participants sometimes design and create their own stage set and lighting. Books and educational videos are awarded as prizes for participation.

Mommy Dreams, Too

Teaching self-determination through creative writing skills to pregnant teens, we facilitate discussions on self-development, conflict resolution and effective parenting; they then use the discussion and their resolutions to form the content of their poems and essays.

HISTORY for VALUES EDUCATION and CLARIFICATION



Workshop for Educators 1:

Integrity and Leadership - Healing the Wounded Spirit

Lead teachers and assistant teachers in evaluation of historical power plays and their use in contemporary business and politics. Discussion and theatre games help participants examine the usefulness or dangers of these attitudes in dealing with students who have difficulties

overcoming learning blocks, personal trauma, prejudices and cultural or class conflicts.

ADDICTION RECOVERY / RELAPSE PREVENTION

Faith Walk

Lead daily, weekly, or monthly morning discussion group of recovering addicts in soul-searching for triggers and underlying causes for relapse. Group discussions solidify supportive relationships in group and ease tensions between rivals. Use music and theatrical improvisation games to relax and involve participants.

COMMUNITY BUILDING / VIOLENCE PREVENTION

Integrity 101

Interactive spoken word, music, and theatre games designed to motivate and stimulate participants. Participants are guided in simulated exercises and games to give as one needs to receive, let go of resentments toward individuals and institutions, visualize and brainstorm ideas for better relationships between individuals, institutions and communities, institutions and other institutions. Texts from various sources are used to ignite discussions leading to role play and personal experience sharing.

Power of Peace Community Dinners

Together with IN POWER, a spirituality- nurturing community enterprise, dinners are prepared for neighborhood residents and served up with performances, peace-making activities and honoring ceremonies. Honored are the “heroes and sheroes” of the community who avert violence and unrest with positive values, activities and or enterprise.

Restoring the Icon

Jeremiah Drake’s relief paintings of slashed icons are promoted and sold. The proceeds go to pay plastic surgeons to repair the faces of women slashed by domestic abusers, gang initiates earning points for gang membership, or other attackers.



Cross-stitch: County Lines

Produce original, company-written plays by members of the community. Children and adults of all ages learn choreography, write their own pieces and perform them. Participants use traditions from their ancestral and contemporary cultures and sub-cultures to create music, stories, dance and poetry. The local nature of this process usually brings capacity crowds to presentations of the production. Cast members learn to work

with other races, other generations, other economic backgrounds to tell individual and family histories of the community.

Up the Miff Tree

Lead discussion groups of 9-12 year olds on effects of grudge holding and bullying. Discussions are held on impact of lyrics in popular music in order to engage and involve reticent or recalcitrant participants. Children form support partnerships to experiment with alternatives to anger-based behavior during school day. Inclusion of adult assistant teachers in circle brings about noticeable

changes in their behavior toward children as workshops progress. A general easing of tensions between rivals develops quickly. Reluctant students open up and share aspirations with group.



Community Elders Song Sharing

Lead songs of faith in neighborhood senior residences to stimulate conversation and activity with tenants suffering from Alzheimer's and/or stroke-related disabilities. Songs revive their memories, give them a sense of grounding and stability. Noted increased conversation at mealtimes after song leading. Sharing meals with them facilitates conversation about

common interests such as food, grandchildren childhood games and memories from their young adulthood. Noted increase in conversational relevance and coherence with even the more withdrawn residents.

**Poetry Circles, Open Mic Events
(For community organizer
trainings, conferences, retreats)**

These events encourage creativity, improvisation, and communal support for those who are developing their writing, speaking, or other performing skills. They provide a bonding experience for those who are often at odds during the daily



conference workshops and discussion/planning groups. They foster inter-cultural dialogue and acceptance of diversity.

**ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS
AND RESPONSIBILITY**

**Field Studies and Community
Education**

Middle school science, biology, language arts and business students and teachers collaborate to do field studies, write reports in narrative, script, and verse, and formulate responsive business designs addressing the local environment and its effects on the quality of our daily lives. The science, language arts and business students together report on findings in writings that endeavor to encourage more responsible practices by local citizenry and government. Theatre and communications students take the resulting written work and formulate sketches for live and video performance, public service announcements, and radio spots.

Wildlife Wonder Pen Friends

Elementary school children from Harlem's PS 123 and Middle school children from rural Wilcox County, Alabama connect, in words and pictures, their experiences with nature. Under the tutelage of "Green Man" Thomas Goodrich, the Harlem children have created a garden next to their school where they study the interrelationships of plant and insect life. The Alabama pre-teens have studied exotic animals, local foliage, soil and water quality under the tutelage of Auburn University's

Environmental Studies Institute. The children exchange photos, artwork and poetry about their experiences in nature. The older children model the study of ecology to the younger students, who, in turn, expose the Alabama students to their understanding and application of the Nguzo Saba, or Seven Principles, of Kwanzaa.

THE GIVING TREE – Workshops with Paula Larke

·? Drumming for the Spirit

This is a simple rhythm exchange and blending workshop in which participants take turns sharing rhythms from their home culture or of their own invention.

·? The Society of Survival*

This 5-day holistic workshop for adults includes singing, drumming, meditation, drawing, writing, art-making, quilting, basket making or chair bottoming, cooking, nutrition discussions, history, anthropology, language arts, story circles, dance, and theatre exercises. This is done with a team composed of wordsmiths, visual artist, dancer, culinary artist and Paula Larke as curator and discussion leader.

·? Positively Hip Hop for Children of Promise

This is a critical thinking musical journey for children, teens and/or young adults. It involves questioning the values in society which compromise the principles found in the Declaration of Human Rights, the Bill of Rights, and the Constitution of the United States. The participants write their ideas which are then turned into raps and spoken word performances by the group with Paula Larke's instrumentation.

·? Moving Mountains

This singing and songwriting workshop is for recovering victims of domestic violence, substance abuse, and depression in general. The workshop is designed to involve the participant in actual, physical movement that releases pain and replaces it with energy and joy.

·? Who Are Your S/Heroes?

This is a storytelling, digital video and writing workshop incorporating the elements of oral history gathering and reporting. It is intergenerational; young and elder participants gather stories of achievement and human service by people in their own lives from each other, retelling the stories live (as spoken word performance,) in writing, or on camera.

·? Intelligences, Perspectives and Perceptions

Staff team-building workshop for teaching and/or tutoring programs, especially after-school venues. Using various texts, Paula Larke explores participant's hidden and/or under-accessed talents and interests to stimulate their early childhood memories. Participants exchange stories and examine their remembered experiences for ideas on working with their students.

*The workshop, The Society of Survival, is the only offering here that involves other artists both in the planning and execution.

All workshops are designed for groups of 20-40 participants and last from 2 to 5 hours, depending on the size and goals of the group (performance or archiving)