access to the visual arts

History and Programming for People with Disabilities

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In society, the arts exist as a universal language and function not only for entertainment and appreciation, but also for increasing our understanding of ourselves and the world around us. The arts fulfill the basic human need for creative self-expression. The process of creating allows us to explore our questions of identity and understanding. Abraham Maslow recognized the importance of art in his psychological theory of the hierarchy of human needs. Within this theory, the fullest and richest potential of human existence involves self-actualization, which is closely related to self-expression, creativity, and aesthetic appreciation.

The National Association for Education in the Arts identifies the significance of participation in visual arts for its productive and communicative purposes. Not only do they provide a system of communication and expression, but they also produce something tangible, which can bring a sense of accomplishment, engagement, and creative expression.

This manual focuses on the importance of access to the visual arts for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Importance of Visual Arts in Lives of People with Disabilities

The visual arts hold special importance in the lives of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Through participation in the visual arts, individuals with disabilities can use their talents and abilities to explore and express themselves and to connect and share. The visual arts provide opportunity for creative self-expression of one's internal state, which must be expressed for well-being and growth. For people with disabilities, the production of something tangible and uniquely one's own can increase self-efficacy and self-determination. Art production can facilitate choice-making, self-expression, and when created in an inclusive setting, can foster community involvement and social skills.

Compared to their peers without disabilities, individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities have not experienced the same access to the visual arts. Prior to 1970, the few programs that existed typically involved therapeutic services or activities in a sheltered workshop, such as "arts and crafts" as activities in adult day programs. However, more recently people with disabilities are participating in the visual arts for social and vocational purposes. Further, many artists with disabilities currently have work displayed in galleries and museums across the United States. This manual will examine the development of art programs that promote this access to the visual arts.

Current Movements in Visual Arts and Disability

There are two distinct views when observing art involving people with disabilities. For some, the arts serve a greater civil rights agenda: that one must have full access to the arts. Known as *Disability Art*, this genre of art serves to transform or educate others of the culture and identity of disability. A second movement of art produced by individuals with disabilities is reflective of a "self-taught" artist, meaning one who receives no formal training in art technique. Known as *Outsider Art*, this genre of art is valued for the inherent chaos and abnormality of the work. Simply stated, Disability Art is art about disabilities. The Disability Art Movement comes from the field of Disability Studies, which emphasizes the importance of establishing the identity and culture of disability. Pieces in Disability Arts usually depict the experience of living with disability, which also means that the art does not have to be created by someone with a disability. Disability Arts distinguishes itself from "people with disabilities doing art". Disability Art celebrates the ability and beauty of disability, and communicates this sentiment through the production of something artistic. Thus, Disability Arts believes strongly that the arts should not be used for rehabilitation or to "cure" disabilities.

In contrast to Disability Art, "Outsider Art" is used to describe self-taught artists or artists without formal training who often depict their life experience in their work. Across the United States, there are a number of dedicated Outsider Art galleries and museums, with many including pieces by individuals with disabilities. However, not all art by individuals with disabilities is considered in Outsider Art. Rather, the piece must be evaluated for abnormal and self-taught features.

Some disagree with labeling of the art of individuals with disabilities as "Outsider". This term, they feel, connotes different and abnormal; as such, it does not promote the attitude of inclusion. Others, however, have maintained that the label of "Outsider Art" is merely descriptive of the art form, not of the artist themselves. Hence, it is possible to be an artist with a disability, but to create work that is not considered Outsider Art. This example supports the claim that the term "Outsider Art" is descriptive of the art form, and does not connote the artist.

Though notably more marketable in Europe, Outsider Art (also known as Intuitive Art) is especially of interest to collectors in the Northeastern United States. For example, Ricco/Maresca in New York, NY currently displays work of several artists with disabilities. In 1996, the Visionary Art Museum was founded in Baltimore, MD to exhibit outsider artists, which included some exemplary artists from American Studio Art Centers. The American Folk Art Museum in New York hosts a contemporary collection including self-taught artists and outsider arts, including some artists from Katz's studios in Oakland, CA.

Overview of Art Programming for People With Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

The most common types of art programming for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, include: art as recreation (usually in conjunction with adult service providers), independent studio art centers, and organizations promoting careers in the visual arts for people with disabilities. There also are movements within art therapy and arts education concerning persons with disabilities.

₿ ART AS RECREATION

Historically, art programming for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities has been used for a leisure-time activity. Such programming occurs in conjunction with community-based agencies, as part of their adult services. For the purposes of this manual, art participation for adults with disabilities in conjunction with agencies will be referred to as "recreational art". Often, these programs are segregated, and emphasize the therapeutic and rehabilitative potential of art for people with disabilities. In more recent history, several adult service providers have expanded their art programming into dedicated studio space with adjacent galleries.

₿ CREATIVE ART CENTERS

The origins of independent art centers for adults with disabilities are deeply rooted in the collaboration of art education and psychology, through the work of Elias Katz and Florence Ludins-Katz. These Art Centers are the model for socially inclusive studio programs. The goals allow for the power of personal choice in self-expression, the power of expression of feelings and emotions, empowerment in creation of self-image, and opportunities to develop social skills. The model also recognizes the potential for persons with disabilities to be included in art museums and galleries, thus allowing for the potential for income.

₿ ART FOR EMPLOYMENT

For some artists with disabilities, a career in the visual arts is an opportunity for meaningful employment. Several national organizations in this genre exist to ensure that art careers are fully accessible to individuals with disabilities. Furthermore, there has been an increased interest in "Outsider Art." People with disabilities might find part-time employment in the visual arts through the support of a local studio art program for people with disabilities or through self-employment.

X ART THERAPY

Art Therapy is based on the belief that the creative process involved in artistic self-expression helps people to resolve conflicts and problems, develop interpersonal skills, manage behavior, reduce stress, increase self-esteem, self-awareness, and achieve insight. Most publications concerning art and disability mention art therapy in some form, yet hold conflicting stances on its function.

☑ ARTS EDUCATION

Arts education is the instruction and programming in art disciplines. In early research, scholars in arts education demonstrated that children with disabilities have creative potential. However, students with disabilities are less likely to participate in art class or community art programs than their peers without disabilities. The influence of arts education can be seen in the mission of VSA, the international organization on arts and disability. VSA programs mostly focus on access to art for children with disabilities, rather than adults.

Scope and Sequence of Manual

This manual serves as a guide for those who wish to locate resources and further understand opportunities in the visual arts for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Because of the vast number of national, state, and local organizations that serve to facilitate access to the visual arts, the appendix organizes various resources at the national, state, and local levels.

Section 2 reviews the history of participation in visual arts for individuals with intellectual disabilities. It describes the foundation of national organizations in the United States, and trends in local program development. It will further explain the contributions of Art Therapy and Arts Education to the field of art and disabilities.

Section 3 provides a replication manual for starting an accessible art program in a local community. Potential art programs will include those in conjunction with day service agencies, independent studio programs, and dedicated studio space to support self-employment.

A separate Appendix contains a directory of art resources for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, organized by state. It also contains a list of national organizations that serve to advocate or provide resources for individuals with disabilities in terms of participation in the visual arts.

History of Access to the Visual Arts and Current Issues

Prior to the 1970's, there was little discussion of the arts in the lives of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. However, with the de-institutionalization movement in the late 1960's, many adults with disabilities needed more community-based activities and services. With the establishment of group homes, sheltered workshops, and day treatment centers, recreational activities for adults with disabilities emerged, and one common activity was arts and crafts. Thus, art became a leisure activity for many adults with disabilities.

Participation in the arts for people with disabilities became a national interest through the work of Jean Kennedy Smith, who was inspired by her sister, Rosemary Kennedy. In 1974, Mrs. Smith founded the National Committee of Arts for the Handicapped in Washington D.C., which later came to be known as Very Special Arts (VSA). Today, the Department of VSA and Accessibility at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts exists as an international organization on arts and disability, working to promote arts and educational opportunities for all. As part of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, VSA state affiliates receive federal funding to implement art programming for individuals with disabilities in schools and communities.

Also in the 1970s, Elias and Florence Ludins-Katz established independent Art Centers for adults with disabilities in California. These Art Centers, which continue to operate today, serve as national models for dedicated studio programs for adults with disabilities. Due primarily to artwork created in these Creative Art Centers, people with disabilities began to be included in Outsider Art galleries as early as the 1980s. Further, publications in Art Education in the 1970s show increased awareness of the inclusion of students with disabilities in the art classroom.

National Organizations

₩ VERY SPECIAL ARTS (VSA)

In 1974, Jean Kennedy Smith founded that National Committee on Arts for the Handicapped (N.C.A.H.) to facilitate opportunities for people with disabilities to participate in the arts. Mrs. Smith recognized that participation in the arts can significantly enhance the quality of life, and that children with disabilities should have an equal opportunity for access. A committee was formed that included leaders from national arts, disabilities, and education organizations. The Alliance for Arts in Education, the Bureau of Education for People with Disabilities, the Department of Health Education and Welfare, and the Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. Foundation all provided the initial funding for the N.C.A.H. Initial goals included research and dissemination of information concerning arts instruction for people with disabilities, identifying model programs, and increasing the number of people with disabilities served by arts programs.

Three years later, the N.C.A.H. convened a committee of experts at a special conference, called "The Arts and Handicapped People: Defining the National Direction". The conference organizers hoped to gain an understanding of the current state and future outlook for art and disability programming. The key questions brought to the 1974 conference included: What is the federal role in the development of arts for the people with disabilities? What is the state of research? What relationship does the arts play in the aesthetic development of a human being? What is the full utilization of public facilities in relation to arts for people with disabilities? What is the state of career development and utilization of leisure time in relation to arts for people with disabilities? What is the role of the artist working with people with disabilities? What is the nature of society's attitude toward these individuals, and how do the arts affect such attitudes? What contributions can all the disciplines make to the fields of arts and people with disabilities? Many of these questions still need attention today. The current state of these questions will be addressed in the second part of this chapter.

The establishment of N.C.A.H marked the beginning of Very Special Arts (VSA). Prior to 1985, the name VSA was known in the context of Very Special Arts Festivals. VSA festivals, hosted by the N.C.A.H., were opportunities for local artists to display their artwork or participate in theater productions. In 1985, there were around 450 festivals nationwide, located in each of the 50 states, with over 600,000 participants. These festivals are now held internationally every 5 years.

In 1981, Congress officially designated the N.C.A.H. as the national resource to coordinate arts programming for individuals with disabilities. The N.C.A.H. provided organization among state and local art programs. Jean Kennedy Smith worked in conjunction with the N.C.A.H. and Project REAP (Retirement with Enrichment: Arts and Purpose) to encourage people to volunteer in the arts with children and adults with disabilities.

In 2011, VSA merged with the Kennedy Center's Office on Accessibility to become the Department of VSA and Accessibility at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C. Currently, VSA is organized at the state level, with organizational affiliates in each of the 50 states. From surveying various VSA state affiliates, several programs are consistent across states. A program for preschool and early elementary children, Start with the Arts, provides literacy and art instruction for students, including students with disabilities. It aims to develop creativity and to help children express their thoughts and emotions at a young age through connections in art and literature. Almost every other VSA state chapter also has an Artist-in-Residency program. These programs involve an artist visiting a classroom or group home for a designated period (usually over several weeks). These programs are mostly focused on the visual arts, and help participants develop basic art skills.

Currently, VSA works with 37 state affiliates in the United States (JFK Center for the Performing Arts, 2012). In some states, affiliates are independent non-profit organizations that also host the state VSA office. Each VSA affiliate coordinates programming across the state, mostly in arts education. In many states, the VSA affiliate is the sole resource for people with disabilities to access the arts. In other states, the affiliates are one among many existing resources. Most VSA affiliates maintain strong ties to the national office and receive funding, resources, and organizational support. Some areas do not have a statewide affiliate. In these areas, VSA partners with local agencies to deliver effective, quality arts-based educational programming for students with disabilities. While VSA provides many resources

on physical accessibility, it does not fully address accessibility to employment and art production.

ELIAS AND FLORENCE KATZ: ART CENTERS AND THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF ART AND DISABILITY

Elias Katz, a clinical psychologist, and his wife Florence Ludins-

Katz, a psychologist and art educator, developed the first United States model of an art center specifically designed for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. In *Art and Disabilities* (1990), Ludins-Katz and Katz describe the philosophy of Creative Art Centers for adults with disabilities and provides support to replicate these programs.

Katz has written extensively on the psychosocial needs of adults with disabilities, including recreational needs for activities such as painting, making craft objects, singing, dancing, or playing an instrument. Katz views the creation of art as modes of self-expression, in which individuals can release their feelings and gain pleasure from their own productions.

Katz and Ludins-Katz (1990) defined the Art Center for adults with disabilities as "a full-time supportive and stimulating environment without pressure, threat, or competitiveness in which creative work in painting, sculpture, printmaking, creative crafts, etc. is carried on in a studio setting for people with mental, physical, or social disabilities" (p.14). They reasoned that these Art Centers are a unique program for individuals

Art provides people with disabilities the opportunity to create something uniquely their own.

with disabilities, and much different than typical day programming, such as activity programming or rehabilitation centers. The Art Centers maintain several similar goals of these programs, but also provide a unique opportunity for fulfillment through creative development. In 1973 in Oakland, CA, the Katz and Ludins-Katz founded the first Creative Art

> Center specifically for adults with intellectual disabilities, known as Creative Growth Art Center.

> Since the inception of the Creative Growth Art Center, 25 Art Centers have developed in California. By founding two centers in northern California in the early 1970s, their program

soon became a national model for socially inclusive studio art programs—known as Art Centers. From 1982-1984, Ludins-Katz and Katz founded Creatively Unlimited in San Jose and Creatively Explored in San Francisco. From the 1970s on, Art Centers for adults with disabilities grew tremendously in many areas of the United States. In light of the success and increased interest in Creative Art Centers, the Katzes recognized the need for a national organization of these centers, and went on to establish the National Institute on Art and Disability (NIAD) in 1984.

Ludins-Katz and Katz maintained the components of the institute should include a creative art studio at the center, including an art program for adults and a gallery to display the work of the artists. As in the Art Center model, the art program can also serve as pre-vocational training, ultimately providing vocational opportunities. Art Centers should also provide inclusive art classes for children with and without disabilities on weekends or during the summer, so that they might develop art as an interest. The institute would also train professionals for work in this emerging area, and even award a certificate of specialization in art and disabilities. The institute would also include an art gallery, featuring artists with and without disabilities in a variety of mediums. It would also house a permanent collection of art by people with and without disabilities and provide opportunities for marketing greeting cards, posters, bookmarks, and other paper goods with the work of the artists.

In 1996, the NIAD published a study on the national dissemination of the model of Art Centers for individuals with disabilities. The study noted that there were distinct differences between community-based programs in the arts for people with disabilities and the Art Center model that developed in Oakland. These community programs were typically seen in sheltered workshops or recreational activity programs. From the inception of Creative Growth Art Center in Oakland, Katz noted the ways in which the Art Center model is unique to any other community-based service that exists for people with disabilities. Compared to the work-oriented program, Katz described four distinct differences in the Art Center model.

First, participants in the Art Center can exercise personal choice and control over their work. In contrast, participants in most work-oriented environments are told to accomplish a specific task, and not completing the task as instructed is considered a failure. The goal of work in an Art Center is typically on the process and the opportunity for creative expression. Art Centers are not competitive environments, and the artists proceed at their own pace in art-making.

Second, the Art Center model gives participants opportunity for the transformational power of achievement. Art provides people with disabilities the opportunity to create something uniquely their own.

Third, Art Centers provide an opportunity for inclusion. People with and without disabilities can

participate in this studio, display their work in the studio exhibition, and attend group visits to local art studios and shows. The focus on engagement with the local community and the presence of peers without disabilities makes these centers different from work-oriented programs.

Finally, the Art Centers maintain a wide range of participants. Everyone from young adults to seniors attend. In contrast, most work-oriented programs for people with disabilities do not include seniors. Art Centers provide people of all ages an opportunity to do something, which is increasingly important for many older adults with disabilities.

NIAD is supported by the Regional Center of the East Bay, various foundations and individuals, NIAD art sales, and special events. Even so, NIAD is constantly challenged to meet expenses, dependent on community support for its continued existence. Katz (1990) notes that, above all, participation and involvement of the local community is the most important factor of maintaining an art center.

₩ NATIONAL ARTS AND DISABILITY CENTER

In Los Angeles, another national resource exists to facilitate access to the arts for persons with disabilities. The National Arts and Disability Center (NADC) is a project of the Tarjan Center at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). The Tarjan Center is part of the national network of University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education, Research, and Service (UCEDD). The mission of the NADC is to promote and provide resources for full inclusion of people with disabilities into the arts world. The NADC serves as a consultant in the field of art and disability, including the performing arts and visual arts. NADC is supported by federal and private grants and UCLA.

The NADC promotes the work of artists with disabilities through an online directory that includes images

of their art and a short biography. The directory contains a search field, with filters such as "visual arts" or "performing arts." In addition, the NADC shares information about the artists and their work through a listserv. The NADC provides information to artists concerning opportunities for funding or galleries that are calling for entries. The NADC also provides technical assistance to Art Centers, museums, performing arts associations, and film and television companies.

Since 1994, the NADC has been a leading provider of resources and information to individuals and professionals on the subject of arts and disabilities. NADC provides information about grants and programs for artists with disabilities. It also provides an online directory of visual, literary, media, and performing artists in California, to which individuals with disabilities can submit their work or their biography. The NADC also provides technical assistance to art centers, museums, performing arts associations, and film and television companies.

Other services of the NADC include resource directories for artists with disabilities to find assistive technology, art centers, dance and theater companies, and film festivals. They also provide publications concerning careers in the arts and arts education. Several local organizations that promote access to the arts across the

United States note that they receive funding from the NADC. Another way in which the NADC supports states is by hosting Statewide Forums for Careers in the Arts for People with Disabilities.

FORUMS ON CAREERS IN THE ARTS FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

In recent years, VSA has partnered with the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Art and Disability Center to conduct Forums on Careers in the Arts for people with disabilities, both statewide and nationally. Statewide Forums were instituted to address the educational and vocational needs of artists with disabilities, and to outline the challenges and opportunities concerning career development for people with disabilities in the arts.

With NEA funding, the National Arts and Disability Center hosted a series of Statewide Forums. Upon receiving a grant from the NADC (funded by the NEA), for example, the state of Tennessee hosted a Forum in 2006. Run by the Tennessee Arts Commission and VSA Arts Tennessee, the purpose of the ArtsTalk Forum was to provide information as a service to artists, arts administrators, service providers, and potential employers in order to increase access to the arts and enhance opportunities for careers.

Since 2002, the following 26 states have participated

in the Statewide Forums: Maryland, Minnesota, New Mexico (2002), California, Hawaii, Mississippi, Puerto Rico, Washington (2003), Arkansas, Indiana, Massachusetts, Missouri, Texas (2004), Arizona, Florida, Nebraska, New Hampshire, and Ohio (2005), Tennessee, Maine (2006), Michigan, North Dakota and Colorado (2007), Illinois, New Jersey, and Connecticut (2008).

Various Fields Involving Art and Individuals with **Disabilities**

As illustrated above, Very Special Arts (VSA), the National Institute of Art and Disability (NIAD), and the National Art and Disability Center represent the organizational history of arts and people with

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disabilities. However, to further understand the various philosophies surrounding art programs for people with disabilities, it is important to review the history of arts education, art therapy, and outsider art.

☑ ARTS EDUCATION

In some ways, interest in making the visual arts accessible to all began in arts education. In early research, scholars in arts education demonstrated that children with disabilities have creative potential. These scholars became interested in developing art programs for these students, especially with the passage of Public Law 94-142. With the establishment of the National Committee of Arts for the Handicapped, Jean Kennedy Smith brought the state of arts education for children with disabilities to national attention. The influence of arts education on VSA is still apparent today, as VSA programs mostly focus on access to art for children with disabilities, rather than adults. However, still today, students with disabilities are less likely to participate in art class or community art programs than their peers without disabilities. Thus, chapter two will further examine the history of art education in terms of access to students with disabilities. It is also necessary to clarify differences in the philosophy of art education. Art education seeks to teach technique in the arts, and thus involves assessment criteria. Students in art education are expected to conform to norms, such as painting horizontal lines, drawing a face, or scoring with clay. This approach differs from the philosophy of many other art traditions involving people with disabilities, but still has a significant impact on existing art programs.

In the field of Art Education, there exists a fair amount of research concerning art instruction for students with disabilities. This research provides evidence that students with disabilities can participate and benefit from the arts. It also reveals that students with disabilities can benefit from arts instruction, and as a result, also make gains in several other subject areas.

In accordance with IDEA, students with disabilities must be included in the general education arts classroom, or provided arts instruction in their least restrictive environment. Frances Anderson, art therapist, is recognized as pioneering the field of Art Education for all children. Her 1978 sourcebook, *Art for all Children: A Creative Source for the Impaired Child*, united ideas of art therapy and art education. She asserted that art instruction benefits the child's social, creative, emotional, and academic development. Further, art therapy can be listed as a related service on a student's IEP and thereby funded in some states.

The state of accessibility to the arts curriculum in schools today is unknown. While it is still required under IDEA that students with disabilities have full access to all parts of the school day, students with disabilities often do not experience the same access to the arts as their peers without disabilities.

🕅 ART THERAPY

Developed from the intersection of the arts and psychology, art therapy is a vast discipline that encompasses art-making in the lives of individuals with disabilities. Today, several conflicting ideas exist on what art therapy is and what an art therapist does, specifically for individuals with intellectual disabilities. This section will overlay some of these inconsistencies in interpretation. While the role and definition of the art therapist is still debated, it is important to examine the history of the discipline and the influence this field has on the existence of art opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

According to the American Art Therapy Association (AATA), art therapists facilitate art production for individuals experiencing physical, mental, or emotional health needs. Art therapists provide opportunity for

coping, stress management, communication, or relief of anxiety. Further, with individuals of all ages, art therapy is used to treat a variety of mental health needs; social and emotional difficulties related to disability and illness; and psychosocial difficulties related to medical illness. Art therapy programs exist in various settings, including hospitals, community agencies, and educational systems. In this AATA definition, no mention is made of using art therapy with persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Two philosophies of art therapy emerged in the foundational period of the field, including "art as therapy" and "psychotherapy," from the work of Margaret Naumburg and Edith Kramer. Here, we see the origin of the debate over what actually constitutes art therapy, which ultimately leads to differing opinions of the use of the field in the lives of people with intellectual disabilities. These philosophical views of the field are confusing, but critical to understanding the various roles of art therapy. Naumburg was the first to define art therapy as a separate mental health profession and a form of psychotherapy, which is most in line with the medical model. She described the two facets of art education as: "psychotherapy" and "art as therapy", with the latter heavily influenced by art education. As such, Margaret Naumburg aligns most closely with the "psychotherapy" view (medical model), and Dr. Kramer aligns with the "art as therapy" view (education model).

To begin to understand the "psychotherapy" model, it is important to look at the emergence of the medical model of art therapy. Art therapy existed in psychiatric hospitals, as well as in other community agencies who served people with mental illness and in hospitals to serve those coping with medical illness. As early as 1925, psychiatrist Nolan D.C. Lewis at the New York State Institute became fascinated with the work created by his patients under the direction of art therapist Margaret Naumburg. Junge asserts that these early examples of art by psychiatric patients had a strong influence on the growth of the field of art therapy as psychotherapy. In the early 1940s, the term art therapy was used in hospitals to describe the therapeutic benefits of drawing and painting. Thus, there is a distinct medical model connected to this philosophy of art therapy.

In contrast, Dr. Edith Kramer, another important foundational influence in art therapy, aligns with the "art as therapy" view. She theorizes that the creative process itself and the successful making of an art product brings about change and healing for the patient. Dr. Kramer demonstrates the origins of the close connection between "art as therapy" and "art education." However, in contrast to art education, which focuses on the enhancement of technique, followers of Kramer's theories maintain that healing is the ultimate goal through creative expression. In simple terms, Kramer asserts the importance of the process, while Arts Education maintains the importance of a tangible product.

From these two philosophies, two conflicting views of art therapy emerged. Because of the medical origins of art therapy, several people have come to oppose the term "therapy" as related to art-making by individuals with disabilities. Many view the purpose of art therapy as trying to "cure" individuals of their disabilities, instead of cultivating their talents and abilities. In contrast, others describe the role of the art therapist as facilitating the art-making process. With backgrounds in both art and psychology, art therapists can understand the accommodations needed to set up an artist's least restrictive environment. One philosophy states that participation in the visual arts for people with disabilities should not be considered art therapy, for the word "therapy" connotes that individuals with disabilities are "ill"

and need to be rehabilitated. This belief particularly contrasts with views of Disability Arts, as Disability Arts states that individuals with disabilities do not need to be cured or relieved of their "ailments". Some dedicated art programs with individuals with disabilities maintain this perception of art therapy, and explicitly state that their participants are not receiving therapy.

In contrast, however, others consider Art Therapy as the means by which creation and production of

visual art is made accessible to someone with a disability. In this view, Art Therapists merely facilitate the production of art, and provide the opportunity for someone to access materials and space. Art therapy does not teach a specific technique, such as a lesson or art form. Rather, the art therapist ensures that the environment and supports are in place for one to fully access their artistic potential. In this way, many artists with disabilities

discover their passion and talent for art at a young age, and continue to participate in art therapy to produce work. Art therapy enables individuals to build on their strengths and abilities in art, and facilitates the production of art by providing the appropriate supports and accommodations. This view of Art Therapy aligns more closely with Outsider Art, and establishes art production and self-employment as the ultimate goal of participation in the arts.

Several other distinctions of art therapy and therapeutic arts are also noteworthy. For example, Karkou and Sanderson (2006) note that confusion still exists between terms art therapy and therapeutic art, as nothing existed until 1985 to truly acknowledge their difference. Karkou and Sanderson summarize

The art educator aims to enhance artistic knowledge and skills, whereas the art therapist focuses on social and emotional development.

the differences in the focus: the product is the main focus of therapeutic arts, whereas in art therapy (or art as therapy) the process of art-making is important.

Karkou and Sanderson also differentiate between art therapy and art education. This distinction mostly consists of a difference of intention. Art therapy does not exist to teach anyone a specific form or technique in the arts. Art education, however, maintains the presence of art instruction in compliance to a particular technique. The art educator aims to enhance artistic

> knowledge and skills, whereas the art therapist focuses on social and emotional development.

🕅 OUTSIDER ART

Specifically in the visual arts, many individuals with disabilities seek opportunities for part-time employment as artists. In the past, the Art Centers were crucial for these artists to be recognized in the Outsider Art world, and to have success in marketing their art to museums

and galleries. It is therefore important to understand the origins and characteristics of Outsider Art.

In the United States, the Outsider Art movement dates to the 1970s. By the 1940s, the term "art brut" began with Jean DuBuffet in France. In the 1970s, art critic Roger Cardinal used the term "Outsider Art" to convey the concept of "art brut" in English terms. As this word "brut" connotes "raw," it was used initially to describe art created by individuals in psychiatric settings. Because of the presence at that time of persons with intellectual disabilities in these settings, art created by a person with an intellectual disability was also called "Outsider Art."

ACCESS TO THE VISUAL ARTS

Outsider Art has since been described by other terms, such as "Visionary Art" or "Intuitive Art." In Chicago, Intuit: The Center for Intuitive and Outsider Art exists to study and promote such work. There are also a number of dedicated galleries and collections of Outsider Art in the Northeastern region of the

United States. In 1992, the first international exhibition of Outsider Art was held in New York City, and this exhibition continues to be held annually. This exhibition provides a great opportunity for exposure of studio artists with disabilities, as well as a broader population of self-taught individuals. Many artists with disabilities who attend Art Centers have achieved

success in the Outsider Art market. The Ludins-Katz and Katz model of the Creative Art Center plays a significant role in the Outsider Art world. Many artists with disabilities who attend Art Centers have achieved success in the Outsider Art market. For further reading, see *Metamorphosis: The Fiber Art of Judith Scott and Dwight Mackintosh: The Boy Who Time Forgot*, by John MacGregor.

Remaining Issues

Many questions posed by the Committee of Art for the Handicapped in 1977 still need attention today. Furthermore, many suggestions made at the 1977 conference need to be extended. For example, arts programming for adults with disabilities requires an interdisciplinary approach for planning and implementation. The state of research, specifically in America, has not grown as much as the conference anticipated. The next section will extend questions and suggestions from N.C.A.H in 1977 to the current state of arts programming today.

🕅 FUNDING

In the 1970s, awareness heightened of the importance of art to all Americans. President Carter stated that "Arts are not simply a luxury; they are a vital part of the fabric of American life and deserve strong support from the federal government". Now, more

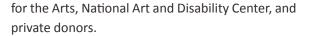
Many artists with disabilities who attend Art Centers have achieved success in the Outsider Art market. than 30 years later, the national organizations governing arts and disabilities receive some federal funding, from sources such as the Department of Education (VSA) and the National Endowment for the Arts. But, most other organizations, both national and local, struggle with funding.

VSA is the federally funded national organization to govern

the network of art and disability. VSA state affiliates then receive funding to implement VSA programs (which mostly involve art participation in schools for children and youth with disabilities). Several existing art programs, however, are not affiliates of VSA or partners of VSA, and thus do not receive any federal supports.

Funding also becomes an issue in art therapy, as not all graduate programs in art therapy are funded. In some states, art therapy programs give funding to graduate students seeking a professional degree in the field. In part, such funding patterns accounts for the inconsistency in the availability of art therapists across states.

For most existing art programs, funding is the most important issue in development and maintenance. Funding should consider program, supplies, space, and instruction, if given. In addition, studios with adjacent galleries must consider how commissions are earned by artists for pieces sold. Many programs also receive funding from the National Endowment



STATE OF RESEARCH

In 1978, the N.C.A.H. conference found that there was a need for more research in specific areas of art; it also recommended that universities perform doctoral research into the arts. Using the 138 studies analyzed prior to the conference, Kalenius (1977) concluded that children with disabilities can learn from instruction and the arts, and benefit in rehabilitative ways. Before the conference, most research sought to show that children with disabilities can benefit from art instruction.

However, most studies concerning art and disabilities are limited to people with mental illness or physical disabilities. Few studies discuss art specifically with people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. In a master's thesis at the University of British Columbia, Lige (2011) expressed discontent with the state of research concerning people with I\DD and the arts. She asserted that such research involves only the therapeutic perspective, rarely addressing participation in the visual arts for purposes of social and vocational development. As part of her thesis, Lige (2011) studied an arts program for adults with intellectual disabilities. Her study provided evidence of the vocational and social benefits of participation in the arts—with an explicitly non-therapeutic method.

Blandy (1993), a scholar in Art Education, also recognized the need for more research in this area. He wrote of the importance of lifelong learning opportunities in the arts for people with disabilities, stating that art educators should also consider developing community-based adult art programs. He stated that art educators need to make community-based adult art education programs accessible to them, and that there is a need for further research on how this should take place (Blandy, 1993).

STATE OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT

At the National Committee on Arts for the Handicapped Conference, Goldstein (1977) spoke of career development and use of leisure-time. She stated that, though many individuals will find pre-vocational benefits in art participation as a leisure activity, some individuals would find that leisure time in the arts can lead to paid employment (p. 47).

But such consensus in the arts has not come about easily. The Statewide Forums hosted by VSA and the NADC resulted in a report by the National Endowment for the Arts. This report described specific barriers and educational needs for people with disabilities in the arts, with the most pressing barriers being the lack of funding in the arts. Moreover, people with disabilities need more access to opportunities to cultivate their art skills when they are younger, so the report stated that attention should be directed toward working with young adults who are interested in pursuing careers in the arts.

In addition to the Statewide Forums, there are several other resources and agencies to promote access to careers. In 2009, the Job Accommodation Network published a Fact Sheet with tips for artists with disabilities seeking self-employment in the arts. The sheet lists several benefits and challenges to self-employment, as well as national resources and agencies that provide support to people with disabilities (some specific to self-employment). While many artists with disabilities earn commissions from their work sold through the Art Center's adjacent gallery, others have become self-employed in the arts, through the support of open studios, local agencies, and Vocational Rehabilitation services. One of the most important uses of art in Disability Art is to change society's attitude. Not only is the work of an artist with a disability a statement of the ability of the individual and a form of expression, but is also one of the most constructive ways to raise consciousness.

One example of a successful, self-employed artist is Brandon Tipler of Medford, OR. Tipler is 25 years old, and receives help from Creative Supports Incorporated, a local agency that provides supports to people with developmental disabilities. Brandon attended Studio Sfumato, where artists with disabilities are matched with visiting artists. Further, as he created a self-employment plan, the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation agreed to pay for his materials and studio supplies (ODHS, 2006).

🕅 ROLE OF THE ARTIST

The N.C.A.H. Conference sought to define the role of the professional artist or teaching artist in art programs for people with disabilities. The role of the artist varies among the many art programs. For those studios modeled after the Creative Art Center, the role of the artist is not to instruct, but rather to facilitate the production of art through the materials. As a result, the work of the artists is considered "outsider art," as art created by someone without formal training in technique.

In art education, the instructor or artist-in-residence provides the framework and instruction in technique to help the students create art. VSA uses artists as instructors for people with disabilities, as seen in their Artist-in-Residency programs. Many studio programs in the United States maintain the role of the artist as the teacher of technique and director of the program.

₩ INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH

The N.C.A.H. also called for an interdisciplinary approach to integrating arts into the lives of people with disabilities. While movements in art education and art therapy have grown since the 1977 conference, there remains a need for greater collaboration among disciplines. The Katz Creative Art Center, one of the significant movements in art and disability, was the result of the collaboration of art education and psychology. More recently, art therapy has fostered opportunities for exhibition in the Outsider Art world. Still, more collaboration is needed among national organizations, art education, art therapy, psychology, special education, social work, and studio arts.

🕅 SOCIAL INCLUSION

Many accessible art programs in the United States also exist to foster opportunities for social inclusion. Several studios describe aspects of a socially inclusive setting in their missions, which is carried out in a variety of ways.

In terms of best practice, a socially inclusive art studio would be a place where people with and without disabilities could participate in art or take art classes. However, many models facilitate social inclusion by merely having present both people with and without disabilities. Usually, however, the individuals without disabilities are labeled as "volunteers" or "aids" in the studio, and these individuals facilitate the art making process for the individuals with disabilities. Other art studios exist solely for people with disabilities and do not include social inclusion in their mission. Such studios are more likely to exist to provide opportunity and resources for individuals with disabilities to produce art. These studios are more likely to be tied to a local community agency that works solely to advocate for people with disabilities.

🔀 ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

For over 35 years, a range of eligibility criteria has existed for participation in art programs. For some programs, eligibility is determined by the sponsoring community agency. For these organizations, funding is provided through the community sponsor and thus they make decisions regarding program eligibility. Other programs determine eligibility based on age, presence or absence of specific disability, or general skill level.

Image: Book of the arts affect society's attitudeToward people with disabilities?

An important question of the 1977 conference pertained to the role of art in changing attitudes toward people with disabilities. For those involved with the inclusion of people with disabilities into the arts, all see the arts as a way to showcase the abilities of people who have been marginalized or identified for their disabilities.

One of the most important uses of art in Disability Art is to change society's attitude. Not only is the work of an artist with a disability a statement of the ability of the individual and a form of expression, but is also one of the most constructive ways to raise consciousness. Many people who could not be reached through lectures or educational events about disabilities can be reached through the arts. In the Disability Arts perspective, art does not have to be created by an individual with a disability to make a statement about the culture and identity of a person with a disability. Because depictions of disability have often been marginalized by the art and media, Disability Arts view visual art as an opportunity to advocate for the rights and value of individuals with disabilities.

Further, dedicated art studios for adults with disabilities have made an impact in promoting awareness in local communities. Because of the opportunities for social inclusion and for public display of art pieces, these studios have brought increased attention to the lives of older adults with disabilities in a community. Even if the studio merely exists as an activity to keep older adults occupied, the studio provides opportunities for social engagement and public awareness. Many studios are located in shopping centers or close to university campuses, away from less visible group homes or residential facilities. By simply maintaining these public locations, people become aware of the existence of aging populations of adults with disabilities, and that they often do spend time in isolation. Further, galleries or public displays of work by artists with disabilities give the artist a sense of accomplishment and of belonging to a community. Such displays also give the community a tangible representation of the potential of people with disabilities.

Replication Manual

Across the United States, several community-based programs provide opportunities for people with disabilities to participate in the visual arts. Although this manual's Appendix contains examples of these programs by state, this section will outline the critical components in developing a community-based arts program for individuals with disabilities. The section incorporates the work of Elias and Florence Katz in Art and Disabilities (1990), which was published to provide guidance in establishing a Creative Art Center similar to their centers in California. Because close to 40 existing art centers are explicitly modeled after Katz, this manual will incorporate some suggestions given by Katz (1990). The section will also include suggestions for extending existing art programs run by local agencies, and for setting up studio space for use by artists with disabilities working toward self-employment.

Before You Begin

ESTABLISH A PLANNING COMMITTEE IN THE COMMUNITY

The most important resource in establishing a program for adults with disabilities is the support of a local community. Members of a local community can serve as volunteers, funders, advertisers, and advocates for an art program for people with disabilities.

One suggestion is to begin by establishing an interdisciplinary team of individuals who are interested in the development of an arts program. This team might include local artists with and without disabilities, parents of artists with disabilities, art therapists, arts education professionals, and local disability advocacy groups. Another potential group of partners includes university students involved in psychology, special education, social work, studio art, or related disciplines. Above all, there must be people working together towards a collaborative goal.

To find others who are interested, talk to members of local advocacy groups, such as The Arc, Autism Societies, or Down Syndrome Associations. Contact state and local arts councils, VSA affiliates, museums, community art classes, and national organizations for support and resources. Further, locate art therapists in the state and art educators in the school district. This planning group should agree on the program's intended philosophy and goals.

B DETERMINE THE PHILOSOPHY AND GOALS

The initial planning committee should determine the philosophy and goals of art-making. This will guide the program's eligibility criteria and the overall structure. The goals should be publicized to grow community support and awareness, and to begin marketing for donations. As specified earlier, the most common philosophies of community-based arts programs include: art for recreation, art for creative growth, art therapy, art education, and art for employment (both supported employment and self-employment). In planning arts programs for the community, the committee should determine which philosophy drives the arts programs.

It is also important to note that many programs will exist in some combination of these various philosophies. For example, art for recreation might overlap with art for supported employment. Art therapy might be used by individuals seeking self-employment in the arts. Further, all community-based art programs



in setting up the environment and adapting materials. Further, some artists with disabilities seek self-employment in the arts, which excludes studio programs that display work in adjacent galleries and give artists commission for their work.

might need additional help for the operational part of their "art business." For these artists, a community-based program might also have advocates or networking with local resources to facilitate this component.

can incorporate social inclusion in their intended goals. Examples are listed below of a resource taking shape in three ways:

• Art for Recreation: an extension of existing day-service programs

Many examples of the art programs across the United States have developed as an extension of a local day-service program for adults with disabilities. These programs take place in a dedicated studio space and opportunities exist to sell art work in an adjacent gallery for a commission. Because these programs are typically extensions of day-service programs, they often function mostly for recreational purposes, giving

older adults with disabilities something to do. Further, these programs might incorporate some version of art for therapeutic purposes and art education in their overall philosophy of the purpose of art-making.

There must be people working together towards a collaborative goal.

Supported Employment: Independent Creative Art Centers for adults with disabilities

Across the United States, many Art Centers have developed from the model of Creative Growth Art Center in California. These centers are independently run, and operate heavily on funding from private donors or grants. These centers are not simply day-service programs or activities for aging adults with disabilities. Rather, the centers provide an outlet for creative expression, artistic development, and opportunities for supported part-time employment. Existing programs of this

ACCESS TO THE VISUAL ARTS

These self-employed artists

philosophy of creative growth.

nature have been more successful in marketing

their participants work to Outsider Art galleries. For this reason, centers that align with the Katz

model tend to place more value on the goal

of supported employment in the arts, and the

Self-Employment: Studio space and supports for self-employment

Some artists with disabilities simply need physical space to facilitate access to the visual arts. These individuals do not desire to attend art classes (as they are typically self-taught), but rather desire access to studio space for art-making. Art therapists may facilitate the art-making process,



₩ A BRIEF TIMELINE

1. Writing mission and goals

Once the planning committee agrees on the overall philosophy and purpose of the arts program, the committee needs to establish the mission and goals. Specifically, these goals should include the benefits of art participation in the studio for adults with disabilities. Benefits and goals might include:

- Improving social skills through a socially inclusive model
- Developing vocational skills through participation in operations of organization
- Encouraging self-efficacy in production of a tangible product
- Facilitating community engagement for adults with disabilities, including opportunities to showcase talents of people with disabilities to a community
- Fostering development of creative expression in people with disabilities
- Developing opportunities to earn commission by sale of art work

2. Define eligibility criteria

One should also begin by defining eligibility and exclusion criteria for participation in the art studio. For example, if the resource will be connected to a local disability agency, such as The Arc, it is likely that participants have to qualify for day services at The Arc. Further, address how people without disabilities (if at all) will participate as well.

• Application process

Many centers require an application process for participation, which includes evaluation of medical history. Some places outline on their application that they do not accept participants who have a past history of aggressive behavior.

• Tuition and funding

Some places will work with clients in securing funding for participation through Medicaid waivers. Otherwise, consider how your program will be accessible even with tuition.

Age of population served

In the Creative Art Centers, the full-time program only served adults, as children were enrolled in school during the day. However, their model provides opportunities for summer, after-school, and weekend participation for children enrolled in school. When developing a community arts program, explicitly describe the age-requirement for participants (if any). Again, this will often be influenced by the most important goals of the program.

• Disability specific

Will the art program be specific to one type of disability? Some programs have been established through advocacy groups for adults with development disabilities, so the criterion for participation is already established. The application process should make any exclusion criteria for participation apparent, such as past or present behavioral issues.

3. Determine operational logistics

Next, one must consider the operational logistics, such as operating hours and the daily schedule. This also involves consideration for the physical layout, how it will be socially inclusive (if at all), transportation and physical access, and the responsibilities of the participants.

• Physical space and location

One of the most important components of a community-based art program involves the physical space and location. As soon as possible, one should begin searching for possible facilities to rent or buy. It is important to pay special attention to the location of other disability advocacy organizations and programs that provide other activities for adults with disabilities. Also, one should pay attention to proximity of group homes and access van routes, as it is possible that several individuals who reside in group homes will be interested in attending the center. The site must also meet licensing requirements in the respective state, in addition to the local and federal licensing requirements. Examples would be regulations of the number of people in the facility at one time and zoning.

• Hours of operation

Some studios operate 5 days a week, for 7 hours a day. Though not every participant will come 5 days a week, many do or might desire

to come every day. Some centers have policies about attendance, in that the participating artists are expected to be there five days a week. Others are open anywhere from 3-6 days a week. Important considerations include: presence of staff/volunteers and funding. Some studios also insist that participants

attend a designated amount of time per week or session. Others run on a drop-in basis, meaning that participants can come as they wish during any normal operating hours.

• Physical layout

Another very important consideration is the physical layout of the studio space and/or gallery. If the studio does contain a gallery, it is common to place this near the front of the facility, to increase public view. Further, considering how to lay out the actual studio space is very important in terms of removing any physical barriers. The studio space should be accessible to all participants, and it best to keep very organized and clean.

• Materials

Determine with the team what materials and medium for production of art will be the most important. Further, will the materials and supplies be given to the artists for a sliding-scale fee, or will all working artists be responsible for bringing their own materials (enables self-employment)? How will art work be stored?

• Facilitation of social inclusion

The issue of social inclusion frequently appears when surveying the various art programs that exist for individuals with disabilities. More often than not, the program has social inclusion written into their mission. However, programs manifest

> social inclusion in different ways. For example, Katz writes that his studios must be separate, meaning existing only to serve the art production of people with disabilities, in order to provide their least restrictive environment. However, social inclusion is achieved through the presence of volunteers without disabilities. Other models, especially those in line with Art Therapy, assert

that the physical environment of the classroom is one of the most critical components in creation of art by individuals with disabilities. For some individuals with disabilities, they will find it incredibly difficult to participate in art production alongside any other individuals. This group believes strongly in the one-to-one model for art therapy, and might use a local studio space for various one-to-one appointments.

Establish adjacent gallery and commission
 If the resource facilitates the selling of art work,
 the commission for the artists must be set. In
 defining this commission, one should consider
 the cost per visit per artist, and if there is a
 sliding scale fee. One should also consider overall

support of a local community. ne per week or basis, meaning ev wish during of art by individual

The most important

resource in

establishing a

program for adults

with disabilities is the

budget and projected annual sales, as well as the cost of the materials, rent, and operational costs such as salaries. Ultimately, in order to support overhead costs, the studio will need to make some money from the sale of art work. However, programs should also take into account the role of the staff artists in the art production, differentiating between artwork with "teaching artists" and work that is "self-taught."

- 4. Hire staff and recruit volunteers
 - One should also consider the needs of your specific resource and the staff that will best meet these needs. For example, if the goal is instruction and emphasis is on final product, an arts education professional might be most appropriate. If the focus is the process of art creation (self-taught), that enables creative expression through healing, an art therapist might be best suited. It is especially important to think about how funding will be maintained if paid staff are hired.
 - Next, one should define the role of the staff and the qualifications. If the resource is part of a local agency, the staff will likely have other requirements (e.g. employment by the agency). Further, one should consider the level in which the staff plays a role in art instruction, and based on this, the qualifications of the staff. Will the staff work part-time, full-time, and how are salaries funded? Will there be volunteers? What is the purpose of volunteers? Will there be opportunities for participants to be employed by the studio? In what ways might they work for the studio?
- 5. Establishing 501(c)3 status
 - If your program will be independently run, it is important to apply for 501(c)3 status in order to apply for certain grants and to be eligible for tax exemptions. This process varies by state.

- 6. Marketing your program
 - Once you have an established structure, recruited staff, and have raised some funds, marketing of the program should begin to increase participation and funding. Establishing a website is critical to recruiting participants. Further, there should be a link to make donations online. One should also be in touch with the state VSA chapter for support in finding funds and increasing participation. Also, one should become aware of people in the community who are interested in purchasing the type of art that might come out of your resource.

Funding

Establishing a budget and raising start-up funds will be some of the first steps in developing an arts program for people with disabilities. Specifically, one should consider writing for grants and be continuously networking with corporations, government agencies, and individuals for support and funding. Networking with individuals in a community can lead toward the securing of funds, locating a physical space, and referring participants or consumers of art products.

B FUNDING FOR IMMEDIATE NEEDS

No matter which overall goals or structure your intended program mostly aligns with, funding for immediate needs will be crucial for any program. Immediate needs might include licensing fees for a facility, materials, furniture and work space, and marketing materials for fundraising.

The planning committee will need to develop a plan to gain funding for at least 36 months of operation. You should outline expenditures by month, and calculate the total cost of operating a program for 36-months. This number is the goal to obtain before implementing your program.

In many ways, finding continuous funding will be the most critical component, and likely the most challenging. Many art programs have closed across the United States due to lack of funding. Most directors should have experience or feel comfortable with fundraising. This includes writing for grants, soliciting donations from individuals or corporations, and holding fundraising events. It would also be helpful to develop a brochure or flyer that describes the mission, benefits, and goals of the studio.

Begin by brainstorming a list of people and places that might provide grants to begin a program. Examples include: corporate sponsors, government agencies, and private donors. In addition, consider how your program will maintain funds after the start-up costs. Some places charge a sliding-scale fee for participants to attend the program. This fee might be charged on a daily or weekly basis. For several existing art programs, this is the main source of revenue. The attendees of the program might be able to pay with Medicaid Waivers or SSI. In addition, existing programs use funds from art sales to continue to fund the structure of their program.

B MORE NOTES ON FUNDING

As a national organization, VSA provides funding, structure, and organization for several state affiliates. However, in many states, the VSA state affiliate is an organization that is run independent of the VSA structure, but receives benefits such as funding for their association with VSA. Other national funding resources include the NIAD Center for Arts and Disabilities, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the National Arts and Disability Center. Often, these organizations advertise grants for various purposes; such grants might be used to initially start an organization.

When considering the budget, one should take into account your projected revenue. Develop an estimate of how many individuals will attend the studio, and their fee for attending. With this estimate and any grants, plan a budget for one fiscal year, which includes your projected gross income. Further, calculate the overhead costs, as developed by the implementation plan (including advertising, rent, utilities, electricity, and paid staff).

Promoting Access to Existing Studio Art Programs

Many children spend summers and holidays at local art studios, taking classes or attending camps taught by art educators. However, these privately-run studios are not always accessible to children with disabilities. Parents of children with disabilities can simply ask studios to include students with disabilities in their classes. This is one area where there is a great need for further exploration. To what extent do privately run arts program include children with disabilities? It is clear that VSA provides many opportunities for children with disabilities to participate in art programs after school or during the summer time. These children might also benefit from arts programming offered to their typically developing peers.

For adults with disabilities interested in the visual arts, the question of least restrictive environment also remains. Some adults might find community classes open to anyone with or without disabilities to be their least restrictive environment. Others might prefer one-to-one art therapy sessions. Regardless, community art classes offered to any adult in a community should not discriminate on the basis of disability in admission. However, the extent to which the participant benefits from this class should be evaluated.



With more people with disabilities finding passion and ability in the arts, there exists a growing need to provide opportunities for art participation to the same extent as their peers without disabilities. The general philosophies of participation in the visual arts by people with disabilities, as discussed in previous sections, include: art for recreation, art for creative growth, art education, art therapy, and art for employment. In many ways, these philosophies overlap in the resources and programs that currently exist in the United States. A community-based arts program for adults with disabilities serves several different functions and operates in a variety of ways.

The most common example of the supported employment model exists in dedicated art centers for adults with disabilities. In these programs, adults with disabilities participate in visual arts production through a variety of mediums, with supports of the program staff. The staff typically consists of art therapists, art educators, or local community artists. Participants typically pay a sliding-scale fee to participate, and then receive staff supports and materials from the studio. Further, there is a typically an adjacent gallery where participants can display their pieces. This gallery is usually visible in a local community, and many participants sell their work in this way. In addition, these studio programs provide an opportunity for adults with disabilities to find success in the Outsider Art world. Notably, art centers modeled after Elias and Florence Katz's innovative centers in California have been most successful at marketing the work of their participants to Outsider Art museums and galleries across the United States.

Some art programs for adults with disabilities have developed as an extension of day service programs provided by local agencies. These programs typically maintain the purpose of art as an activity for older adults with disabilities. Still, as an activity, art has many benefits for older adult participants. Some benefits include the therapeutic process of art-production, specifically seen in the sense of accomplishment and increased self-efficacy. Art provides an opportunity to create something uniquely one's own, and for creativity in this process. Other benefits might include an opportunity for social inclusion, especially if the program takes place in a setting for people with and without disabilities.

The most important factors in developing an arts program include: working with an interdisciplinary team, establishing an overall goal for art-making, and planning for funding. Some programs operate to give adults with disabilities something to do that also provides a creative outlet and something to be proud of. Others function to give self-employed artists with disabilities a place to create their pieces, and provide supports in maintaining their art business. It takes a great amount of work to maintain a communitybased program, but the results can be life-changing for many people with disabilities.

For those interested in creating a community-based arts program for people with disabilities, realize that this will be a challenging task. One must have a network of support and interest in the community before it begins. It is important to develop the overall purpose and mission, as it will help find the right supports from others and to secure funding. There are various philosophies and purposes in The most important factors in developing an arts program include: working with an interdisciplinary team, establishing an overall goal for art-making, and planning for funding.

art participation for people with disabilities, and whichever the program aligns with will drive logistical operations of the program. To learn more about programs and organizations that currently exist to support opportunities for people with disabilities in the arts, see the subsequent appendix.

Regardless of the purpose or philosophy, it is clear that the variety of organizations that exist to promote access to the arts for people with disabilities serve an effective purpose. Still, many communities do not have adequate resources for career development in the arts or even opportunity to participate in art activities for their adults with disabilities. There still is a great need for program development and support.

About the Author

Crystal Finley graduated in May 2013 with a degree in Special Education from Peabody College, Vanderbilt University. Originally from Fort Worth, TX, she discovered her passion for working with people with disabilities from her participation in several programs at the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center. Specifically, she is interested in transition to adulthood and community engagement for people with disabilities.

After volunteering at an art studio for adults with disabilities in Austin, TX, she undertook a specialty project in conjunction with the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center to examine opportunities in the arts for persons with disabilities. At Vanderbilt, Crystal was a board member of the Best Buddies chapter and a peer mentor in the Next Steps program, a post-secondary program for students with intellectual disabilities. In her time with Next Steps, Crystal took inclusive art classes and helped to organize an "Art Benefit" to raise funds for the program.







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