

# Boston Youth Arts Evaluation Project Handbook



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1st Edition

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All quotes from youth in this publication have had their names changed to respect confidentiality.

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# The Boston Youth Arts Evaluation Project Handbook

Medicine Wheel Productions



The Theater Offensive



ZUMIX



Hyde Square Task Force



Raw Art Works



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*“At Hyde Square Task Force I have learned confidence, how to be a better performer, and a better person.” – Joselyn, age 18*

# Boston Youth Arts Evaluation Project (BYAEP) Introduction

Those of us who work with young artists deeply believe that art has the power to transform lives. We have seen that art can heal pain, open minds, and plant the seeds for bigger dreams. Art creates riches that do not belong only to the privileged. When the world seems to say to a child, “*You have nothing,*” participation in the arts gives that child the voice and courage to boldly reply, “*Look at what I have created, I am here, I am part of something bigger.*”

We have witnessed the wealth of 21<sup>st</sup> century skills gained by youth through the unique combination of rigor, experimentation, and limitless creative potential offered in the arts. We recognize the critical, life-saving role of the arts in the community, and the wisdom and value of investment in youth arts, *especially* in these difficult and uncertain times.

To paraphrase Ray Bradbury, the way to enslave a people is to keep them real busy and take away their front porches (Brown, 2012, p. 50). The Boston Youth Arts Evaluation Project (BYAEP) was born of a common desire to measure and share, with each other as well as our funders, what we believed was happening inside our studios. We took the bold move to devote precious time and to develop the trust necessary to share our discoveries—our strengths *and* our weaknesses—from our “front porches.” We also garnered input from experts as we researched, developed, piloted, and revised the tools we hoped would accomplish something transformative—deepen understanding of the impact of youth arts programs so that we might elevate and enrich the field. In doing so, we sought to create evaluations that changed the emphasis from collecting and reporting on data, which often did not correlate with attainable outcomes, to establishing a framework with tools that spoke directly to meaningful outcomes. This framework and set of tools needed to wholly encompass the unique identity of the field of youth arts—one that integrated youth development, the arts, and social services.

Adopting evaluation tools from other disciplines has proved cumbersome because the standards of these fields often failed to do justice to the beauty, nuance, and holistic nature of our work with youth. We needed a methodology for designing evaluation systems that was conducive to tracking and articulating youth development outcomes, specifically tailored to our programs, manageable to implement, that shared a common language amongst practitioners of varied art forms, and that would ultimately inform program improvements.

We are tremendously grateful to the Barr Foundation, which awarded funding to Raw Art Works (RAW) in 2008 to create the Boston Youth Arts Evaluation Project, a three-year project undertaken with four other outstanding nonprofit youth arts organizations and programs in Boston: The Theater Offensive, Hyde Square Task Force, Medicine Wheel Productions, and ZUMIX. These youth arts organizations and programs collaborated with national leaders to research, design, implement, and share innovative evaluation methods and tools to measure progress and outcomes in the field of youth arts. Here is what we have created and what we have learned. Although we did not find the “silver bullet” (because there isn’t one), this handbook was developed so others can deepen their understanding of youth arts evaluation, engage with our framework, and modify our tools to fit with their organizations. It also is meant as a grassroots “work in progress” and poses a challenge to our field to further collaborate in this effort to more clearly, boldly, and effectively speak to the complex and important work we do with youth in the arts. – Käthe Swaback, Project Leader, Boston Youth Arts Evaluation Project

## Executive Summary

*“You see this deep impact that your program makes every day: young people bursting to life, creating, bonding. But how do you get data to express that?”* – Abe Rybeck, Executive Artistic Director, The Theater Offensive

The Boston Youth Arts Evaluation Project (BYAEP), a three-year initiative funded by the Barr Foundation, was launched in 2008. Embarking upon this groundbreaking venture, Raw Art Works and collaborators The Theater Offensive, Hyde Square Task Force, Medicine Wheel Productions and ZUMIX sought to create a comprehensive set of evaluation tools designed specifically for youth arts organizations working with youth ages 13-23. With one hundred years of collective experience in the youth arts field, the BYAEP members had witnessed the transformative power of the arts (music, dance, visual arts and film, and theater) and were motivated to better understand and communicate the outcomes achieved by our programs, with the ultimate goal of better serving the youth in our programs. BYAEP had three goals: to develop a youth arts evaluation language and methodology based on existing research and the experiences of Boston youth arts programs; to use the new methodology to design, pilot, and implement evaluation systems for the five collaborating organizations; and, finally, to document what was learned and publish results to help other organizations implement evaluation systems for youth arts programs.

On the topic of evaluation, John Bare’s article “Evaluation and the Sacred Bundle” challenged nonprofits to **“Measure what you value and others will value what you measure”** (2005, p. 7). Our first step in developing a youth arts evaluation framework and a set of tools was figuring out what we value—our own “sacred bundle.” To do so, we needed an evaluation framework that encompassed our whole identity. For many of us in the youth arts field, evaluation strategies have felt particularly foreign. As artists we have struggled with how to prove “success” while honoring the integrity of the work we do. We required a framework to provide a common language and usable evaluation tools for assessing program quality as well as youth’s self-perceptions and satisfaction with the programs. We wanted to track longer-term outcomes through alumni evaluations and employ creative tools (like our drawing evaluations) for youth to express their views. We desired tools, data, and results that were easily accessible for directors of youth development arts programs and available on the web to enable a wider dialogue.

The project began with a thorough review of each BYAEP collaborator’s “logic model” (a road map from identified needs to program outcomes). It became clear that we helped youth build success in three main outcome areas: their skills of expression and art (I Create), their ability to look at themselves (I Am), and their ability to form connections with others (We Connect). The BYAEP evaluation tools align with these three outcomes.

Between 2008 and 2011, we dedicated thousands of hours to researching, developing, piloting, and modifying the framework and tools and experimenting with methods of data collection and analysis. While the work was focused locally in Boston, BYAEP engaged national consultants, presented at national conferences, and created a website and a video widely accessed by organizations in fourteen countries. Forums were held to present our work to a larger audience and to receive important feedback on our framework and tools.

In this Handbook, we have documented the foundational research that informed our framework and tool design, the process of developing our tools, and the challenges we encountered relative to implementation, data collection and analysis. In the Appendix we



include detailed information about the collaborators and examples of how we have used our results, with images, quotations, and statistics. The BYAEP Workbook includes the BYAEP Evaluation Tools themselves, which can be customized to meet any organization's needs. These also can be found at [www.byaep.com](http://www.byaep.com).

While the data we have collected about the impact of our youth arts programs fill hundreds of pages, some highlights include:

- 87% of alumni from Medicine Wheel Productions were proud to report that in the past five years they had worked to improve their choices in life after being at Medicine Wheel.
- At The Theater Offensive, 88% of youth agreed or strongly agreed, "This program has helped me build my confidence."
- At Hyde Square Task Force, the percentage of teens who agreed or strongly agreed, "This year, I have done something valuable for or in my community" increased from 57% in their Beginning Self-Evaluations to 100% in their Final Evaluations.
- At ZUMIX, 76% of youth agreed or strongly agreed in their Beginning Self-Evaluation, "I know where my life can improve and how to improve it," and this rose to 86% in their Final Evaluation.
- At RAW, 96% of youth agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, "I am able to express who I am through the arts," showing an increase of twenty-four percentage points from the beginning of the year.

The BYAEP evaluation data provided examples in which the five collaborators collectively excelled based on the average scores among all five organizations:

- 96% of youth in all of our programs either agreed or strongly agreed, "I feel the staff does a good job with this program."
- 94% of youth could imagine successful options for their future. For some organizations, this showed an increase of over twenty percentage points from their Beginning Evaluations!

The data also showed us collectively where we needed improvement and how we improved over time:

- It was a bit surprising that we all scored lower on certain indicators such as "I am connected to my community," where collectively only 58% of youth felt that this was true.
- All of the BYAEP collaborators worked hard in 2010–2011 to intentionally increase youth's connection to their community. Our final scores, when averaged, increased nine percentage points to 67% who agreed, "I am connected to my community."

The value of evaluation extends beyond the measure of program quality by also serving as a powerful developmental tool for youth. The actual request to fill out an evaluation form expresses to youth that their thoughts count. It also suggests that self-reflection and goal setting are worthy endeavors, intentional activities through which they can begin to change the course of their lives. One of the RAW alumni put it this way:

***"RAW definitely taught me that it is important to evaluate one's life. It taught me how important it is to explore how past and present experiences affect me. Every project we did required reflection on often intimate aspects of our lives and our identities. Since it was a group setting, I saw the individual journeys of my peers, who each struggled to figure out who they were. That camaraderie***

*created a comfortable space for all to reflect and evaluate. I am proud of maturing over my college years. I am proud of graduating from college. **But mostly, I am proud that I was able to evaluate my core beliefs.** I am proud that I am actively making steps that allow me to continue to evaluate and strengthen what it is that makes me, me.”* – Jen, age 28 (graduated from Harvard University in 2006 and is currently enrolled in a Ph.D. program in Clinical Psychology.)

## Our Key Findings

When BYAEP first began, the main concerns that our Forum 1 (October 2008) participants had about evaluating their own programs were that: 1) the project would require a significant expenditure of time and money; 2) their existing tools did not authentically match with the work; and 3) youth and staff were resistant to evaluation. Evaluation for many was a necessary but time-consuming task consisting of rigid processes and burdensome paperwork that might have appeased funders but did not add much value, insight or useable feedback to inform the work. Authentic systems and tools were needed to better describe the work and to evaluate it in a timely, cost-effective way.

BYAEP wrestled with the above concerns for over three years. We feel that we have succeeded in creating a framework and piloting tools that authentically represent the youth arts development field. We worked to gain a greater understanding of short-term, intermediate, and long-term outcomes while creating a language and culture that integrated the aesthetic (I Create), the personal (I Am), and the community (We Connect).

Challenges that we encountered included the time-intensity of evaluation data collection, analysis, and reporting, insufficient resources to compensate BYAEP collaborators' generous contribution of time, and difficulties in designing an optimal database--one that effectively integrates evaluation data with other organizational systems, while being affordable and user-friendly. We have much more work ahead, but this Handbook presents the opportunity for a richer dialogue, offering our best attempts at honoring the courage of youth who give us feedback and adding our voice to the important work of our field.

*“I have learned more about myself than I thought I could know. I now have a voice in what I want and what I am going to do.”*  
– Shawn, age 16

## Acknowledgements

In developing the BYAEP Framework and tools, we benefitted from the work of many experts past and present. Theorists that we have found inspiring include Erikson, Maslow, Gilligan, Miller, and Csikszentmihalyi. Our work was also informed by Learner and the 5 C's, the Forum for Youth Investment, Search Asset Model, 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills, The Community Action Framework for Youth Development, and Eliot Eisner (see Resources). We also incorporated the suggestions and opinions of Boston youth arts nonprofits and consultants throughout the nation to help focus the framework for BYAEP. We were able to begin this project with the guidance of Bill Bulick of the Portland, Oregon-based firm Creative Planning, who was pivotal in providing supervision, leadership, and expertise in the formation of our project and in co-presenting at Forum 1. We partnered with a broad array of leaders across the United States to gain feedback on the drafts of the BYAEP Framework. Valuable conversations included: Elizabeth Whitford of Arts Corps in Seattle about the Seattle Arts

Education Consortium; Michael Sikes, Senior Associate in research and policy at the Arts Education Partnership; Steve Seidel, Director of Project Zero at Harvard University; and Nick Rabkin and the Teaching Artist's Project. Dennie Palmer Wolf, Suzanne Bouffard, and Julia Gittleman were instrumental in advising us about the design and nuances of the evaluations. Special thanks to Lingjun Chen for help with the analysis of three years of Drawing Evaluations. The guidance of Tanushree Seth (from the Analysis Group of Boston) was crucial in building Microsoft Excel templates that we used to manage our data with formulas that were compatible with Survey Monkey. We are very grateful to the hard work of BYAEP interns Joanna Richardson (2009) and Maura Tighe Gattuso (2010) of the Harvard Graduate School of Education and Laura Hill (2011) of Lesley University. This BYAEP Handbook would not be possible without the editing and support of Marcia Felth, with the able assistance of Ian Duncan-Brown.

Collaborators from ZUMIX, Hyde Square Task Force, Medicine Wheel Productions, The Theater Offensive, and RAW formally met over twenty times. H. Mark Smith from the Massachusetts Cultural Council generously contributed to these meetings as our advisor. Leadership support by the Massachusetts Cultural Council of our YouthReach programs has been instrumental in the development of our work and in the success of BYAEP.

We are grateful for Suzanne Callahan's inspirational book *Singing Our Praises: Case Studies in the Art of Evaluation*, which planted the seed for BYAEP:

*"The challenge for the arts field is that we may not have caused the evaluation and accountability problem, but we can and must find our own solution... what is missing from the growing body of research, however, is a commitment on the part of the arts field to gathering information on an individual basis and sharing it with others."* (2004, pp. 15-16)

We are **most thankful** for Klare Shaw and the Barr Foundation's belief in our work and its generous funding that brought this project to fruition.

## Brief Descriptions of the BYAEP Collaborators

### **Medicine Wheel Productions**

The mission of Medicine Wheel is to enable people to gain awareness of themselves in their communities by participating in the creation of enduring, site specific public art projects in which they explore and share issues unique to their individual and collective experiences, thereby accessing the hidden world through art. The purpose of the Youth in Transitions Program is to use art to reengage youth with themselves, with community, and with the larger world, a process through which they will become positively reengaged with their lives and their futures. Youth will create individual art projects, collaborative art pieces, and public art projects that engage thousands across the city and state.

### **The Theater Offensive**

The mission of The Theater Offensive is to form and present the diverse realities of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) lives in art so bold it breaks through personal isolation and political orthodoxy to help build an honest, progressive community. True Colors: Out Youth Theater, a community program of The Theater Offensive, was created for LGBT youth and their straight allies, ages 14-22. Each season, a diverse group of participants creates an original play based on their lives and the lives of their peers. Troupe members tour this show to schools, events, and community groups throughout New England.

### **ZUMIX**

Empowered youth who use music to make strong, positive change in their lives, their communities, and the world—this is the mission of ZUMIX. Founded in 1991 as a direct response to an epidemic of youth violence, ZUMIX has provided safe space after school and during the summer months for young people to participate in music and arts programs so they may explore who they are and who they'd like to be. Core programs focus in one of four areas: instrumental instruction, creative technology, radio, and songwriting & performance. ZUMIX also gives youth the opportunity to bring their music and technology skills into action through live concerts, festivals, recording projects, and radio broadcasts.

### **Hyde Square Task Force**

The mission of Hyde Square Task Force is to develop the skills of youth and their families so that they are empowered to enhance their own lives and build a strong and vibrant urban community. Ritmo en Acción dancers learn Afro-Latin and contemporary dance styles, and as they gain confidence and mastery, learn to share their skills with others and to make positive changes in their community. Dance is used to build the self-esteem and harness the creative energies of youth, who then, through dance programs, become performers and instructors to over 300 local teens and children per year. They also become cultural stewards to hundreds more through performances across the city—helping to forge a stronger, safer, and more vibrant urban community.

### **Raw Art Works**

The mission of RAW is to ignite the desire to create and the confidence to succeed in underserved youth. RAW currently serves over 1,000 youth each year in forty groups and outreach programs. RAW offers a continuum of free programs in the arts, including an award-winning film school, single-gender groups, mentoring and leadership development programs, and summer programs. Youth strengthen their identities as artists and build the confidence and connections they need to succeed in life.

## BYAEP Collaborators, Participating Youth, and Description of Programs

Name of Organization and Programs involved in BYAEP	Approximate # of youth involved each year with BYAEP evaluations	Description of Programs	Contact Hours	Focus
<b>Medicine Wheel Productions</b> Public Art Internship Summer Public Art Full-Time Youth in Transitions	55 BYAEP participants	High-risk youth work with arts mentors to create individual, collaborative, and public art. Medicine Wheel internships invite youth to discover themselves and their gifts through art. Youth give in service to communities through large-scale public art projects.	Approximately 8-30 hours per week for 36-48 weeks	Public art Internships
<b>The Theater Offensive</b> True Colors	35 BYAEP participants	True Colors creates a safe haven where lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) youth are supported and challenged to engage fully in their own personal, social, and artistic development through the power of theater.	Approximately 8 hours per week for 36 weeks	Theater
<b>ZUMIX</b> Instrumental Music Songwriting & Performance Creative Technology Radio	135 BYAEP participants	Programs are designed to involve young people over multiple years, in sequentially challenging in-depth arts experiences. Through writing & performing songs, developing musicianship, gaining skills in audio engineering, and creating radio broadcasts, youth are given the opportunity to cultivate and share their talents through projects and performances.	1-10 hours per week in both private lessons and group programs year round. Average time spent at ZUMIX is 3 hours per week	Music
<b>Hyde Square Task Force</b> Ritmo en Acción	16 BYAEP participants	Ritmo en Acción dancers learn Afro-Latin and contemporary dance styles. As they gain confidence and mastery, they learn to share their skills with others—such as with the Community Dancers where they teach free Afro-Latin and Contemporary dance classes for youth ages 6-18.	10 hours per week for 40 weeks	Dance
<b>Raw Art Works</b> Men 2 Be (M2B) Women 2 Be (W2B) Real 2 Reel (R2R) Film school Adventures in Fine Arts (AFA) and CORE Good 2 Go (G2G) RAW Chiefs	100 BYAEP participants	M2B is a long-term, mentor-based arts group for young men. W2B is a long-term, mentor-based arts group for young women. R2R is a film school where teens learn every aspect of professional filmmaking. AFA and CORE are groups for teens committed to building their art skills for portfolios and submission to art schools. G2G is for young men who are specially selected for paid positions to create murals and other large-scale art works for community organizations in and around Lynn. RAW Chiefs receive ongoing training and support to be great mentors and are paid to co-lead groups for younger children and their own peers, representing RAW in the community.	Approximately 3-5 hours per week for 36 weeks	Visual Arts, Film

# Collective Impact and How Each Collaborator Benefitted from BYAEP

*“Our research shows that successful collective impact initiatives typically have five conditions that together produce true alignment and lead to powerful results: a common agenda, shared measurement systems, mutually reinforcing activities, continuous communication, and backbone support organizations.” – John Kania & Mark Kramer (2011, p. 39), *Collective Impact**

## **Medicine Wheel Productions**

I think the most lasting benefit that the BYAEP grant from the Barr Foundation had on our organization and the people we serve is how the grant honored and supported best practices and recognized those practices in the grantee organizations. BYAEP allowed Medicine Wheel to quantify and demonstrate objectively what we knew about our participants anecdotally. Having hard data about the impact we are having on the youth we serve makes a much more powerful statement to the community, the Board, and funders (both present and future). The BYAEP Framework really helped us create stronger programs and focused our energy on what we do well, on areas that we need to improve on, and in areas that we need to pull back from. It was a deeply satisfying journey for Medicine Wheel to be on our common path of moving beyond diversity to inclusion, building community from the inside out, using art as a threshold. – Michael Dowling, Artistic Director

## **The Theater Offensive**

We hadn't anticipated the extent to which the BYAEP process would benefit our strategic planning process and our program development in general. Sure, all of our programs had always had evaluation plans, and we had learned a great deal from assessments. But our association with BYAEP has changed our organizational culture, increasing the energy we devote to understanding the depth and complexity of our program goals. This clarity is tremendously useful in the midst of the constricting financial environment we face. We are better able to make the tough choices about priorities than we would otherwise be. – Abe Rybeck, Executive Artistic Director

## **ZUMIX**

Implementing the BYAEP evaluations has been both rewarding and challenging for ZUMIX. We have particularly found the Program Evaluations to be helpful in allowing us to assess our programs and enhance our work based on direct feedback from our students. Because ZUMIX offers twenty-three different group programs over the course of three semesters (winter/spring, summer & fall), our biggest challenge has been an issue of capacity—truly planning, implementing, inputting, and analyzing these evaluations and the data they provide to their greatest potential. This has given us the insight that the BYAEP materials and their implementation guidelines are not a one-size-fits-all model. We have carefully considered how to make these materials work for us both in our current year of programming and in the future. – Kim Dawson, Program Director

## **Hyde Square Task Force**

BYAEP gave us an opportunity to capture how our youth connect with the community and develop leadership skills through the arts. Leadership and community are two things that our organization puts a lot of emphasis on. The tools were able to give us valuable positive results that support our strong organizational focus in these two areas. – Barbara Civill, Manager of School-Based and Cultural Programs

## Raw Art Works

What BYAEP has done for us, first and foremost, has been to elevate the quality of our work with youth, due to the focus that it has brought to the areas where our practice can increase in efficacy. Secondly, as an organization now in our 25<sup>th</sup> year, this has allowed us to use our own field knowledge and wisdom to work together with peer agencies to collectively achieve an impact greater than the sum of our own diligent individual selves. We have been looking for ways that we can leverage greater collaboration and deeper learning about what we do as youth arts programs, and BYAEP has provided that opportunity. – Kit Jenkins, Executive Director



*“Through our art, we are able to send out a message from our hearts or minds that we sometimes cannot do by words. I feel that my first year here, I was very introverted and not sure of who I wanted to be. Each year I felt old layers peeling and new layers building about who I am as a person and an artist. Here, the staff believe in the youth’s unknown potential. It helps us to heal, grow, and change.” – Dari, age 17*

# BYAEP's Brief History of Adolescence and Youth Development

S T O R Y P E O P L E ®

Brian Andreas, Storypeople, July 10, 2010



**This is a machine that guarantees it can keep teenagers interested in the world around them & while a lot of people are showing up to check it out, you'll notice not a lot of them are teenagers.**



All of the collaborators of the Boston Youth Arts Evaluation Project have been serving youth since the 1990's. Meeting together over the past three years, we have engaged in many illuminating discussions about what works effectively with teens and young adults, and what does not. Our programs have thrived because more than *talking* we *listen* to the experts themselves—the youth. Finding out what *they* want, how they think programs should be designed, and what we can improve upon has been our ongoing focus. As we embarked upon this project, however, we knew that we needed to consult other experts in the field to substantiate and enhance what we knew from our experience. We reviewed developmental theories, sought to gain a better understanding of the brain, and explored the ways in which supporting youth in the arts could aid in their growth process. All of this was directed toward the goals of 1) developing a framework that could best explain the work we do, and 2) creating tools that could assess the indicators and the outcomes in the framework.

The depth of our research rooted us in the collective knowledge necessary to develop the BYAEP Framework. The following section provides a brief review of adolescence as a stage of life and some of the latest findings about the brains of adolescents. Both topics help to elucidate the necessity of addressing the specific needs of youth in our work and the ways in which youth arts development programs are ideally suited to address these needs.

More on this subject can be found in the excellent publication (to which BYAEP contributed) by the National Guild for Community Arts Education entitled “Engaging Adolescents” which can be downloaded as a PDF:

<http://nationalguildstage.eccentricarts.com/Programs/Information-Resources---Publications/Publications/Engaging-Adolescents-Initiative.aspx>

## Early Studies of Adolescence

Although the first use of the word “adolescence” appeared in the 15<sup>th</sup> century and came from the Latin word “adolescere,” which meant “to grow up or to grow into maturity” (Lerner & Steinberg, 2009, p.1), it wasn't until 1904 that the first president of the American Psychological Association, G. Stanley Hall, was credited with discovering adolescence (Henig, 2010, p. 4). In his study entitled “*Adolescence*,” he described this new developmental phase that came about due to social changes at the turn of the 20th century. Because of the influence of Child Labor Laws and universal education, youth had newfound time in their teenage years when the responsibilities of adulthood were not forced upon them as quickly as in the past. Hall did not have a very positive view of this phase, and he believed that society needed to “burn out the vestiges of evil in their nature” (G. Stanley Hall, 2010). Therefore, adolescence was a time of overcoming one's beast-like impulses as one was engulfed in a period of “storm and stress” (Lerner & Israeloff, 2005, p. 4). He identified three key aspects of this phase: mood disruptions, conflict with parents, and risky behavior.

Other work appearing in the late 1950s through the 1970s in Europe and America helped adolescence emerge as a field of study (important earlier work by Freud, Piaget, Maslow, and Kohlberg also addressed stages of development). In BYAEP, we were interested in how the work of Erik Erikson related to our work and how it articulated what we knew. Erikson (1959, pp. 251-263) described the impact of social experience across the whole lifespan. Erikson looked at life in eight stages. We felt that our age group of 13-23 year-olds actually struggled with the following three stages:

Psychosocial Stage 4 - Industry vs. Inferiority, age 5-11. Main Question: Am I successful or not? Through social interactions,

children begin to develop a sense of pride in their accomplishments and abilities. **BYAEP focus: Competence.**

Psychosocial Stage 5 - Identity vs. Confusion, age 12-19. Main Question: Who am I and where am I going? During adolescence, children are exploring their independence and developing a sense of self. Identity formation can take a long time and can lead to an “Identity Crisis.” **BYAEP focus: Identity.**

Psychosocial Stage 6 - Intimacy vs. Isolation, age 20-35. Main Questions: Am I loved and wanted? Should I share my life with someone or live alone? This stage covers the period of early adulthood when people are exploring personal relationships. **BYAEP focus: Connections.**

In the chapter “Developing the BYAEP Framework” you will see how these areas of focus contribute directly to building our framework.

In 1962, Peter Blos published a book titled *On Adolescence*. Blos, a German-born American child psychoanalyst, was known as Mr. Adolescence as a result of his research into the problems of teens. His theories described the conflicts teens have between wanting to break free of their parents and desiring to remain dependent. He popularized the notion that there were two individuation stages in human development. The first occurs when one is a toddler, and the second takes place when one is an adolescent and is finally able to shed family dependencies. Since maturity depends on achieving a degree of independence, it is during adolescence that the “self” develops. The goal is to be independent and to discover and celebrate one’s unique attributes as one develops one’s distinct potential.

## Cultural and Gender Studies Expanding the Western View of Adolescence

It is important to note that in many other societies adolescence is not recognized as a phase of life. Instead, there is a distinction between childhood and adulthood, with significant rituals around this transformation. The duration of these rituals may be only a few days, whereas in the United States the period of adolescence often lasts over a decade. Although we have bat mitzvahs, confirmations, and celebrations around getting a driver’s license or graduating from high school, teens in this country often lack formal road-marks on their way to adulthood. Youth are frequently left to design their own rites-of-passage, gang violence, pregnancy, and graffiti may serve as such passages. Seeing these risk factors among many others fueled the common belief of Western society through the 1970s that teens were “broken” with major deficits and needed to be “fixed” in order to become self-sufficient and independent.

The 1970s also ushered in a greater focus on and understanding of cultural context and gender differences. New approaches shaped broader definitions of what it meant to develop an identity and sense of self in adolescence. *Webster’s* (1984, p. 627) defines self as “the essential being of one person as distinct from any other.” This definition is in strong contrast to the “self” seen in other countries. In most Asian, African, Latin-American, and southern European countries, the “self” is experienced with a more interdependent rather than independent view. For instance, in Japan the word for “self” is *Jibun*, which means “one’s share of the shared life space” (Kitayama & Markus, 1991, p. 228). This is quite a different “self” and one that honors interdependence.

The Western world began to look more closely at ways to define “self” in the 1970s. With its roots in psychology’s multicultural and

feminist movements, the field of relational-cultural therapy (RCT) was born. In 1976, Jean Baker Miller published *Towards a New Psychology of Women*, a groundbreaking work in the understanding of human relationships. The relational model she described, in which growth-fostering relationships are seen as central to well-being and disconnections are often seen as the source of psychological problems, offered a paradigm shift in our understanding of human development. This view dramatically helped to open the doors for a reappraisal of the importance of family relationships during adolescence. Emphasis that had been placed on disengagement, where “storm and stress” were seen as normal and inevitable, was re-examined as culturally constructed. What had been seen as a “female trait,” caring about relationships, was newly perceived as a human characteristic critically needed in human development and our society.

Theorists also began to delve further into gender and culture. Stemming from important theoretical works like Carol Gilligan’s (1982) *In a Different Voice*, popular books like *Reviving Ophelia: Saving Selves of Adolescent Girls* by Mary Pipher (1994) came out in the 1990s. Pipher’s book looked at how escalating levels of sexism and violence in our culture cause girls to stifle their creative spirits and natural impulses, which ultimately destroys their self-esteem. An important book about boys followed. *Raising Cain: Protecting the Emotional Life of Boys* by child psychologists Daniel J. Kindlon and Michael Thompson (1999) explored the frequently hidden and often painful lives of male teens who are sad, hurting, scared, silent and at a high risk for suicide, alcohol and drug abuse, loneliness and violence. Whereas girls may shut down in adolescence because of a culture of objectification, boys are steered away from their emotional lives (“big boys don’t cry”) by adults and their peers, and they often experience a culture of cruelty. In this culture, boys seldom receive encouragement to develop qualities such as compassion, sensitivity, warmth, and empathy.

The Youth Development movement built upon and tied together many of the newly embraced concepts described above, with the fields of positive youth development and community youth development emerging in the 1980s and 1990s. “Youth development” is the process through which young people acquire the social, cognitive, and emotional skills and abilities required to navigate life (University of Minnesota Cooperative Extension, 2005). This movement looks at how youth need peers, adults, schools and a community to build their skills and interests into adulthood. Youth development principles focus on the assets of every child and stress how early intervention can lead to success. Richard Lerner and his colleagues (2009, p. 17) wrote, “It is the goal of the positive youth development perspective to promote positive outcomes. This idea is in stark contrast to a perspective that focuses on punishment and the idea that adolescents are broken.” The positive youth development movement places the emphasis on helping youth achieve their potential rather than focusing on the risks of their development. It also encourages all youth to contribute to the well-being of the greater community by developing emotional literacy, emotional expression, and acceptance—skills needed greatly by both sexes and a society at large.

## What is Going on in the Brains of Youth and Why the Arts Can Help

It was once widely believed that the brain stops growing shortly after puberty, but we now know that it keeps maturing well into the twenties, as the limbic system (where emotions originate) and the cortex (what manages those emotions) are both still forming. Teens, thus, have a limbic system that is highly active during puberty, with a prefrontal cortex that keeps maturing for another ten years! It is easy to see how emotions might outweigh rationality and teens’ overall ability to manage them.

Dr. Linda Mayes at the Yale University School of Medicine looks at brain development, stress, adolescence, and addiction. Mayes (2008) has found that adolescence is a prime time to experiment with risky behavior. The prefrontal cortex—the front of the brain which contains the executive control function—is the command center where we ask, “Is this right or wrong?” and make decisions by weighing rewards and consequences. Because this part of the brain grows and develops well into adulthood, teens experience a dual challenge because the sub-cortical parts of their brain (the “pleasure zone”) develop very quickly and are hypersensitive to reward. This region of the teen brain becomes highly activated and releases feelings of great pleasure when taking chances, driving fast, taking drugs, etc. The promise of potential reward often overrides the concern about perceived risks involved. Dobbs (2011) explains, “We all like new and exciting things, but we never value them more highly than we do during adolescence. Here we hit a high in what behavioral scientists call sensation seeking: the hunt for the neural buzz, the jolt of the unusual or unexpected. And although sensation seeking can lead to dangerous behaviors, it can also generate positive ones” (p. 3).

Researchers have also found that the normal teen brain that is already developmentally “imbalanced” is further challenged during stress. Many of the youth we serve live in poverty, with challenging family circumstances and sometimes violence. They come of age experiencing adult demands very early in their lives. In our five programs, when we asked youth if they felt their chance of living to age 35 was 50/50 or less, over 30% said, “Yes.” In one program this number was as high as 50%, over three times the national average (Borowsky, Ireland, & Resnick, 2009, p. 81). Part of this may be due to the fact that, in several of our programs in BYAEP, greater than 60% of youth surveyed had experienced one or more friends or family members die due to violence, drug overdose or other unnatural causes.

In moments of stress, the not-yet-fully-developed prefrontal cortex’s function is diminished, survival and pain relief instincts kick in, and youth steer toward towards risk-taking and pleasure-seeking activities. Adolescence offers teens a brain that is wide open to trying new things, but it also poses a huge risk when youth are stressed, as the call of addiction to drugs, tobacco, alcohol, and fattening foods can be loud—offering promise of relief from the negative emotional state.

*“Before coming here I was falling. After being involved here I feel like you caught me.” – Andrew, age16*

Mayes did a sixteen-year longitudinal study of prenatal cocaine exposure which looked at stress in toddlers and at possible intervention strategies for mitigating the effects of drugs and poverty. Researchers were trying to answer the question, “If you are an impulsive highly stressed toddler, are you automatically going to be a drug using adolescent? If not, what prevents it?” (Mayes, 2008)

Mayes has been testing how the intervention of one person, a strong positive caring figure in a child’s life, can mitigate the negative influences that he or she was born with. This is the person Mayes describes as one “who has you in mind when you come home from school” (2008). Rather than the earlier-held goal of disconnection from family to achieve independence, this view posits that adolescents need parents, other adults, and programs such as the five involved in BYAEP to “hold them in mind” in order to mitigate the compelling draw to drugs, depression, eating disorders, etc.

In 1999, the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities sponsored “Champions of Change: The Impact of the Arts on Learning,” which introduced seven pieces of research documenting the impact of arts learning on young people and the nature of that experience. This collection includes the results of decade-long research conducted by Stanford University professor Shirley Brice

Heath, and identifies qualities in the creative experience—exploration of individual identity, risk-taking, and responsibility for consequences—that account for its impact on young people. In the arts, youth have a greater range, degree and frequency of risk-taking than in community service or athletic programs. Teens experiment with new materials and try new methods and forms of interaction and presentation safely and with the support of others. This experience of exploring, discovering, and presenting with others in the arts helps youth to build a richer identity with increased skills of commitment and responsibility and connections with both peers and adults. Adolescence is a time when youth are most open to new possibilities and new chances for change, an optimal time for the arts to intervene because positive risk-taking can be at an all-time high. Participation in the arts offers teenagers excitement, risk, and a multitude of ways to safely leave their comfort zone and feed possibilities for their future.

In summary, adolescence is a time of both significant risk and great opportunity. Psychologist Dr. Reed Larson addressed the topic well in his 2010 talk, “Positive Development in a Disorderly World,” when he asserted that the “developmental challenges of adolescence—of coming of age in a disorderly world—are enormous. These challenges need more recognition and research. Despite the limitations of the human mind, adolescents have enormous strength and potential for learning and development. We as a field have an important role in better understanding these potentials, how they develop, and how to support their development” (Larson, p. 23). Larson and others have begun to discover the highly beneficial role of youth programs in adolescent development. Quality youth arts programs are able to attend to the deep complexity of teens’ lives while offering them the ability to work with peers and adults to navigate challenges, use strategic thinking, show leadership, develop resiliency, and learn to better understand and self-regulate their emotional selves.

*“Before coming here, I would waste my time doing things that weren't important or productive and would always be the person watching others doing what I wished I was capable of doing. After being here, I know I am capable of doing anything I put my mind to. I've become a leader and am no longer the one looking at people doing something. I am the one making a difference and being involved. I am a better, stronger, and a more determined individual.” – Danielle, age 17*

## Developing the BYAEP Framework

*“Not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted.” – Albert Einstein*

For many of us in the youth arts field, evaluation strategies have felt particularly foreign. As artists, we have struggled with how to prove “success” that connects with the integrity, depth, and breadth of the work we do. Evaluation methods that “divide” and “attack” seem to do little and can even hinder us in understanding the relationships and wholeness we are often trying to create. Compare here the quote of the “evaluator” with the quote of the “artist,” Hans Hofmann:

*“Evaluation theories are like military strategies and tactics; methods are like military weapons and logistics... The good commander needs to know strategy and tactics to deploy weapons properly or to organize logistics in different situations. The good evaluator needs theories for the same reasons in choosing and employing methods.”* (Mark, 2005, p. 2)

*“We speak of the mood we experience when looking at a landscape. This mood results from the relation of certain things rather than from their separate actualities. This is because objects do not in themselves possess the total effect they give when interrelated.”* (Hofmann, 1967, p. 68)

As artists, we clearly see that most often, there are no truly separate parts in a whole. Things exist in relation to others around them and to try to separate, quantify, and analyze them often feels forced and untrue. There are often competing desires, philosophies, and strategies when one is asked to evaluate the arts and arts programs; finding a middle ground that can give justice to the complex relational work that we do has been quite difficult.

## The Sacred Bundle and The Logic Model

*“The goal of evaluating is getting the answers to the right questions.”* – H. Mark Smith, Massachusetts Cultural Council

Our first step in designing evaluation tools was to begin to discuss the questions themselves. In the Summer 2005 issue of the *Evaluation Exchange*, John Bare of the Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation wrote an article entitled “Evaluation and the Sacred Bundle.” This article invited nonprofits to simply,

*“Measure what you value and others will value what you measure.”* (p. 6)

We found that the first step in exploring evaluation and developing the BYAEP Framework was figuring out our own “sacred bundle.” Bare describes the custom of North American indigenous tribes preserving their culture through items wrapped up in a pouch, or “sacred bundle.” When the bundle was unwrapped, stories were told that strengthened their identity, history, and core values. A sacred bundle can be thought of as the things that an organization values so dearly that it is willing to take the time to track, assess, and refine what is needed to understand them more deeply. If we were to invest three years in an evaluation project, we wanted to be sure that it would convey our values, help us to better understand our programs, and enable us to plan for our future by making better-informed decisions.

In order to transform evaluations from a measuring stick of accountability to a tool for learning and analysis, we started by asking the following questions:

1. What do we really value and how does this help us tell our story?
2. What information do we need to show we value this?
3. How can we assess how well we value it? How we can improve?
4. How do we show that our part of the world is a little better off because of our efforts?
5. How can we track this information in short-term, intermediate, and long-term outcomes?
6. Who is going to use this information and how?

To begin to answer these questions, we went to our logic models. Using the logic model is an efficient approach to understanding your program, planning your activities, assessing the indicators for your outcomes and seeing how you might evaluate them. For those unfamiliar with this tool, a logic model is a snapshot of how your program works. You create this picture by looking at the needs and goals of your constituents and at how your program produces the outcomes you want to achieve. It is important to note that many urban youth have particularly complex and challenging home and school lives. We recognize that in evaluating a program's impact, the logic model is a powerful tool; however, it is not meant to oversimplify cause and effect or to devalue other influences in a young person's life.

One of the requirements of becoming a BYAEP collaborator was that an organization have a history (at least eight years) of assessing its programs and that it employs a logic model as the basis of its evaluation plan. To help us discover our commonalities and some of our differences, we revised and compared logic models, finding remarkable similarities. It became clear that all collaborating organizations helped youth build success in three main outcome areas: their skills of expression and art (I Create), their ability to look at themselves (I Am), and their ability to form connections with the wider world (We Connect). The following page contains a template you can use to create a logic model. If this is new to you or you want further information, please see the list of resources at the end of this Handbook for great on-line planning tools that include logic models.



# LOGIC MODEL

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This is a template that can be used for your organization's logic model. It asks the questions: Why are you doing what you are doing, how are you doing it, and what do you want to have changed as a result of doing it? What will be changed because of your programs?

<b>Organization and Mission:</b>				
<b>Conditions</b> (The way it is now)	<b>Inputs</b> (What you invest in)	<b>Activities</b> (Your programs and services)	<b>Outputs</b> (Things that can be counted)	<b>Outcomes</b> (The way you want it to be)
Current conditions, challenges, and needs	Resources Constraints	Programs and services	Measurable products like... # of sessions held # of participants # of hours	Results showing increased skills, positive behaviors, knowledge, beliefs, improved condition and status <b>Short term:</b> What you expect to see during your program <b>Intermediate:</b> What you want to see <b>Long-term:</b> What you hope to eventually see
Theory of Change: <b>If</b> we do this... <b>then</b> we are looking for this change to happen...				

## The Need for a Youth Arts Development Framework

“...we are calling for the field to move beyond the current state of ‘dueling frameworks.’ We think we need an overarching structure within which all of us can find our place—within which we can each articulate what we can contribute to making meaningful change and learning from it, on the ground, in diverse communities.” (Corporation for Public/Private Ventures, 2000, p. 299)

During the first year of our project we researched many frameworks from the fields of out-of-school time, youth development, and social science, hoping that we could find a framework that fit our needs and values. After several months of research, we could not find a framework to adequately describe arts-based youth development programs. We decided that we needed to borrow from the fields of youth development, arts education, and out-of-school time, while drawing upon our own wealth of experience to give a voice to the youth arts development field.

We needed a framework that encompassed our whole identity. We required:

- o Easy access for directors of youth arts development programs
- o Availability on the web with links, tools, research etc., giving the potential and encouragement to build the field through contribution
- o A common language
- o Usable evaluation tools for assessing:
  - Youth’s perceptions of themselves
  - Program quality and youth satisfaction with the programs
  - Longer-term outcomes through alumni evaluations
  - Creative evaluation tools for youth self-expression and demonstration of our program’s results

We spent the first year formulating our short-term, intermediate, and long-term outcomes based on our collective experience working with youth. We also created side-by-side comparisons with other models. We were able to find ten strong youth development frameworks and we were particularly inspired by *Community Programs to Promote Youth Development* by the National Academies of Sciences (2002) and the comprehensive longitudinal study entitled *Finding Out What Matters for Youth: Testing Key Links in a Community Action Framework for Youth Development* (Gambone, Klem, & Connell, 2002). Additionally, The Protective Risk Factors, the 5C’s Youth Development Framework, the Forum for Youth Investment, and the Search Institute’s Internal Assets all played a role in inspiring the development of the BYAEP Framework. The following chart gives one example of these comparisons.

## How the BYAEP Model Compares to Four Other Models

BYAEP FRAMEWORK: Short-Term Outcomes	The Protective Risk Factors	The 5 C's Youth Development Framework	The Forum for Youth Investment Ready by 21 - Outcome Areas	Search Institute's Internal Assets
I CREATE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Value on achievement</li> <li>•Liking and perceived competence in activity</li> </ul>	<p><b>Competence</b> Positive view of one's actions in specific areas including social, academic, cognitive, and vocational</p>	<p>Ready for College: Learning</p> <p>Ready for Work: Working</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Achievement motivation</li> <li>•School engagement</li> <li>•Planning and decision making</li> </ul>
I AM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Positive attitude toward the future/future expectations</li> <li>•Models for conventional behavior</li> <li>•Controls against deviant behavior</li> </ul>	<p><b>Confidence</b> The internal sense of overall positive self-worth and self-efficacy, identity, and belief in the future</p> <p><b>Character</b> Respect for societal and cultural rules...a sense of right and wrong</p>	Ready for Life: Thriving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Integrity</li> <li>•Honesty</li> <li>•Responsibility</li> <li>•Restraint</li> <li>•Personal power</li> <li>•Sense of purpose</li> <li>•Self-esteem</li> <li>•Positive view of personal future</li> </ul>
WE CONNECT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Sense of acceptance and belonging</li> <li>•Neighborhood resources</li> <li>•Interested and caring adults</li> <li>•Ability to work with others</li> <li>•Ability to work out conflicts</li> </ul>	<p><b>Connection</b> Positive bonds with people and institutions</p> <p><b>Caring</b> A sense of sympathy and empathy for others.</p> <p><b>Contribution:</b> <i>This 6th C is present when the above 5 are present</i></p>	<p>Ready for Life: Connecting</p> <p>Ready for Life: Leading and Contributing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Caring</li> <li>•Equality and social justice</li> <li>•Interpersonal competence</li> <li>•Cultural competence</li> <li>•Peaceful conflict resolution</li> </ul>

The BYAEP Framework shares similarities with youth development frameworks that assess programs that aim to provide a safe, supportive environment to highly-engaged youth, helping them to build strong relationships with adults, peers, and their community. However, these frameworks do not consider how the arts particularly engage youth or the wealth of skills teens can develop through the arts. Additionally, there has been little development of evaluation tools that enable the creative voices and visions of youth to be expressed. Finally, few frameworks have adequately spelled out what the short-term, intermediate, and long-term outcomes look like, and very few are able to provide the tools by which to measure the intermediate and long-term outcomes.

All of the collaborating organizations honor the process of creating as well the artistic product of creation, wanting each to be of high quality. We were informed and inspired by the findings of the report *Qualities of Quality: Understanding Excellence in Arts Education* (Seidel, Tishman, Winner, Hetland, & Palmer, 2008) that embraced the concept that quality is “personal, passionate, and persistent.” The search for quality in the journey from process to product resonated with us, and we began to assess quality through their following four lenses:

- Students are engaged, real, open to taking risks, and are able to take pride in their creations.
- Teachers model artistry, inquiry, and work to make sessions relevant and intentional, as well as flexible.
- The culture (community dynamics) is one of respect, challenge, openness and willingness to collaborate.
- The environment (space, materials, time) is aesthetic, with high-quality materials in a functional space where youth have enough time to deeply engage in the work.

While understanding that a quality program is multidimensional, subjective, and tied to one’s values, we feel that all of our programs share the capacity to provide the following three required inputs of the BYAEP Framework:

1. **OPPORTUNITIES:** Challenges and experiences that increase innovation, expressive skills, self-efficacy, and fun in the lives of youth.
2. **POSITIVE CLIMATE:** Meaningful structure that is youth-centered, safe, inclusive, engaging, and challenges youth to see, reveal, and strengthen who they are.
3. **CONNECTIONS:** Opportunities to belong, contribute, and build supportive relationships with peers, adults, and community.

Youth participating in programs where these inputs are reflected in the core mission are much more likely to strengthen their ability to artistically express themselves (I Create), strengthen their identity (I Am), and build their connectedness (We Connect).

## The BYAEP Framework

The BYAEP Framework found on the following two pages is the product of the three-year collaboration among Boston-area youth arts organizations Raw Art Works, The Theater Offensive, Hyde Square Task Force, Medicine Wheel Productions and ZUMIX. The framework we collaboratively developed reflects the extensive research, development, and piloting we conducted over three years and provides the basis for the evaluation tools used in our organizations.

Our theory of change is represented in both diagrams. In the first diagram three intersecting circles, I Create, I Am, and We Connect, illustrate BYAEP's outcome areas: Short-term— Builds Artistic, Problem-Solving and Expressive Skills, Strengthens Identity, and Develops Community; Intermediate—Able to Navigate, Able to Engage and Be Productive, and Able to Make Connections; and Long-term—Resiliency, Self-Efficacy and Personal Fulfillment, and Community Engagement.

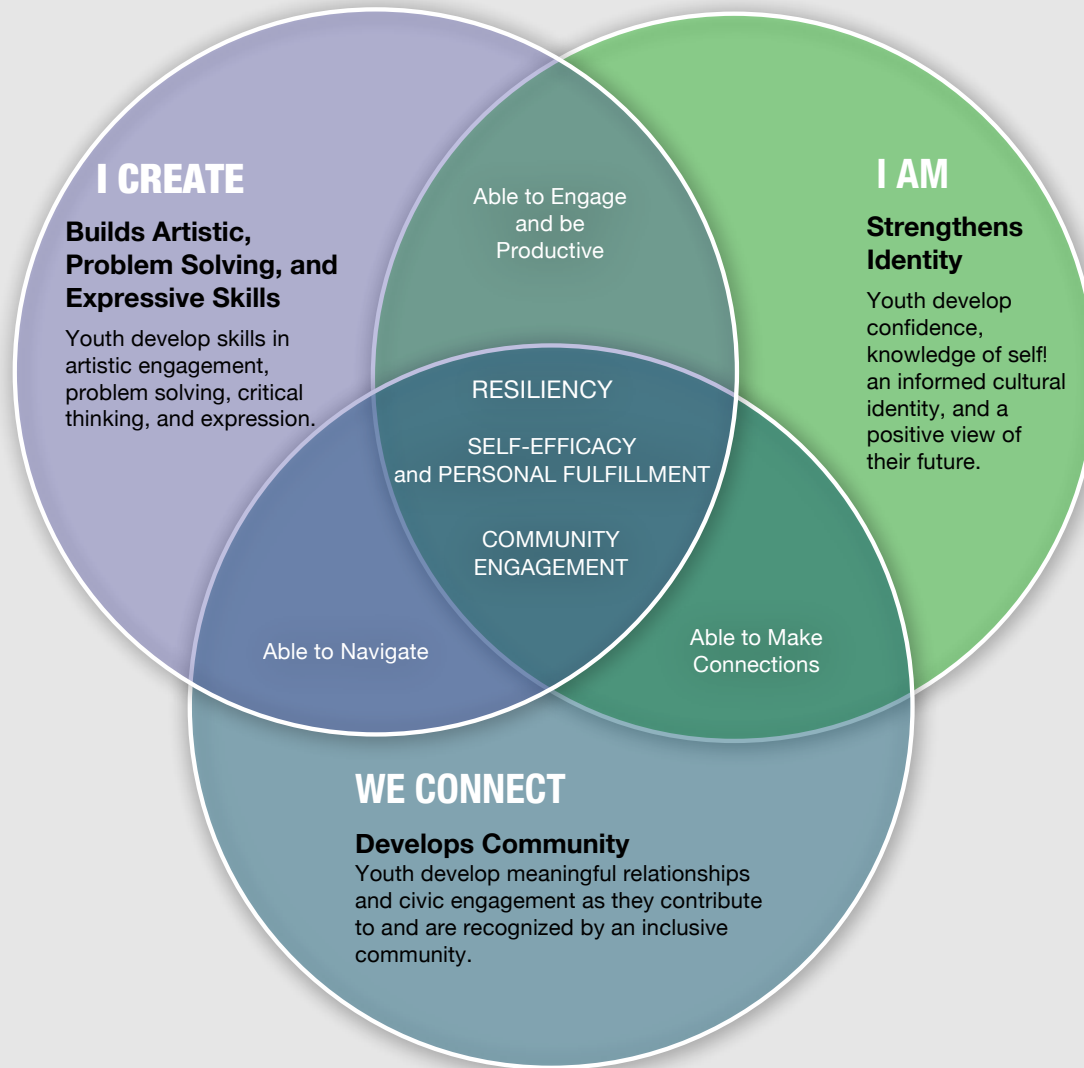
The second diagram is our BYAEP Logic Model that describes in detail the inputs and the indicators of our outcomes.

# BYAEP's Framework for Outcomes in Youth Arts Programs

Quality Youth Arts Programs provide Opportunities, a Positive Climate, and Connections\* to create change in the lives of youth.

## THEORY OF CHANGE

If youth participate in high-quality arts programs, then they will develop specific skills and competencies (I Create, I Am, We Connect), which lead to a set of intermediate outcomes\*\* (able to engage and be productive, to navigate, and to make connections with others), which in turn lead to a set of long-term outcomes (resiliency, self-efficacy and personal fulfillment, and community engagement) that together constitute life success.



Boston Youth Arts Evaluation Project (BYAEP) Collaborators:

Raw Art Works, Hyde Square Task Force, ZUMIX, The Theater Offensive, and Medicine Wheel Productions. BYAEP website: [www.byaeep.com](http://www.byaeep.com)

\* Adapted from The National Research Council and Institute of Medicine, 2002. *Community Programs to Promote Youth Development*.

\*\*Adapted from *The Community Action Framework for Youth Development*, 2002. Youth Development Strategies, Inc., and the Institute for Research and Reform in Education

# BYAEP's Logic Model for High Quality Youth Arts Programs

INPUTS OF PROGRAM QUALITY*	SHORT TERM OUTCOMES		INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES**	
<p><b>Opportunities:</b> Challenges and experiences that increase innovation, expressive skills, self-efficacy and fun in the lives of youth.</p>	<p><b>I CREATE: Builds Artistic, Problem Solving, and Expressive Skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increases <b>Artistic Engagement</b> in focus, skills, and in one's authenticity and passion in the arts.</li> <li>Uses <b>Problem Solving/Critical Thinking</b> to be reflective, analytic and creative in finding solutions to challenges.</li> <li>Develops <b>Expressive Skills</b> and the ability to convey feelings and thoughts artistically and verbally.</li> </ul>	<p>Short Term Outcomes combine and lead to Intermediate and Long Term Outcomes</p>	<p><b>Able to Navigate</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Takes responsibility in diverse settings</li> <li>Navigates risk-taking</li> <li>Responds effectively to challenges and opportunities</li> </ul>	<p><b>Resiliency</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adapts and learns to thrive with change, challenges, and even failure</li> <li>Is respectful of laws and/or works to change those that are unfair</li> <li>Strives to be physically and mentally healthy</li> <li>Engages in positive activities that brings one joy, pleasure, and captivation</li> </ul>
<p><b>Positive Climate:</b> Meaningful structure that is youth-centered, safe, inclusive, engaging, and challenges youth to see, reveal, and strengthen who they are.</p>	<p><b>I AM: Strengthens Identity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Builds <b>Confidence</b> with self-assurance arising from one's belief in one's own abilities or qualities.</li> <li>Increases <b>Knowledge of Self</b> through: <i>self-awareness</i> of characteristics, strengths, and weaknesses; honest <i>self-reflection</i> into one's history, cultural influence, and one's current thoughts, feelings, and actions; and <i>self-regulation</i> of behavior to increase the likelihood of a desired end goal.</li> <li>Understands how one's identity is informed by <b>Cultural Identity</b> (place, gender, race, history, nationality, abilities, language, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, ethnicity, class and aesthetics).</li> <li>Develops a <b>Positive View of the Future</b> by internalizing optimism about the outcomes for one's life ("possible selves") and increasing one's ability to set short and long-range goals (especially in education and/or employment).</li> </ul>		<p><b>Able to Engage and be Productive</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Displays commitment (dedication shown in school/employment)</li> <li>Strives for achievement (effort, courage, skills in progress toward goals)</li> <li>Possesses a positive sense of one's own uniqueness and potential (differentiation)</li> <li>Displays a character that is genuine, empathic, and is connect to one's cultural identity (integration)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Self-Efficacy and Personal Fulfillment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Education level</li> <li>Economic self-sufficiency</li> <li>Job satisfaction</li> <li>Self-actualization (the desire and efforts that lead to realizing one's capabilities)</li> <li>Continues to take steps towards dreams</li> </ul>
<p><b>Connections:</b> Opportunities to belong, contribute, and build supportive relationships with peers, adults, and community.</p>	<p><b>WE CONNECT: Develops Community</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increases <b>Support and Belonging</b> where one develops positive bonds, empathy, respect for others, and an increased ability to communicate and work with a diverse set of people including those with cultural identities and experiences different than one's own.</li> <li>Builds <b>Contribution</b> by finding opportunities, exchanging ideas, and working together to create something in the community.</li> <li>Gains <b>Recognition</b>, appreciation and/or acknowledgement for an achievement, service, or ability in the eyes of others/community.</li> </ul>		<p><b>Able to Make Connections</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Connects with family</li> <li>Connects with peers/significant other(s)</li> <li>Connects with adult mentors</li> <li>Joins groups/organizations</li> <li>Respects and is respected by others</li> </ul>	<p><b>Community Engagement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has dependable networks</li> <li>Has significant relationship(s)</li> <li>Involves oneself in social groups (PTA, unions, support groups, religious groups, etc.)</li> <li>Votes, volunteers, works to create social change</li> </ul>

## Researching, Developing and Implementing Evaluation Tools

*“Thus, the questions we ask, the categories we employ, the theories we use guide our inquiry; indeed, what we come to know about the world is influenced by the tools we have available.” (Eisner, 1998, p. 28)*

In the book *Art and Fear*, Bayles and Orland talk about the period in the 1870s when manufacturers figured out how to seal oil colors in collapsible metal-foil tubes. This simple invention enabled artists to leave the studio for the first time and paint in the open fields. Some of those artists that courageously left their studios became Impressionists.

*"The dilemma every artist confronts, again and again, is when to stick with familiar tools and materials, and when to reach out and embrace those that offer new possibilities." (1993, p. 59)*



Before we launched into developing our own tools, we researched many others, hoping that the appropriate tools had already been developed. Although we found many helpful, none spoke specifically to the three desired outcome areas for our current participants (I Create, I Am, and We Connect) and to the six intermediate and long-term outcome areas we identified for our alumni (Able to Navigate, Able to Engage and be Productive, Able to Make Connections and to do so with Resiliency, Self-Efficacy/Personal Fulfillment, and Community Engagement). It was clear we needed to create our own tools, but, knowing that this was going to be a daunting task, we first needed a plan.

## Creating an Evaluation Plan

The following ten questions inspired by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation's Evaluation Handbook helped us to design both a plan and the tools that we needed (1998, pp. 47-99). We believe these questions are very helpful for all organizations that are attempting to design a system of evaluation.

1. **WHO IS ON OUR TEAM?** *Identify stakeholders and your evaluation team, including staff, early in the process.* Getting input from all of your staff members on the design of the evaluation tools is very important. Collaborators regularly asked for feedback from their team, and we held all-staff training for all five sites to help design and pilot our tools.
2. **WHAT DO WE VALUE?** *Define the "sacred bundle" (the creative soul of the work that you do). Develop a strong logic model and clear theory of change.* Do this with your team (not in isolation) in order to get buy-in from a diverse and rich knowledge base. We worked with five different disciplines and populations, and while this was very challenging at times, we were closely aligned in our values.
3. **WHAT DO WE ASK?** *Define the indicators/outcomes in your logic model and then develop evaluation questions that align with your logic model.* Indicators should be Specific, Measureable, Action-oriented, Realistic, and Timed (SMART). Make sure, too, that the questions connect with your "Sacred Bundle." The toughest part of our task was formulating measurable questions that were aligned with our indicators. Writing them in a language accessible to both youth and funders proved quite challenging.
4. **WHAT WILL IT COST?** *Budget an amount between 5-10% of your project's total budget for evaluation.* Know that evaluation is time-intensive and that there is significant effort and time needed for the next six steps. Although RAW received funding to help manage and lead this project, none of the collaborating organizations received funding to offset the additional resource demands of BYAEP. The staff time devoted to this project exceeded our budget, and we found that we often underestimated how much time it takes to formulate, implement, and analyze evaluations. Creating the BYAEP Handbook is partly an attempt to minimize the time investment for others. That being said, the process was deeply rewarding, and wrestling with the questions, our values, and the analysis enhanced our ability to understand and convey our missions.
5. **WHO OWNS THIS?** *Find out who will take on the evaluations. Will this be handled with staff on hand and/or external evaluators or consultants?* This time-intensive process requires ownership and a clear assessment of staff and outside skills

and resources (especially time) needed. We received a lot of advice and help on this project. We also needed to contact experts in the field to help with the pilot design. Suzanne Bouffard from Harvard, Steve Seidel from Project Zero, Michael Sikes from Arts Educations Partnership, Dennie Palmer Wolf, and Julia Gittleman all helped in the formulation of our pilot evaluations along with BYAEP collaborators, who contributed countless hours. Individual staff members engaged in all components of the evaluation process, with RAW's Käthe Swaback managing the flow, guidance, and details of reporting.

6. **WHAT CAN WE GATHER?** *Plan how you will collect the data as you assess the resources and skills available.* Determine what data you need to collect and be careful not to collect data that is “interesting” but can easily lead to “data burn-out.” We found that we were collecting far too much data the first year in our pilot. Although all this information was informative, we simply did not have the staff resources to work with all the results. We cut the Self-Evaluation from six pages in the first year to four pages, completed online, in year two. We decided to include optional worksheets for program staff to complete with youth in order to gain other information that would be valuable for the leaders but not necessarily for the organization as a whole (see the Workbook for examples).
7. **HOW WILL WE GATHER IT?** *Collect both qualitative (descriptive information) and quantitative (information that can be counted) data.* Determine what information you need and how you will obtain it in order to best assess your outcomes. Did we want to use pre- and post-tests, focus groups, interviews, observations, or other creative tools we could invent? We found collecting stories, numbers, and images (photos and other visuals) was important in capturing the vibrant makeup of our programs. When we could, we offered multiple-choice answers in order to derive percentages that we could rate and compare. Although we saw many downfalls with pre- and post-tests, we used them in order to assess change, resulting in some important findings. It was also important to assess things creatively. We piloted the Drawing Evaluations; their results can be viewed in the Appendix.
8. **WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN?** *Analyze and understand your findings.* Determine what you can assess yourselves and where you may need technical assistance and statistical analysis. We were challenged by some of the technical aspects of Excel and the fact that none of us were well-versed in statistics and analysis. Learning to manipulate Survey Monkey proved important, allowing us to download reports in a useable format. In our third year we formulated an Excel template to populate all the results from Survey Monkey into a system that presented comparisons and enabled us to delete duplicated and unmatched evaluations.
9. **WHAT AND WHO CAN WE TELL?** *Communicate findings to participants, staff, and stakeholders.* Report on what you wanted to do, what you did, how you did it, what you learned, and what you might want to change going forward. This was an important part of the process. Many evaluation efforts end in the data-gathering stage, and we were determined to see it through to the reporting stage. With BYAEP we had the unusual opportunity to share our data—both the strengths and weaknesses of our findings—with each other. This afforded us a new lens for viewing ourselves, our organizations, and our field as a whole.
10. **HOW CAN WE IMPROVE?** *Make practical use of the results by reflecting it back to your programs.* Use what you have learned to inform program improvements and to better assess and meet the needs of youth, staff, and community. Although it was rewarding to see our high scores in several areas, discovering where our low scores fell and discussing how we might

work to improve these outcome areas was most beneficial. This was instrumental in setting goals for the year and designing a curriculum and initiatives that would better address these areas.

## Researching Designs and Tools

Our greatest challenge was to try to create a reliable, valid, and *practical* evaluation plan and tools that would address the indicators of our outcomes and provide us with usable data to improve our programs. There is great diversity in the type of evaluation models developed and used by the social sciences. The following approaches are some that were recommended for us to consider.

**Experimental Designs:** These evaluations are considered the “gold standard” in research because they consider not only outcomes of programs and their participants, but also the comparison of those who are not involved with the program and assigned at random to a control group. The outcomes of the control group are then compared to the program outcomes to understand the direct effect of the program.

**Quasi-Experimental Design:** This design is exactly the same as experimental design except that there is no random assignment of participants to a control group; instead, the assignment may be based on things like convenience.

**Non-Experimental Impact Evaluations:** These types of evaluations look at changes in the indicators of outcomes among program participants or groups but do not include comparison groups who are not part of the program(s).

**Pre- and Post-Participation Surveys:** These surveys relate to before and after comparisons and look at outcomes for participants before the program’s start and at its conclusion.

**Retrospective Evaluation:** This kind of evaluation asks youth to compare how they are “now” to how they were before they started the program. Retrospective evaluations are seen as less reliable and valid than pre-post assessments because one’s “recall of information through reflection may be subject to problems of insufficient recall as well as offer the potential for fabricated or biased responses” (Lamb, 2005, p. 18). However, other studies have shown little difference in traditional pre-tests/post-tests and the retrospective evaluation.

**Utilization-Focused Evaluation:** The utilization-focused approach is one in which evaluations are designed, used, and judged by their utility so that the whole process is designed for and by the intended subjects for a specific use. These evaluations are personal, situational, and implemented in a way that makes a significant difference to improving programs and improving decisions about programs.

**Participatory Evaluation:** Participatory evaluation design is the process of designing evaluations with the people involved in the organization, programs, and/or community (including funders) in order to make the findings more relevant and meaningful to all stakeholders.

## Considering These Methods to Build BYAEP's Tools

The YouthARTS Toolkit (Farnum, Carlson, & Schaffer, 1998) has many worthwhile resources applicable to developing effective evaluations. However, it states, “The ideal outcome evaluation design is an **experimental design**, which involves collecting data from youth randomly assigned to treatment groups (youth from the target population who receive program services) and control groups (youth from the target population who do not receive program services)” (p. 139). The time, expense, and complexities of random assignment are beyond the reach of all our programs and all those we have spoken to over the past three years in this under-resourced field. Therefore, we have to disagree with some of the experts, who state, “Only experimental or quasi-experimental designs provide convincing evidence that program funds are well-invested, and that the program is making a real difference to the well-being of the population served” (Burt, Harrell, Hatry, Rossman & Roth, 1996, p. 30).

We decided that “acceptable proof of effectiveness” needed to be expanded, as did the definition of the “strength” and “proof” of programs. One’s perspective, beliefs, and stories are all important versions of the truth. We do not assume to know “the truth” and feel that the more information we gather and the wider the perspective we have, the more complete our understanding will be. In the essay “Measuring Deficits and Assets,” MacDonald and Valdivieso further emphasize the point that we must expand our mindset regarding what is usable data.

*Attitudes and beliefs are powerful motivators for or against positive development. Yet, as a society, we have somehow decided that, for example, learning a child’s views about the quality of her or his home life is “soft” (i.e., unimportant) data, while counting the number of employed adults in that house-hold is “hard” data. Data about feelings and perceptions are routinely considered soft because they are self-reported. However, if we were more systematic in our collection of soft data and more intentional in our use of it to drive policies and programs, we might develop greater respect for this underused resource. (2000, p. 173)*

We perceive youth’s view of themselves and other self-reported data as valid and valuable in assessing our participants and our programs. All of our evaluation tools, therefore, are participatory and utilization-focused (see above definitions). Input from youth, members of the community, staff, consultants, collaborators, and funders is integrated into the design and wording of the tools, which are summarized below.

## BYAEP Evaluation Tools

1. **Beginning Self-Evaluations and Final Self-Evaluation:** This is the basic pre- and post-test model where most of the questions are the same in the beginning and final evaluations. Youth fill out Self-Evaluations in the first three weeks of the program and in the last two weeks of the program in order to measure the short-term program impact.

*Inspired by:* Search Institute (2004), Lerner, R. M., & Israeloff, R. (2007), Forum for Youth Investment (2008), Oyserman, D., Bybee, D. & Terry, K. (2006), Oyserman, D. (2007), Brooks, McCarthy Ondaatje, & Zakaras (2005), and Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (2008).

2. **Program Evaluations:** Youth evaluate the programs in which they are involved at the end of their program cycle. We used some elements of the retrospective evaluation when we designed our Program Evaluations to both measure the program effectiveness and to encourage youth to think back on what they were like before the program. In doing so, they could compare differences between their past and current states and consider whether changes resulted from their involvement in the program.

*Inspired by:* National Research Council and Institute of Medicine (2002), The Forum for Youth Investment (2007), Little, Dupree & Deich (2002), Bouffard, Little & Weiss (2006), Smith & Hohmann (2005).

3. **Alumni Surveys:** Our Alumni Evaluation was designed as both a survey of current lives and as a retrospective evaluation, inviting young adults to reflect on what they experienced and gained in their time with our organizations. Program graduates complete an extensive survey online or in hard-copy form.

*Inspired by:* Gittleman (2007), Csikszentmihalyi & Schneider (2000), Catterall (2009), and Gambone, Klem, & Connell (2002).

4. **Teacher Evaluations:** These were designed as a combination of observations and case studies on individual youth where teaching staff completes an evaluation on each youth in the beginning and at the end of the program.

*Inspired by:* Massachusetts Arts Curriculum Framework (1999), Seidel et al (2009), Hetland, Sheridan, Veenema, & Winner (2007), and the “5 Processes” by Larry Scripp in Rabkin & Redmond (2004, p. 42).

5. **Artistic Response and “This program is like...”:** These creative, open-ended responses offer the widest range of expressive opportunity. Youth respond through drawing and creative statements at the end of the program to what they feel has changed due to their experience in their program. This incorporates the power and voice of youth as artists in drawing their responses and helps them speak in metaphors to more richly describe their experience. Designing these tools works best when each organization can match the creative tools to the arts modalities that they offer.

## Our Process and Timeline for Developing the Evaluation Tools

Over a period of eight months, we utilized our research findings, created a common language with goals and outcomes, and engaged in many lively discussions. The results were a finalized BYAEP Framework in June 2009, along with three evaluation tools that we tested at Raw Art Works with one hundred youth. In analyzing the results, we found that the evaluations were too in-depth and reporting on each program was very labor-intensive and costly. Therefore, we simplified the system and designed a total of five evaluation tools to pilot in 2009-2010 across all five sites. The results from these tools helped us further decide how to refine the evaluations that we administered in 2010-2011. The following details show the changes that we made to the tools, and also specifics about the process.

### Testing: 2008-2009

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- The Self-Evaluation needed to be shortened. It often took more than an hour to complete, and many youth complained about the length. Reporting on all these measures was also very time intensive. We felt we could streamline the evaluation to get stronger results.
- Questions needed to be reworded so that they were not leading or too complicated. We needed to control for the social desirability bias of our questions. (**Social desirability bias** is a term used in scientific research to describe the tendency of respondents to reply in a manner that will be viewed favorably by others. This will generally take the form of over-reporting good behavior and underreporting bad behavior.) We addressed this by revising questions, inverting some, and striving for neutral language on others.
- A middle choice needed to be integrated for youth who did not feel strongly about certain questions. We felt we needed to add a “?” or “Unsure” to the multiple choice. This helped to ensure a wider spectrum of scores, enabling us to more clearly see where we needed to improve.
- A behavioral checklist needed to be created so that the youth’s behavior *and* opinions were able to be rated.

We created the Teacher Evaluation and Alumni Evaluation in the fall of 2009 and finalized the design of the tools listed above. In the fall and spring we piloted all five tools in all five sites.

## Pilot: 2009-2010

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Our key challenge in revising the evaluations was making them shorter and less complex. We reworked the wording of questions and asked alumni to give feedback on the drafts.

- We added a behavioral checklist into the year one pilot of the Self-Evaluation but took it out of the year two pilot in order to make these evaluations shorter. The revised checklist can now be found in the Program Evaluation.
- We converted three participatory pieces in the Self-Evaluation into questions for our Adolescent Risk Survey and as optional worksheets for program staff to use with their youth.
- We encouraged each site to create ten distinct site-specific questions in the Teacher Evaluation (see the

Workbook for examples)

- We also encouraged each site to create a site-specific question in the Program Evaluation (see question # 4 in the Program Evaluation).
- We changed two of six negatively-phrased questions back to positive phrasing because youth were finding the wording confusing and it was difficult to report on the negatively-phrased questions.

The pilot data was completed in June 2010. We spent the summer analyzing the data, compiling reports, and offering feedback to the collaborating organizations and programs in order to reevaluate the effectiveness of the tools themselves.

## After the Pilot: 2010-2012

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In September 2010, we made the above revisions and reintroduced the evaluations to all of our organizations in year three. We also piloted an Adolescent Risk Survey. During the summers of 2009 and 2010, we created reports for all five sites based on results from Self-Evaluations and Program Evaluations, with some examples of Artistic Responses. It was crucial for each organization to figure out changes it wanted to make in programming while setting goals and intentions based upon its results. In the summer of 2011, we again analyzed all of our data and further refined the tools to make them more specific for each of our sites.

Total Numbers of Evaluations Involved:

- **Student Self-Evaluation:** 236 Beginning Evaluations and 174 Final Evaluations were recorded in year one.

Matched beginning and final evaluations were used to chart growth. Scores and analysis were taken on 140 evaluations that could be matched. In year two, 241 were recorded and 173 of those were matched (pre- and post-evaluations by same participants). Challenge to matching pre- and post-evaluations are typically due to youth starting the program in the middle or leaving before the program has finished.

- **Program Evaluation:** 202 were completed in year one and 212 in year two.
- **Artistic Response:** 196 were completed in year two.
- **Teacher Evaluation:** 71 were recorded in year one and 65 in year two.
- **Alumni Evaluation:** 175 alumni evaluations were collected over the two years.

## Development of BYAEP’s Self- and Program Evaluation

This chart shows how Self-Evaluation and Program Evaluation statements are aligned with our indicators. The numbered statements directly correspond to the BYAEP evaluation questions that can be found in the Appendix.

<b>Goal #1</b>  <b>I CREATE</b>	<b>Indicators of Short Term Outcomes</b>	<b>21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills</b>	<b>Statements developed for the Self-Evaluation</b> (Students rate themselves on a 5-point scale from NO! to YES!)	<b>PROGRAM Inputs</b>	<b>Statements developed for the Program Evaluation</b> (Students rate the program on a 5-point scale from NO! to YES! and all questions ask “Why or how?” )
<b>I CREATE: Builds Artistic, Problem Solving, and Expressive Skills</b> Youth will develop skills in artistic engagement, problem solving, critical thinking, and expression.	Increases <b>Artistic Engagement</b> in focus, skills, and in one’s authenticity and passion in the arts.  Uses <b>Problem Solving/Critical Thinking</b> to be reflective, analytic and creative in finding solutions to challenges.  Develops <b>Expressive Skills</b> and the ability to convey feelings and thoughts artistically and verbally.	Shows an increase in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creativity and Innovation</li> <li>• Critical Thinking and Problem Solving</li> <li>• Media Literacy</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I feel excited and focused when I am creating art.</li> <li>2. I am able to express who I am through the arts.</li> <li>3. I have knowledge of the artistic process and have skills in the arts.</li> <li>4. Challenges prevent me from working towards my goals.</li> <li>5. I am able to understand situations from other people’s points of view.</li> <li>6. I use feedback (criticism and praise) to improve my work.</li> <li>7. I use the arts to communicate feelings and meaning.</li> <li>8. I feel uncomfortable giving others feedback about their artwork (critiquing).</li> </ol>	<b>Opportunities:</b> We provide challenges and experiences that increase innovation, expressive skills, self-efficacy, and fun in the lives of youth.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. I have improved as an artist and feel proud of my contributions.</li> <li>9. Because of this program, I can better express my ideas and feelings.</li> </ol>



<b>Goal #2</b>  <b>I AM</b>	<b>Indicators of Short Term Outcomes</b>	<b>21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills</b>	<b>Statements developed for the Self-Evaluation</b> (Students rate themselves on a 5-point scale from NO! to YES!)	<b>PROGRAM Inputs</b>	<b>Statements developed for the Program Evaluation</b> (Students rate the program on a 5-point scale from NO! to YES! and all questions ask "Why or how?" )
<p><b>I AM: Strengthens Identity</b> Youth will develop confidence, knowledge of self, an informed cultural identity, and a positive view of their future.</p>	<p>Builds <b>Confidence</b> with self-assurance arising from one's belief in one's own abilities or qualities.</p> <p>Increases <b>Knowledge of Self</b> through: <i>self-awareness</i> of characteristics, strengths, and weaknesses; honest <i>self-reflection</i> into one's history, cultural influence, and one's current thoughts, feelings, and actions; and <i>self-regulation</i> of behavior to increase the likelihood of a desired end goal.</p> <p>Understands how one's identity is informed by <b>Cultural Identity</b> (place, gender, race, history, nationality, abilities, language, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, ethnicity, class and aesthetics).</p> <p>Develops a <b>Positive View of the Future</b> by internalizing optimism about the outcomes for one's life ("possible selves") and increasing one's ability to set short- and long-range goals (especially in education and/or employment).</p>	<p>Shows an increase in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initiative and Self-Direction</li> <li>• Flexibility and Adaptability</li> <li>• Productivity and Accountability</li> </ul>	<p>10. I am a confident person.</p> <p>11. I stand up for what I believe in even when it is unpopular.</p> <p>12. I think about how my past experiences and choices have influenced who I am.</p> <p>13. I rarely reveal who I am in a real and honest way.</p> <p>14. I am often irresponsible.</p> <p>15. I explore my personal culture and roots to better understand who I am.</p> <p>16. I know where my life can improve and how to improve it.</p> <p>17. I imagine successful options for my future.</p> <p>18. I put strong effort into my education.</p>	<p><b>Positive Climate:</b> We provide meaningful structure that is youth-centered, safe, inclusive, engaging, and challenges youth to see, reveal, and strengthen who they are.</p>	<p>4. This program has helped me build my confidence.</p>

<b>Goal #3</b>  <b>WE CONNECT</b>	<b>Indicators of Short Term Outcomes</b>	<b>21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills</b>	<b>Statements developed for the Self-Evaluation</b> (Students rate themselves on a 5-point scale from NO! to YES!)	<b>PROGRAM Inputs</b>	<b>Statements developed for the Program Evaluation</b> (Students rate the program on a 5-point scale from NO! to YES! and all questions ask "Why or how?" )
<p><b>WE CONNECT: Develops Community</b> Youth will develop meaningful relationships and civic engagement as they contribute to and are recognized by an inclusive community.</p>	<p>Increases <b>Support and Belonging</b> where one develops positive bonds, empathy, respect for others, and an increased ability to communicate and work with a diverse set of people including those with cultural identities and experiences different than one's own.</p> <p>Builds <b>Contribution</b> by finding opportunities, exchanging ideas, and working together to create something in the community.</p> <p>Gains <b>Recognition</b>, appreciation and/or acknowledgement for an achievement, service, or ability in the eyes of others/community.</p>	<p>Shows an increase in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication + Collaboration</li> <li>• Leadership</li> <li>• Social and Cross Cultural skills</li> </ul>	<p>19. I feel a sense of belonging in this program.</p> <p>20. I have adults in my life who support me.</p> <p>21. I am connected to my community.</p> <p>22. I am a strong leader.</p> <p>23. I feel I contribute positively to my community.</p> <p>24. I am comfortable working on projects with people from different backgrounds.</p> <p>25. My successes are celebrated here.</p> <p>26. People see me in a positive way.</p>	<p><b>Connections:</b> We provide opportunities to belong, contribute, and build supportive relationships with peers, adults, and community.</p>	<p>2. In this program, I am involved in decisions here and my opinions matter.</p> <p>6. This program has helped me become a better listener.</p> <p>7. I have gained trusting relationships with my peers here.</p> <p>9. I have gained trusting relationships with the staff here.</p> <p>10. I believe what I create positively impacts others.</p> <hr/> <p>5. This program has a good balance of structure and freedom.</p> <p>11. I feel the staff does a good job with this program.</p> <p>12. I would recommend this program to my friends.</p>

## BYAEP's Incorporation of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills into our Tools

*"U.S. leadership depends on creativity and innovation and not technology alone in order to compete in the global marketplace. Strong skills in the arts are essential qualities needed for success in the workplace: creative and innovative; self-disciplined and well organized; team players who are flexible and adaptable to change; facility with the use of ideas and abstractions." (National Center on Education and the Economy, 2006)*

While developing the BYAEP's Framework, we recognized other types of competencies (beyond those identified by the Search Institute, 5 C's, etc.) that would be valuable to identify, understand, and measure. The need to equip young people with 21<sup>st</sup> century skills has been discussed with much more urgency over the past five years. Companies think that creativity and innovation are extremely important; in fact, 85% of employers concerned with hiring creative people say they cannot find the applicants they seek (Lichtenberg, Woock, & Wright, 2008). In 2008, the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education's 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills Task Force released a publication entitled "School Reform in the New Millennium: Preparing All Children for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Success." This publication underlined the importance of developing students' creativity and creative learning in schools and aligned with the national movement generated by the Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills. BYAEP decided that 21<sup>st</sup> century skills spoke clearly to the wide variety of skills that are taught, encouraged, and built into all of our programs and also provided a common language from which to speak about the complexity of the work. We focused on the Life and Career Skills and the Learning and Innovation Skills noted by the Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills and the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, and created our own definitions, since they had not yet been succinctly defined in the 2008 publications.

### BYAEP's 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills

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1. **Creativity and Innovation:** Using skills and imagination to bring something new into existence.
  2. **Critical Thinking and Problem Solving:** Exploring questions about and solutions for issues which are not clearly defined and for which there are no clear-cut answers.
  3. **Communication and Collaboration:** Exchanging ideas/opinions and working together to produce something.
  4. **Media Literacy:** Accessing, analyzing, evaluating and creating messages in a wide variety of media forms.
  5. **Flexibility and Adaptability:** The ability to adjust to new conditions.
  6. **Initiative and Self-Direction:** The ability to take action and responsibility while working toward a desired goal.
  7. **Social and Cross-Cultural Skills:** The ability to communicate with a culturally diverse set of people, and to monitor and adjust your behavior in such a way that will result in improved interactions.
  8. **Productivity and Accountability:** Having the power to produce things and being responsible for the outcomes.
  9. **Leadership:** The ability to lead, including inspiring others in a shared vision.
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In May/June 2009 we piloted 21<sup>st</sup> century skills evaluations at RAW with success. We further refined the questions and integrated 21<sup>st</sup> century skills into the Beginning Self-Evaluations in all five organizations. In the fall of 2009, all youth identified a 21<sup>st</sup> century skill as a goal in their Beginning Self-Evaluation and assessed progress in that skill and the eight others at the end of the year.

*“Communication and Collaboration are my goal. I want to try to connect with people in my community. My attitude will be more positive. My goal is not to be shy. I want to improve this goal by communicating with my team and group more.” – Sam, age 16*

In October 2009, we attended the Arts Education Partnership’s Conference “Charting a Course for the Arts and 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning.” In a panel discussion, *Statewide Initiatives for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning*, Ken Kay (CEO and co-founder of e-Luminate Group and president of the Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills) revealed research showing the biggest gaps in workforce skills are in applied skills: creativity, communication, teamwork and problem solving (Kay, 2009). In subsequent discussions with Ken Kay and others, there was excitement around BYAEP’s defining, assessing, and using 21<sup>st</sup> century skills as an integral part of programming.

In 2010-2011 we refined our surveys so that in the Beginning Self-Evaluation, participants chose three 21<sup>st</sup> century skills that they felt they most wanted to improve over the year and then picked one of the three as a goal. In the Final Evaluation, we offered the youth the question to pick up to three areas in which they felt they’d most improved.

What we have consistently found in the three years that we have been assessing these skills is that improving all nine skills is important to youth, and youth identify and strengthen **all** of these skills in our programs. The four skills of Leadership, Communication and Collaboration, Flexibility and Adaptability, and Creativity and Innovation were chosen consistently as the most important skills learned.

*“Being here has helped me develop my **Creativity and Innovation** the most. Before, I would never have thought that I could imagine something and then bring it to life, like we do here. Now I know that anything is possible using all the skills I’ve learned.” – Mel, age 16*

*“Being here has helped me with developing **Critical Thinking and Problem Solving skills**. Before I came here I didn’t think about putting two and two together. All I did was NOT think and I lost my ability to stand for what I thought about. Now I do stand for what I think and I express it.” – Dennis, age 18*

# Challenges Encountered in Developing Our Tools

## Pre- and Post-Tests

From the beginning, we found challenges inherent in the “Pre- and Post-Tests” due to the complexity of human behavior, young people’s lives, and the diversity of our programs.

1. Pre- and post-tests often carry assumptions, many of them somewhat arrogant. Many programs use pre- and post-tests with an underlying assumption that the score increases are *because* of the program the youth are involved with. We are very aware of the greater potential impact on the lives of youth by their relationships with family, gangs, their neighborhood, school, finances, trauma, medication, larger community policies, and lack of resources. We have tried to safeguard against assuming improvement is because of our program (sometimes only two hours a week in the lives of youth) by making sure questions are explicitly phrased so that youth consider if changes are *because of their involvement in our programs* or due to other factors.
2. Pre- and post-tests don’t work as well when youth are involved in programming for a number of years. One example is the Good 2 Go program at RAW, where the average length of time that members are involved in the program is 5.4 years. How can one accurately assess changes due to the program versus natural development over time? Is the pre-test a useful tool for those who have already been involved in our program for a number of years, since their answers may already show the program’s effects? Also, we found that youth become more self-reflective and critical as they stay in the program and trust is developed. Thus, final evaluations can actually result in lower scores than beginning evaluations.
3. Pre- and post-tests also don’t work as well when youth are in cycles of programming lasting less than nine months. ZUMIX and many other non-profits are on a three-month cycle of programming. Many youth keep taking classes from cycle to cycle, and it is ineffective to have them do a Self-Evaluation for each cycle. ZUMIX committed to every student completing a Beginning Self-Evaluation and a Final Self-Evaluation, but this was arduous for staff due to tracking the high volume of youth from one cycle to the next throughout the year. It was also difficult to compare those who completed one cycle of three months with those who stayed for three years.

Despite their constraints, we found that the pre- and post-tests produced enough useable data to outweigh the design limitations. Our other tools helped to mitigate the limitations of this evaluation and give a fuller picture of the youth and programs.

## An Effective Database

Throughout this process, we have recognized a critical need for a database that compiles and analyzes the data. We began with Survey Monkey because of the ease of use and the inexpensive nature of the program. Survey Monkey worked adequately, but lacked the ability to combine the results of the data and interface with any existing participant and demographic databases. We researched existing databases and explored the possibility of building one that could work with: 1) data from the evaluations; 2) demographics of the youth and program; 3) program session notes and attendance; and 4) alumni data. We wanted to centralize all of these data points in order to simplify data entry for staff and students and assess the “whole picture” in one system rather than with multiple systems. We found this to be a significant challenge due to the time intensity of inputting, analyzing, and reporting on the data. The challenge to identify and design an effective and integrated database persists, but we are getting closer to the system we need.

## Additional Challenges and Developments

Because individual young people have different patterns of participation, it is difficult to track youth and their progress, especially regarding program variables in three areas:

- **INTENSITY:** Evaluating youth who are in 8-week groups versus year-long groups, those in private lessons, and those who come once a week or four times a week.
- **BREADTH:** Evaluating youth who are in multiple programs at the same organization.
- **DURATION:** Evaluating youth who have been attending programs for many years.

Working with five different organizations in five different disciplines on five different schedules was challenging. Everyone involved made a noble effort in refining tools and strategies to best work for their organization. Despite the fact that no additional financial resources were available for the collaborating organizations in the project, all of the BYAEP collaborators gave generously of their time, knowledge, and materials, with a commendable near-100% attendance at all meetings.

While the primary focus of BYAEP was the development of evaluation tools for our youth arts groups that serve teens/young adults ages 13-23, BYAEP organizations also serve younger children. Some of the collaborators challenged themselves to modify the evaluation questions to be appropriate and accessible for youth under thirteen years of age, and have used them successfully (see the BYAEP Workbook).

Additional project support for BYAEP was achieved through engaging interns from the Arts in Education Program at the Harvard Graduate School of Education and from Lesley University. Each site also used AmeriCorps Vista members and interns from various other colleges and universities. This has been incredibly beneficial for all involved and has helped us to garner results from the current evaluation tools at each site, as well as to test some new possibilities for collecting data.

In the third year, the five BYAEP sites worked to eliminate paper copies of evaluations and did all their teen evaluations online. This was a considerable benefit in cost and time. Youth seemed to appreciate it as well and results were immediate! It became easy to see who had and hadn't completed the evaluations and, when needed, we could send a link for youth to complete their evaluation online from their own home, library, etc.

## Preparing for Analysis

The majority of youth arts practitioners are not trained in using advanced statistical packages such as SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Science--[www.spss.com](http://www.spss.com)) or SAS (Statistical Analysis Software--[www.sas.com](http://www.sas.com)). Because of our lack of expertise, our challenge was to attend to analysis on a more basic level with current software and internet-based tools that are more widely used in our field. Since we were trying to create an evaluation system that would be accessible to virtually everyone, our methods and analysis were limited by the capabilities of Survey Monkey and Microsoft Excel. Excel proved a reasonable (but time-consuming) method by which results from Survey Monkey could be collected and exported into a system that was useful and accessible to all program staff.

We worked to sort through all the data, identify themes, and describe them in written reports summarizing the outcomes for each organization. We knew qualitative data could also be coded, assigned numerical values, and analyzed using a mix of quantitative and qualitative analysis, but this was not as effective for us. What was most helpful, rather, was analyzing content and identifying themes that positively and negatively related to the outcome areas of I Create, I Am, and We Connect. This method allowed us a more holistic view of our programs as well as a way to delve into the details without getting lost in the volume of content. The general rule of measure what you can use, and use what you can measure is a good one.

If we had a bullhorn to express one vital finding, we would say that **inputting, downloading, and analyzing your data takes more time and effort than you expect**. When designing your plan this reality needs to be factored in—and then you should double your estimate! The goal of analysis is to make sense of your data so that it may guide you in understanding, improving and further developing your programs. We found it helpful to think about analysis in terms of: What? So What? and Now What?

### What?

What do we see? What does the data begin to reveal?

1. What immediately gets your attention? What else are you able to see?
2. What seems to be similar? What connections are you seeing?
3. What is different or surprising?
4. Are there themes, categories, metaphors or different threads that begin to reveal themselves?
5. What other patterns are present?
6. What questions do you need to pursue further?

## So What?

What sense can we make of the data? What does it mean?

1. How will your results be compiled and reviewed, and by whom? For instance, what does it mean that 67% of youth agreed or strongly agreed, "I feel like I contribute positively to my community"? Is that greater or less than last year?
2. How does the qualitative data (quotes and narratives) support or negate what you see in the quantitative data (numbers and percentages)?
3. Who on your team should be involved in interpreting the analyzed data? What follow-up conversations do you need to have with program staff that may help you to better interpret the data at hand?
4. What is the existing base level for interpreting the data? Who sets the basis for comparison?

## Now What?

How do we use what we have learned to direct our decisions?

1. What are the conclusions and recommendations?
2. How will you report to your staff and/or youth about the results?
3. What did you learn and what will you change or do differently because of the results that you have seen? How will this influence your goals for the next semester/year?
4. What of the data will you share beyond the walls of your organization and in what manner?

One of the most difficult tasks is the final aspect of reporting—devising contextually grounded and implementable recommendations based on the data that you have sifted through. This is a sophisticated skill that could use the expertise of an outside evaluator paired with the knowledge and experience base of your program staff.



# What We Learned About Our Own Programs

## I CREATE

*I improved my Salsa and Bachata dancing when all I knew before was the basic steps. Ritmo made me come up with a solo and I actually performed it on stage and I never did a dance solo before. I express myself through songs and dances. – James, age 16*

## I AM

*I never really used to open up. Now because of ZUMIX I am open to talk, give ideas, and help everyone and things around me. – Andrea, age 16*

## WE CONNECT

*Here I know I will always have support. No matter what. I know there is always someone to talk to. I know that there will always be someone to listen. – Yaniluz, age 18*

The reflections below are from leaders in the five organizations that participated in BYAEP and implemented all five evaluation tools over the course of the three-year project.

## Medicine Wheel Productions (MWP)



S.P.U.N. (Medicine Wheel Productions' youth initiative) was launched in 1998 as a response to the high rate of suicide and heroin overdose deaths among teens in South Boston. In our first summer we had eighteen young people work for us. Most of them were in a program funded by the Federal Department of Labor; many were survivors of suicide attempts and many were on prison release. Now, twelve years later, we serve over 300 young adults each year, many in the 19-25 year old range. The Medicine Wheel tradition has long held that every spoke of the wheel is significant and that if one spoke is broken, the wheel is broken. All of our work is a response to the human condition; all of it involves inviting young people to take their rightful places as citizens and contributing members of society.

Through the BYAEP surveys, particularly the alumni survey, we have tangible evidence of how young lives have been changed through our programming. Out of the 68 responses that we received through our recent alumni survey, the vast majority were extremely positive:

- An impressive 87% of our young people were proud to report that in the past five years they had “worked to improve their choices in life” after being at Medicine Wheel.
- Social and Cross-Cultural Skills and Creativity and Innovation were the two strongest 21<sup>st</sup> century skills that alumni stated they developed at MWP.
- 80% of our alumni believe that MWP contributed to their working to solve problems in their community.
- 89% of our alumni are working hard to make their dreams a reality.

We have found that 85% of alumni feel that their experience at Medicine Wheel contributed to them taking their education seriously and working hard, with many of our young people pursuing an education working in the trades. It has been encouraging to hear that 75% of alumni feel that their experience at MWP contributed to them finding and keeping a job. These are just a very few ways that we have been able to use the BYAEP survey to deepen our work. Additionally, the BYAEP surveys have enabled us to bear witness and give testimony to the change in young lives, using art as the threshold.

All of us have anecdotal evidence of how and why our programs are wonderful—we witness these miracles every day. The problem, of course, is trying to measure these anecdotes. The BYAEP survey has provided MWP with an outlet and opportunity to strengthen our capacity to measure and communicate the impact we've had on our young people. Funders really do value seeing the concrete results that the self-evaluations (especially the risk assessment) and alumni surveys have produced. In a grant received from the MBAs for the Arts Foundation, the organization articulated that our participation in BYAEP was a key reason why they opted to fund us.

We are excited to continue utilizing the BYAEP surveys and to rely more heavily on the positive results that we've produced when reporting out to funders and the community at-large. While we have utilized many of the statistics mentioned above to some degree, there is still a plethora of data that we have at our disposal to share out in a compelling way.

BYAEP has been a tool that helps us explain who we are as an organization—what we do well and where we need to work. It's helped us to better understand the young people that we serve. Most importantly, BYAEP has helped us to focus and ensure that the services we provide are in line with our mission.

For example, we have a deep-rooted interest and focus on inclusion. We spend significant amounts of time on this concept in our programming. Through our alumni survey, we found that 92% of our alumni think that their experience at MWP contributed to their working well with people of other racial/ethnic groups. This impressive statistic indicates that our focus on inclusion has produced fruitful results, and that our young people are really thinking about this and embracing it in their lives.

As we mentioned above, BYAEP has also played a key role in helping us to better understand our young people and the challenges they face in everyday life. Specifically, we were able to identify that:

- 43% of teens at MWP feel that they have only a 50/50 chance or less of living to age 35. This number is alarmingly almost three times the national average. (Borowsky, Ireland, & Resnick, 2009, p. 81).
- 63% of teens in Medicine Wheel have had two or more friends or family members die due to violence, drug overdose or other unnatural causes.

These statistics really encouraged us as an organization to step up the level of case management that we were providing to our young people. Over the past few years, our case manager has created a solid program for the organization and has built key collaborations with other community resources that can support the needs of our young people. BYAEP played a critical role in helping us to create this shift/change in our programming.

## The Theater Offensive (TTO)



The three major things we have learned from our work in BYAEP, specifically with the BYAEP Self-Evaluation and Program Evaluation are:

**1. Golden nuggets about program improvement:** Anyone who works with youth knows that they will tell you when you are doing something wrong or when changes need to be made. In True Colors, youth are an integral part of shaping the program content and design. The BYAEP evaluations, however, have provided a written, formal method to receive feedback from participants on more subtle details. For example, in year one, information gathered from the BYAEP Self-Evaluation indicated that only 63% of youth felt that participation in True Colors helped them become a better listener. This was our lowest score measured by the Program Evaluation. Staff put great effort into calling attention to moments in rehearsals and performances when listening is crucial to the creative process and moments when folks in the room successfully listened. Results from the second year show that 100% of youth felt True Colors helped them become a better listener.

**2. Organizational impact:** A second impact has been an organization-wide cultural shift at The Theater Offensive. After True Colors started meeting higher standards of proof for the efficacy of its work, our other programs embarked on efforts to demonstrate their impact. This has changed our process from beginning to end. We're still artists; we come up with crazy ideas every day and sometimes we do them just because our gut tells us to. However, we now we have a common practice of identifying when that risk seems worthwhile and some common language to discuss the impact of these artistic choices!

**3. Potent data to present:** Our work with BYAEP has enabled us to gather information that complements the art, which gives stakeholders a fuller picture of the impact True Colors has in the lives of youth and in the community. We now understand that we need to present stories, images, and data when talking to our stakeholders, and BYAEP has helped us develop systems to capture this data. Some examples of this are the fact that 88% of youth agreed or strongly agreed, "This program has helped me build my confidence," and youth participants reported an eleven percentage point increase after participation in the program in their feeling "connected to my community."

**4. Proper prioritization:** The previous three lessons learned are in order of importance. Our evaluation needs to be specific enough to improve the programs and the organization in order to better serve the youth. Reporting data out is a lower priority. Each funder has needs that may or may not be met by our evaluation, so we cannot structure all of our tools to accommodate the needs of every funder. There are still many challenges and barriers to using the BYAEP tools and getting the data necessary to "wow" funders. However, after participating in BYAEP we feel we are able to better help participants, funders, and the community at-large understand the impact and benefits of True Colors.

# ZUMIX

*"I wanted to become someone who meant something. I have."* – Jen, age 17

From the onset of the BYAEP collaboration, ZUMIX has felt the importance of implementing a comprehensive evaluation system into our programmatic culture. In our early stages, we faced two very distinct challenges in implementing the evaluations tools: scheduling and capacity. ZUMIX's programs operate in three semesters (spring, summer, and fall) and serve approximately 400 youth each year, of which roughly 300 are teenagers. Therefore, we had to administer evaluations more frequently and to a greater number of students (as compared to the other organizations). Additionally, many of our young people are served through private one-on-one instruction, which the BYAEP materials are not intended to track. It took us about a year to be able to navigate these challenges, but in the end the strengths of the BYAEP tools came to the forefront and began to have a positive impact on our teaching artists' work.

The primary strength that has emerged is the power of the Self-Evaluations. These tools allow us to do several things that are incredibly useful from an administrative level.



**1. Self-Evaluations allow us to gauge the pulse of our general student population.** In a given year, ZUMIX has fifteen group programs in four different areas (Songwriting & Performance, Instrumental Music, Music Technology, and Radio). These programs are intended to attract young participants from many backgrounds and with diverse interests. Our teaching artists have always had a good sense of their respective classes, but administratively it was sometimes challenging to get a sense of how the overall student population felt in the context of their work. BYAEP has allowed us to measure that rhythm. In the first year that we implemented the tools, we saw that a majority of our youth were looking for more leadership opportunities. In response, we thoughtfully created various opportunities for them to exercise these skills, including a leadership council and several paid youth staff positions. In the second year of implementation, the percentages showed that many of our youth were uncomfortable giving feedback to others on their work, stating that they “didn’t want to make someone feel bad.” As a result, our teaching staff subtly incorporated more opportunities for feedback in classes, and we have noticed that fewer students now feel uncomfortable in these conversations.

## **2. Self-Evaluations also allow us to track an individual youth's progress over multiple semesters/years.**

Since many of ZUMIX's young folks participate in numerous programs over many years, it is important for us to be able to look at a young person's progression over time while involved in our programs. BYAEP Self-Evaluations give us insight into our participants' thoughts and feelings about themselves. Although several particular stories come to mind, we can't help but think of a young man who has been struggling with a difficult personal situation for several years. Carter began coming to ZUMIX this past fall. He is incredibly outgoing and LOVES to sing. He joined our Vocal Group program and immediately "vibed" with ZUMIX. Looking over his Beginning Self-Evaluation, we learned that his mother has AIDS and that this is becoming an increasing difficult situation for him to deal with. He was excited to come to ZUMIX so that he could escape this reality for at least a few hours each week. Upon completing the program and his Final Self-Evaluation, Carter revealed that being at ZUMIX has significantly helped him deal with his mother's illness and that he no longer feels ashamed of her situation. He is able to deal with this reality much better—in large part due to the non-judgmental attitudes of ZUMIX's staff and participants.



## **3. Program Evaluations allow teaching artists to think about the programs from the youth's point of view.**

At the end of each semester, program staff and teaching artists were given reports on their respective programs along with quotes from students commenting on the programs, the instructors, and their learning/artistic experience. Each report included statistics that highlighted the positive aspects of the program as well as possible areas to improve on. One very simple, but extremely powerful, example of how these evaluations positively affected programming is in the case of ZUMIX's Vocal Group (Voices). In the spring of 2010, at the end of our first year of implementing the evaluations, several of our youth participants suggested in their Program Evaluations that the instructor should allow the chorus members to select the music repertoire that they work on over the semester. As a result, the instructor devised (along with youth) a democratic system for song selection. Over the next two semesters, enrollment in the chorus grew steadily, participants became more excited about rehearsals, and the group sounded really good.

BYAEP tools have shifted the way that we are able to communicate with our donors and the foundations that support us. We are able to report on measurable data in a more comprehensive way than we were able to before. This has allowed for a deeper dialogue between us and our supporters. We have had various responses to our presentations and from funders. When presenting the BYAEP Framework to audiences and other organizations there is noticeable interest about using this as a model for evaluating youth arts programming. In terms of funders, our only response has been more of a critique. This particular funder was not so interested in seeing the results of the areas of development that BYAEP measures; instead, the funder wanted to know about the hard skills youth are learning in our programs (technical skills, musicianship, etc.) as opposed to "feelings." We have been considering how we can incorporate this into our evaluations moving forward.

## Hyde Square Task Force (HSTF)

*“People see what I’m doing—being a part of the community, teaching dance to the kids, doing good stuff for the community.”*

– Jamil, age 17

Our evaluation results revealed two important strengths of the program: **confidence in leadership** and **community engagement** among our participants.

- In their Final Self-Evaluations, 93% of youth agreed or strongly agreed, “I am a confident person.” This showed a 43 percentage point increase from the Beginning Self-Evaluations.
- The percent of teens who agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, “This year, I have done something valuable for or in my community” increased from 57% in their Beginning Self-Evaluations to 100% in their Final Evaluations.

We are a part of a larger organization that places great value on these two areas, to which we continue to dedicate much energy and program time. One of the major ways youth develop leadership and community engagement is through teaching dance to other young people in their community. We are continuing to strengthen this piece of Ritmo en Acción by intensifying the training process for all youth as they are preparing to become instructors. The youth will get more training and practice before they actually go out into the community and teach, which will continue to significantly strengthen their leadership skills.

One area we focused on during this past year was peer relationships. We found, through the BYAEP evaluations of year one, that only 54% of youth said they had gained trusting relationships with their peers. This was our weakest score, and although it is easy to see how this mistrust can be a product of an environment that has a great deal of violence and negativity, it also challenged us to be much more intentional about planning and implementing more team-building activities throughout the year to help create the trust teens were missing. This year we made a concerted effort to enhance dialogue and build accountability and trust by developing our system of “feedback and expectations.” Every two weeks, the group came together and staff gave input about areas where each dancer excelled and places where there was room for improvement. This helped create a sense of transparency and group accountability, which has helped improve relationships within the group. These efforts have helped to improve the trust and strengthen the relationships among the dancers on the team. In the Final Evaluations, 90% of youth felt that they had gained trusting relationships with their peers at HSTF, an increase of 36 percentage points from the previous year.

In general, using BYAEP has helped make evaluation a more important part of the culture of the program. It has become a habit to ask the teens how they are doing in the program, what they are learning, and what suggestions they have to improve the program.



## Raw Art Works (RAW)

The strongest benefit of the BYAEP project for RAW has been the development of a common language across the organization, through which we can engage, dialogue, and challenge ourselves to improve in clear outcome areas. The language and spirit of the BYAEP Framework of “I Create, I Am, and We Connect” is deeply woven deep into RAW’s infrastructure and strategic vision. It informs our curriculum, quarterly reports, and staff meetings. It is inherent in our relationships with youth, funders, staff members and our community. The nine 21<sup>st</sup> century skills have been very useful in helping youth establish goals and also in building a vocabulary and skills development focus among both staff and youth that generates a consistency and vibrancy in our organization.

We have learned much about our strengths and development areas through our evaluations with youth and with our alumni. Two items to mention include where we have excelled and where we need to improve:

1. We have learned that our youth believe that RAW staff delivers excellent programming. Teens have consistently rated all of our programs a minimum of 9.1 out of 10. 89% of teens feel that their successes are celebrated at RAW, which represents an increase of 27 percentage points from the beginning of the year.
2. Over the past two years we have placed emphasis on improving specific low scores:
  - Although 90% of teens agree, “I have gained trusting relationships with my peers here,” only 54% of teens agree or strongly agree, “I am connected to my community.”
  - Only 61% of teens agree or strongly agree, “I put strong effort into my education.”

In 2010-2011 RAW worked hard to help youth define how they might more positively engage with their community. Every RAW program was given the challenge to have art displayed in the city and to creatively seek opportunities for community engagement. For example, our RAW Chief teen mentors nominated organizations and leaders in the community whom they felt were the “soul” of Lynn and then made each award recipient a unique handcrafted trophy. In small teams they personally delivered the trophies throughout the city, including one to the Mayor of the City of Lynn, Judy Flanagan Kennedy. A week later the Chiefs received a hand-written card from Mayor Kennedy. The entire experience was incredibly affirming for everyone involved. In our 2011 Final Evaluations, we increased the community engagement score nine percentage points to 63%.

In 2010-2011, the percentage of youth who placed strong effort into their education increased by only one percentage point. In 2011-2012, RAW will better assess the efforts of youth in school and how to improve their connection to their education and success in school. This is a TOP priority along with our continued commitment to helping youth connect positively with their community. Our curriculum is designed to deeply reflect these intentions.

Other benefits of BYAEP include our Artistic Responses (“Drawing it Out” evaluations), which have provided valuable evidence of the strength and diversity of the work we do and the outcomes we are able to achieve. In looking through the hundreds of our Drawing Evaluations completed over the past three years, it is clear that there are ten distinct areas of growth which youth speak to year after year (see Appendix).





BYAEP's inclusion of tools for alumni evaluation has increased our ability to connect to our alumni and assess long-term outcomes. In administering our Alumni Survey, we have been able to connect with over 200 alumni across the nation. For three years in a row we have held an Alumni Dinner, attended by 50-60 alumni each year. Our active Alumni Facebook page has over 150 members. Sixty-six alumni completed surveys, which have offered us incredible statistics and a wealth of quotations from alumni who are now as old as thirty-two (see Appendix). One alumna summed up our challenges and successes of many youth at RAW:

*"The greatest influence RAW has had on the way I respond to challenges is the way in which I now reach out for help when I need it. Before participating in RAW, I struggled through adversity totally alone, which led to very destructive, at times self-mutilating, behavior. From the moment I set foot into the RAW building, I was overwhelmed with support, concern, and encouragement from peers and mentors that immediately changed the way I handle adversity. Now, not only am I willing to ask for support when I need it, but my coping skills are stronger and healthier than they have ever been, a direct result of my experience working through issues in RAW groups."*

## Using Our Evaluations for Investigation

One item of research that interested us all was based on a national study of 20,000 youth in grades seven through twelve. 15% of adolescents in this study predicted they had a 50/50 chance or less of living to age thirty-five. This belief corresponded to adolescents engaging in more risky behaviors (Borowsky et al., pp. 81-88). We were very curious about how the responses of youth involved in our programs might compare to the national statistics. We were also interested in finding out how violence has impacted the lives of youth involved in our programs and influenced their confidence in their future. Amidst much debate regarding privacy, trust, and whether it would be too intrusive to ask, we decided to include the following two questions on the Self-Evaluation during our pilot in 2009-2010:

*What do you feel best describes your chances of living to age 35 or older?*

*Please check one:*  10% - 30% (very little chance)  50% (a 50/50 chance)  80% - 100% (a very high chance)

*Please tell us how many, if any, friends or family members you have lost to violence, drug overdose or other unnatural causes.*

The results surprised us. Out of the 94 responses from teens at RAW and 13 from Medicine Wheel (MWP), 35% at RAW and 54% at MWP felt that they had a 50/50 chance or less of living to age thirty-five, more than three times the national average (Borowsky et al., pp. 81-88). 45% of RAW teens and 64% of MWP teens have known two or more friends or family members who died of violence, drug overdose or other unnatural causes. None of MWP teens experienced zero deaths. One individual wrote the number “9” with the comment, *“I’ve been to a lot of wakes and funerals. I see this as a normal thing...It’s not though.”* Another wrote simply, *“The violence needs to stop.”*

In our second year, we took this question out of the Self-Evaluation and placed it in the Adolescent Risk Evaluation that we devised in 2010. The Adolescent Risk Evaluation was completely anonymous. We wanted to get a better sense of the youth who come to our programs, what they have been through, and what they are going through. The questions are mostly taken from a national ARI survey for teens (Lescano, Brown, Hadley, D’Eramo, & Zimskind, 2007), as well as from teens themselves who were asked what they wished adults would ask them. Some of the questions were very personal. We asked them in order to have a better sense of “what is really going on” and how we might do a better job designing our groups, talking to funders, and, most importantly, serving youth in the best way possible. Some examples of statements that they answer “yes” or “no” to include: “I sometimes think of cutting myself”; “I have been threatened with a weapon”; “I feel like people have no idea what I have been through.” We have not included this tool in the BYAEP Workbook because a significant level of trust must be developed before administering the tool and working with the results.

The youth who dare to connect with and commit to our programs often acquire the resources that enable them to better commit to school, to deal with trauma in their past, and to explore and follow through with different choices for their future. In doing so, they gain resiliency and the support needed to manage the urban nightmare that often surrounds them. We cannot control many of the negative forces that attempt to take youth from their childhoods and their futures, but we can help them build artistic, problem-solving and expressive skills, and strengthen their identity by developing self-knowledge, an informed cultural identity, and a positive view of their possible selves. We embrace their complexity and help them, through meaningful relationship and civic engagement, to contribute to and receive the benefits of an inclusive community that encourages them to shout, “I AM, I CREATE, and WE CONNECT.”

## Overall Reflections on Evaluation and BYAEP

*"We do not believe in ourselves until someone reveals that deep inside us something is valuable, worth listening to, worthy of our trust, sacred to our touch. Once we believe in ourselves we can risk curiosity, wonder, spontaneous delight or any experience that reveals the human spirit." – ee cummings*

## BYAEP Advice for Other Organizations

We have provided a lens, a framework, and tools that have helped us and others gain understanding of the complexity and effectiveness of youth arts organizations. The BYAEP Framework and tools have been instrumental in bringing all of our organizations to the next level of evaluation and program measurement. What we have collectively realized is that while a common language is incredibly useful, each organization must recognize its own dialect. There is great potential to positively influence the work that happens in your organization by understanding more fully what is happening in your programs. Having the framework is a great jumping-off point, and we highly encourage you to modify the actual surveys to meet the needs of your individual organizations. While many of the surveys and questions have produced powerful results, there may be some that are not applicable to the specific mission of your organization, and there will be other questions that need to be added. Make these tools work for you, do not make yourself work for them, and don't be afraid to shift things around a bit so that everything fits together.

We learned—and urge you to embrace—the POWERFUL story that can be expressed through a combination of NUMBERS, STORIES, and IMAGES. This is the three-legged stool on which we can stand and see/be seen in the most complete and impactful way (see Appendix).

Believe in the power of the work you do. Seek to understand it. Boldly show its beauty and nurture the weaker areas so that they may become strong. There is also magic that happens in every strong arts organization that cannot, and perhaps even *should not*, be measured. We must always allow the art itself to be a bold voice in this process. As Eliot Eisner said, “*Neither words nor numbers define the limits of our cognition; we know more than we can tell...we need art forms to say what literal language cannot say*” (Eisner, 2004).

## Questions to Further Explore

- 1. How can we most accurately see the “whole picture” in our analysis? Can we work to invent new tools supported by research and funders that can better take into account the complexity and relational nature of our field, of our youth, community and the age in which we now live?** What are other ways beyond traditional control groups, logic models, and “pre- and post-tests” that can more effectively measure success through an individual’s personal growth, essential skills, and community engagement? How might this system better address the intensity, breadth, and duration of the youth that are involved in our programs?
- 2. Are there ways that we can collaborate through shared data systems, measurement tools, and outcomes so that we could better address and assess our impact while saving time and money?** How might we find shared solutions by fostering further cross-sector collaborations? Who might fund these dynamic collaborations that will bring forth effective systems of measuring impact? Where can we find funding to support a mentorship program of professional evaluators to work with arts organizations?
- 3. How do we most effectively weave the creative arts into the process of evaluation** so that it becomes more accessible and feels less like a “test” for youth and teachers and more like artistic reflection and critique?
- 4. How can we more dynamically report on our discoveries?** How can we display our findings in ways that more directly speak to the artistic nature of our organizations in strong and beautiful ways?

## Next Steps

The complex and relational nature of the work we do is very difficult to assess, and often the tools we are given to measure our progress do not suit our circumstances. Bare (2010) beautifully describes the traditional logic model as a string of dominoes, where he states that when we knock one over, we will get a chain reaction that knocks over every other perfectly lined-up domino in our “If...Then...” theory of change. However, we all know that we do not live in a linear and simple world. Bare challenges us to think of our world rather like the game of pick-up sticks, where our interconnections are messy and where it is virtually impossible to touch one item without all other aspects being affected. It is, in fact, more like a game where we are all moving the sticks at the same time and it “is nearly impossible to predict exactly how the pile will move” (Bare, 2010, p. 89). We work in complex worlds, and what we attempt to see and evaluate is often the “in-betweenness” of things. As we engage with youth in our arts programs we especially value all the feedback we can get directly from them. We know the power in these stories far outweighs the quantifiable statistics of control groups. As a field we are now challenged to build better tools that can give us better feedback to match the complexity of our systems and the issues at hand.

The good news is that we are all beginning to talk about our complex systems in very similar ways—ways that seem to do justice to this complexity. Since the publication of the BYAEP Framework, we have found many other frameworks that speak in similar terms. A report released by the Community MusicWorks (Wolf & Holochwost, 2009) and one from the Mosaic Youth Theatre in Detroit (Gutti & Spencer, 2008) look at outcomes directly corresponding to those of BYAEP. As the youth development field launches further research and has further discussions, we collectively can enlarge our “capacity to be strong” and create tools that more powerfully align with these very similar outcome areas.

What we need is a movement that challenges the orthodoxy of “domino” views of the world and more realistically sees the “pick-up sticks” world in which we live. We need tools that can better help us to view our worlds and we need database systems that are up to the challenge of recording and reporting on the things that matter. We need support for these efforts. We need to creatively design tools and systems that can dynamically inform our efforts, ones that are committed to the outcomes but also have the flexibility to help us “adapt and adjust in terms of what it will take to produce the desired impact” (Bare, p. 103).

We can no longer do this alone. As Kania and Kramer noted in their article *Collective Impact*, and as we have experienced over the past three and a half years, “No single organization, however innovative or powerful, could accomplish this alone... large-scale social change comes from better cross-sector coordination rather than from the isolated intervention of individual organizations... examples suggest that substantially greater progress could be made in alleviating many of our most serious and complex social problems if nonprofits, governments, businesses, and the public were brought together around a common agenda to create collective impact” (2011, pp. 36-38).

We have a ways to go, but we have the courage and the skills to navigate through complexity. It is what we do well.

*“It’s the artists of the world, the feelers and thinkers, who will ultimately save us, who can articulate, educate, defy, insist, sing and shout the big dreams.”* - Leonard Bernstein (Trilling, 2010)

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Yohalem, N. & Wilson-Ahlstrom, A. (2009). *Measuring youth program quality: A guide to assessment tools* (2nd ed.). Washington, DC: The Forum For Youth Investment.

## Important Websites

Arts Assessment Toolbox: A Learning Space for Arts Educators: A resource for improving assessment of student learning in the arts. This website was developed by Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education and provides assessment philosophies, methodologies, case studies, and a wide-range of assessments. <http://www.artsassessment.org/>

Creating Quality. This website provides tools and resources to assess quality and improve programs in school, after-school, and in summer-time programming. Retrieved from <http://www.creatingquality.org/>

Edward Tufte has an interesting website that has well-designed examples for designing visualizations of data. Retrieved from <http://www.edwardtufte.com/tufte/index>

Harris, E. (2011). *Afterschool evaluation 101: How to evaluate an expanded learning program*. Retrieved from <http://www.hfrp.org/out-of-school-time/publications-resources/afterschool-evaluation-101-how-to-evaluate-an-expanded-learning-program>

Harvard Family Research Project. Evaluation has been a core focus of HFRP's work since they began in 1983. This site provides a wealth of resources and many useful publications in the Evaluation Exchange. Retrieved from: <http://www.hfrp.org/evaluation>.

KIDS COUNT Data Book profiles the status of children on a national and state-by-state basis and ranks states on 10 measures of wellbeing. Retrieved from <http://www.aecf.org/MajorInitiatives/KIDSCOUNT.aspx>

Massachusetts Cultural Council YouthReach website. Retrieved from <http://www.massculturalcouncil.org/programs/youthreach.asp>

Periodic Table of Visual Elements on the Visual Literacy website provides a wide range of visualizations of data found on the web and has great examples of what can be done with data. [http://www.visual-literacy.org/periodic\\_table/periodic\\_table.html](http://www.visual-literacy.org/periodic_table/periodic_table.html)





### Cover Artist

Boston artist **Thonah Ep** painted the images that were selected for the covers of the BYAEP Handbook and Workbook. Thonah was a youth arts participant for ten years, beginning when he first came to Raw Art Works at the age of fourteen. After graduating from high school, he continued to remain an active member of RAW's community by serving as a guest artist, art instructor, and gallery coordinator. Thonah was honored as the 2009 recipient of the Massachusetts Cultural Council's Commonwealth Award, the state's highest honor in the arts. He also won the Senator Paul E. Tsongas Scholarship, a full four-year scholarship. Thonah is currently a junior studying Architectural Design at the Massachusetts College of Art and Design.

# Appendices

## Appendix 1: Collaborator Contacts

### BOSTON YOUTH ARTS EVALUATION PROJECT COLLABORATORS

#### **The Theater Offensive**

www.thetheateroffensive.org  
Abe Rybeck, Executive Artistic Director  
Evelyn Francis, Director of Programs  
565 Boylston St. Boston, MA 02116  
Tel: 617.661.1600  
Email: abe@thetheateroffensive.org  
Email: evelyn@thetheateroffensive.org

#### **Hyde Square Task Force**

www.hydesquare.org  
Brenda Rodriguez-Andújar, Director of Programs  
Barbara Civill, Manager of School-Based and Cultural Programs  
375 Centre Street, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130  
Tel: 617.524.8303  
Email: brenda@hydesquare.org  
Email: barbara@hydesquare.org

#### **Medicine Wheel Productions, Inc.**

www.medicinewheelproductions.org  
Michael Dowling, Artistic Director  
Richard Dinsmore, Office Assistant  
110 K Street, South Boston, MA 02127  
Tel: 617.268.6700  
Email: mdowling@mwproductions.org  
Email: rdinsmore@mwproductions.org

#### **ZUMIX**

www.zumix.org  
Madeleine Steczynski, Founder/Executive Director  
Kim Dawson, Program Director  
260 Sumner St., East Boston, MA 02128  
Tel: 617.568.9777  
Email: msteczynski@zumix.org  
Email: kdawson@zumix.org

#### **Raw Art Works**

www.rawartworks.org  
Kit Jenkins, Executive Director  
Mary Flannery, Founder  
Käthe Swaback, Program Director of RAW  
and Project Leader of BYAEP  
37 Central Square, Lynn, MA 01901  
Tel: 781.593.5515  
Email: kit@rawartworks.org  
Email: mary@rawartworks.org  
Email: kathe@rawartworks.org

#### **Advisor**

www.massculturalcouncil.org  
H. Mark Smith  
YouthReach Program Manager  
Massachusetts Cultural Council  
10 St. James Ave., 3rd Floor, Boston, MA 02116  
Tel: 617.727.3668 x253  
Email: mark.smith@state.ma.us

## Appendix 2: Detailed Timeline of BYAEP

### COLLABORATION in MEETINGS and PRESENTATIONS

The Boston Youth Arts Evaluation Project (BYAEP) successfully created a usable framework, vocabulary, and tools based in quality research, and direct experience and through the experience of nationally-recognized consultants. Much collaboration took place through email, phone calls, and most importantly in half-day and full-day meetings. Listed below are the meetings and the conferences in which BYAEP participated. This demonstrates the intense level of participation and communication in a five-way collaboration.

### 2008

- Summer 2008: Interviews with fifteen possible BYAEP collaborators took place, and the four core collaborators were chosen to be part of BYAEP. To become a core collaborator in the Boston Youth Arts Evaluation Project an organization needed to:
  - Be a nonprofit agency working with youth in the arts in the Boston area.
  - Focus on primarily underserved communities with a diversity of youth and developing programs that meet their needs.
  - Have implemented innovative out-of-school arts education programs that have received recognition for their high quality.
  - Have been a nonprofit for over ten years and have utilized various modes of evaluation that try to bridge the fields of arts education and youth development.
  - Work with or be willing to engage a logic model and theory of change as vehicles to further develop their goals, indicators, outcomes and evaluations.
- October 24, 2008: Käthe Swaback and Bill Bullick of the Portland, Oregon-based firm Creative Planning led **The Boston Youth Arts Evaluation Forum** at City Year in Boston. After inviting 52 Boston youth arts nonprofits to attend, 31 participants registered and participated in our half-day workshop in Boston. We presented on current best practices and evaluation models, distributed resource packets and received feedback from groups of participants. After the Forum, collaborators met for the first collaborators meeting at City Year in Boston. Logic models were completed by all five collaborators. These logic models were instrumental in developing the BYAEP Framework, utilizing a common language with goals and outcomes.

### 2009

- January 5, 2009: Käthe met with youth arts development practitioners and Dr. Dennie Palmer Wolf to devote an entire day to sharing tools, strategies, and questions in this evaluation workshop.
- January 9, 2009: Core collaborators met at the Massachusetts Cultural Council to draft our plan for researching and developing the framework.
- June 10, 2009: Käthe presented BYAEP at “The Outcome Measurement Consultants Community of Practice” at the United Way in Boston to stimulate thinking about evaluation measures and youth arts.
- June 11, 2009: Collaborators met at Medicine Wheel Productions for a session designed to finalize the BYAEP Framework and review the drafts of tools we were to use in the fall.

- September 8, 2009: An all-day BYAEP staff training was held at Raw Art Works.
- October 2009: Culture for Change (CfC) used the BYAEP Framework and revised the BYAEP tools to fit its mission, utilizing them in 26 organizations with 145 youth. CfC piloted tools in 2009-2010 and revised the tools in 2010-2011.
- December 7, 2009: We met for a core collaborator work session at Hyde Square Task Force (HSTF) to brainstorm about the At-Risk Survey and to review changes to the Alumni Survey.

## 2010

- January 8, 2010: A small group meeting was held in Cambridge to finalize the Alumni Survey and discuss the At-Risk Survey.
- January 14, 2010: Madeleine Steczynski of ZUMIX and Brenda Rodriguez-Andujar of HSTF presented about BYAEP at a Linde Family Foundation convening in Boston on Evaluation in Youth Arts.
- March 23, 2010: Käthe presented on BYAEP and RAW at a book reading of “Culture is our Weapon” by Damian Platt and Patrick Neat. A panel discussion including BYAEP concepts ensued at Powell’s Bookstore in Portland, OR.
- March 16, 2010: Kim Dawson presented on BYAEP and ZUMIX at a book reading of “Culture is our Weapon” book by Damian Platt and Patrick Neat at Back Pages Books in Waltham, MA.
- April 9, 2010: We completed the final review of the evaluations before piloting the Final Self-Evaluation and Program Evaluation. We also began our conference plans for the summer, fall, and spring in year three.
- June 4, 2010: Evelyn Francis from The Theater Offensive (TTO) presented on BYAEP at Lesley University, Arts in Healthcare Conference, Cambridge, MA.
- July 9, 2010: We celebrated the completion of the pilot of five evaluation tools across all five sites with over 1,000 inputted evaluations! We reviewed the process of administering the Final Evaluations: what worked, what didn’t, how long it took, and suggestions for year three. Guest evaluator Julia Gittleman gave an overview of preliminary analysis and findings of BYAEP, with particular focus on RAW, TTO, and HSTF.
- July 16-18, 2010: Evelyn Francis of TTO presented on BYAEP at *The Queer Youth Theater Retreat* for the Mukti Fund in Orlando, FL.
- August 4, 2010: Evelyn Francis of TTO presented about BYAEP at the American Alliance for Theatre & Education Conference in San Francisco, CA.
- September 1, 2010: Meeting at TTO, we reviewed the reports of year two and suggested changes necessary for administering the five main evaluation tools for our second round.
- September 22, 2010: The introductory BYAEP film was produced by Käthe and two RAW alumni film makers. Within a month of the film’s completion, it was downloaded over 500 times and was seen in 12 countries. Email exchanges took place between BYAEP practitioners in Boston and youth arts professionals in Ecuador and Jordan, two countries where the BYAEP Framework is being utilized.
- October 5, 2010: Käthe and Evelyn presented findings of BYAEP as guest speakers in the Participation Learning Network, The Boston Foundation in Boston, MA.
- October 18, 2010: Käthe, Brenda Rodriguez Andujar of HSTF, Evaluator Julia Gittleman, and Klare Shaw of the Barr Foundation participated as panelists in the *Measuring and Holding Change* session at the Grantmakers in the Arts conference in Chicago, IL.

- November 4, 2010: Käthe presented at the National Guild for Community Arts Education's 2010 Conference in San Francisco, CA. She presented as a panelist in the *Engaging Adolescents: The Adolescent's Journey* session.
- November 12, 2010: We met at ZUMIX. We finalized the Final Self-Evaluation and Program Evaluation, including the end-of-the-year worksheets. We created the draft of the BYAEP Adolescent Risk Survey.

## 2011

- February 4, 2011: We met at The Theater Offensive. We planned for the BYAEP FORUM 2. We critiqued the Forum flyer, our roles, next steps, and review of databases. We also focused on what was working about the second-year process and what continued to be a challenge.
- February 25, 2011: We met at the Hyde Square Task Force. We focused on the results of the Alumni Survey as well as planning the BYAEP Forum Planning and THINK TANK for funders and out-of-state visitors.
- March 4, 2011: We met at the Massachusetts Cultural Council and focused on doing a complete "run through" for the Forum 2. We created guiding questions for the THINK TANK.
- March 11, 2011: The BYAEP Forum 2 was held at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts. 80 people registered, and the attendees not only represented the Boston youth arts community, but youth arts leaders from around the country. We also held a THINK TANK for funders, consultants, and those who attended the Forum from out of state. 20 people attended.
- April 15, 2011: All collaborators met at the Hyde Square Task Force to prepare for The Funders Forum.
- April 25, 2011: All collaborators presented to The Funders Forum at the Barr Foundation.
- June 17, 2011: The Theater Offensive hosted a meeting. We talked about updates from the Funder's Forum, discussed next steps for BYAEP, and reviewed our final evaluations.
- October 21-23, 2011: Käthe presented ten themes of RAW's BYAEP drawing evaluations (more than 250 drawings done over four years at RAW) in a gallery presentation with large images and text at Harvard's Arts in Education Continuing the Conversation Series, *Finding Voice* conference.
- October 24, 2011: Collaborators met at the Hyde Square Task Force and discussed structural changes in evaluations and garnered input for the BYAEP Handbook.
- November 11, 2011: Käthe gave remarks as the Member Speaker at the National Guild for Community Arts Education Annual Meeting at their National Conference in Boston.

## Appendix 3: Telling our Story

### Sample Results in Numbers, Drawings, Images, and Quotations

# RAW's Alumni Survey

Examples from the RAW ALUMNI EVALUATION 2011

Over 150 alumni are now connected to Raw Art Work's (RAW) Alumni Facebook Page. 66 Alumni, with graduates from as far back as 1996, have filled out the Alumni Survey thus far. The following examples are from the 74-question survey. 58% of the respondents were involved for three or more years at RAW.

## RESILIENCY

- 94% felt that their experience at RAW contributed to them gaining an appreciation for further studying the arts.
- 92% say that they agree or strongly agree that they are able to cope with stress and problems in their life.
- 74% state that they are still involved in the arts.

## SELF-EFFICACY and PERSONAL FULFILLMENT

- 89% agree or strongly agree that RAW contributed to their planning for a career and future.
- 80% of graduates are currently working, with 40% working in the field or profession of their choice. 59% of these alums are satisfied with their job right now. 88% have a checking and/or savings account.
- 83% feel that RAW contributed to their working on and achieving their educational goals. 100% received their GED or High School diploma, with 10% being the first in their family to do so. 70% went on to a four-year college. 9% attended or are attending grad school.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- 94% of alumni feel they are able to network (connect with new people).
- 67% feel a connection to their community. 62% spend time participating in community activities.
- 85% are registered to vote.
- 95% feel that their experience at RAW contributed to their current ability to work well in a team and 85% believe RAW contributed to them working to solve problems in their community.
- 95% feel that their experience at RAW contributed to their building trusting relationships with mentors and other adults.
- 80% felt that communication and collaboration were the greatest 21<sup>st</sup> century workforce skills that they learned at RAW.

## SAMPLE QUOTES

*I never thought I would be successful in life. I wanted to, but I thought I would be just like the things that I was exposed to. I now know that I am capable of beating the odds!* - RAW Graduate, 2002, four years in the RAW Chiefs leadership program, currently an Airman Leadership School Instructor in the United States Air Force

*The staff at RAW don't just care about what I make but they care about my soul and my future. They give continual support while I'm treading on a non-traditional path.* - RAW Graduate, Senior at RISD

*RAW gave me a foundation. It's a lot easier to grow into a stronger more confident person when you know that someone will be there no matter what. It's because of the personal traits I developed while at RAW, that I am able to face challenges in life in a calm and confident way.*  
- RAW Graduate



# Raw Art Works - Real to Reel (R2R) Film School

## RISKS of Lynn, MA

### POVERTY

Youth in Lynn are three times as likely as other children in the state to be living in high-poverty neighborhoods.

76% of kids in Lynn Public Schools are eligible for free or reduced lunch.

### EDUCATION

Lynn's high school dropout rate is 47% higher than the state average.

25% of Lynn residents aged 18-24 do not have a high school diploma.

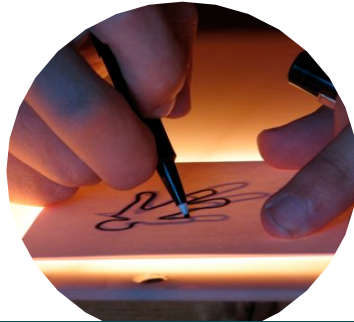
### VIOLENCE

There are 36 active gangs in Lynn. Lynn police estimate that 46% of crime is gang-related.

Lynn's crime rate is ranked 4th in the state.

45% of RAW teens have lost two or more friends or family members to violence, drug overdoses or other unnatural causes.

## RAW Inputs



RAW provides OPPORTUNITIES



RAW provides a POSITIVE CULTURE



RAW provides CONNECTIONS

## RAW Outcomes

### I CREATE

Youth build Artistic, Problem Solving, and Expressive SKILLS

### I AM

Youth strengthen their IDENTITY

### WE CONNECT

Youth develop COMMUNITY

## R2R 2010 - 2011

41 R2R teens were involved in creating films in RAW's R2R programs.

R2R youth produced 21 films in 2010-2011.

100% of RAW's R2R seniors received their high school diploma.

For the past five years over 90% of RAW seniors have applied to and were accepted to over 30 colleges each year.

R2R youth received 26 acceptances into 18 festivals internationally. Four films from R2R earned "best of" awards.

21 films screened at the Peabody Essex Museum, in Salem, MA to a packed house.

R2R partnered with the School of the Museum of Fine Arts and the Museum of Fine Arts for the screening of R2R films.

## Samples of 2010-2011 Evaluation Results

### Indicators

### Quotes



**100%** of R2R teens feel that they use feedback (criticism and praise) to improve their work.

**94%** of R2R teens feel they are able to express who they are through the arts.

**88%** feel they have improved as artists, and feel proud of their contributions.

*“At RAW, I learned more about editing, learned shortcuts on Final Cut Pro, and I learned how to take criticism, good and bad. My biggest challenge and success has been starting a film and finishing it.”*

- Jessie, R2R Beginning

*“In R2R, I improved the most in Creativity and Innovation. I've been trying to think outside the box when I edit and I have learned a what it take to make film!”* - Thia, R2R Beginning



**100%** of teens think about how their past experiences and choices have influenced who they are.

**94%** of R2R teens can now imagine successful options for their future.

**87%** of R2R teens feel that RAW has helped them build their confidence.

*“What I got most out of coming here is learning about myself and learning how to follow my dreams and let nothing stop me.”* - Jose, R2R Beginning

*“At RAW, I gained confidence in my work and in projects that I produce. R2R has also made me a more honest person. I used to be so dishonest with the people around me. Film has allowed me to genuinely express myself.”* - Beverly, R2R Adv.



**88%** of R2R teens feel a sense of belonging in the program.

**100%** feel the staff do a good job and **100%** would recommend the program to their friends.

**92%** of RAW Alumni feel that their experience at RAW contributed to them working well with people from other racial/ethnic groups and **85%** reported that it fostered their ability to solve problems in their community.

*“I feel like film school has matured me as a person and allowed me to form stronger relationships with people due to my newfound confidence. Here, we always have the opportunity to be heard.”* - Dana, R2R Beg.

*“At RAW I count on finding someone who cares about our needs and someone who expects us to be ourselves no matter what.”* - Vicky, R2R Beg.

*“RAW opened up my mind. It helped me accept all types of people. RAW taught me that no challenge is invincible. As long as you have faith and a strong circle of friends and family anything is achievable.”* - Jackson, R2R Alumni, 2006 graduate

# DRAWING IT OUT



## Artistic Responses 2008-2011

*Examples from final program evaluations of Raw Art Works' teen programs - Good to Go, RAW Chiefs, Women 2 Be, Men 2 Be, CORE, Real to Reel Filmschool, and Adventures in Fine Art*

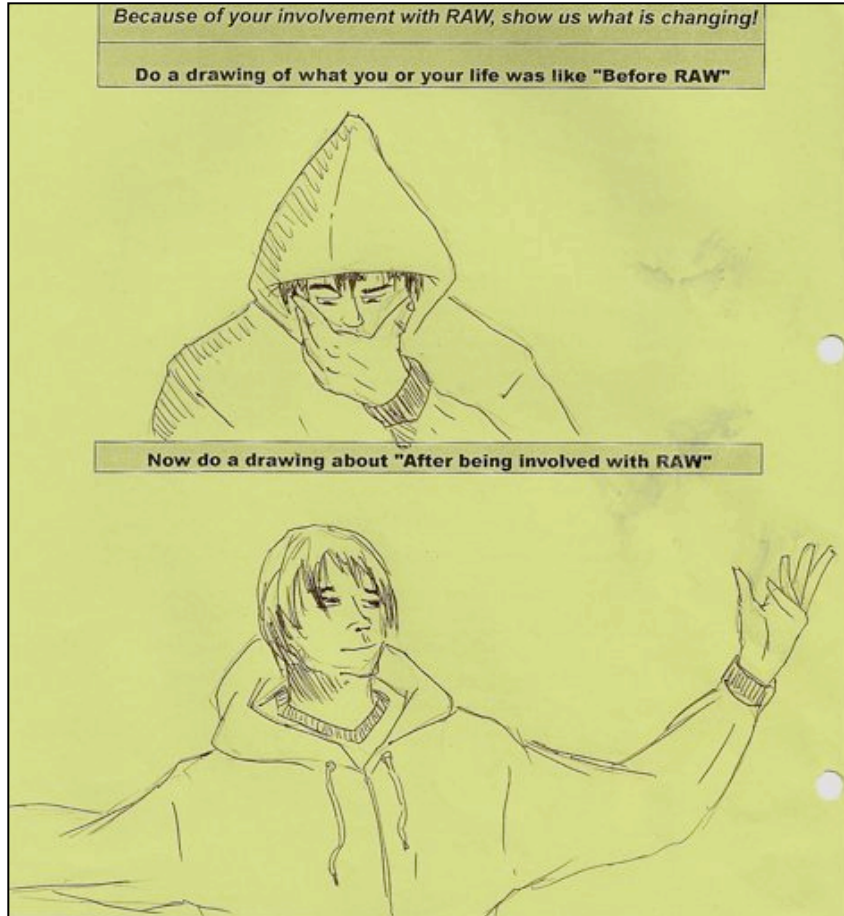
Raw Art Works (RAW) obtained funding in 2008 to create The Boston Youth Arts Evaluation Project (BYAEP), a three-year project with four outstanding nonprofit youth arts organizations in Boston. BYAEP's goal was to create evaluations that changed the emphasis from just collecting data, to establishing a framework and tools that could speak directly to the identity of the field of youth arts—one that truly integrates youth development, the arts, and social services.

For the past three years, as one of five BYAEP evaluation tools, youth have been asked to simply draw a response to...

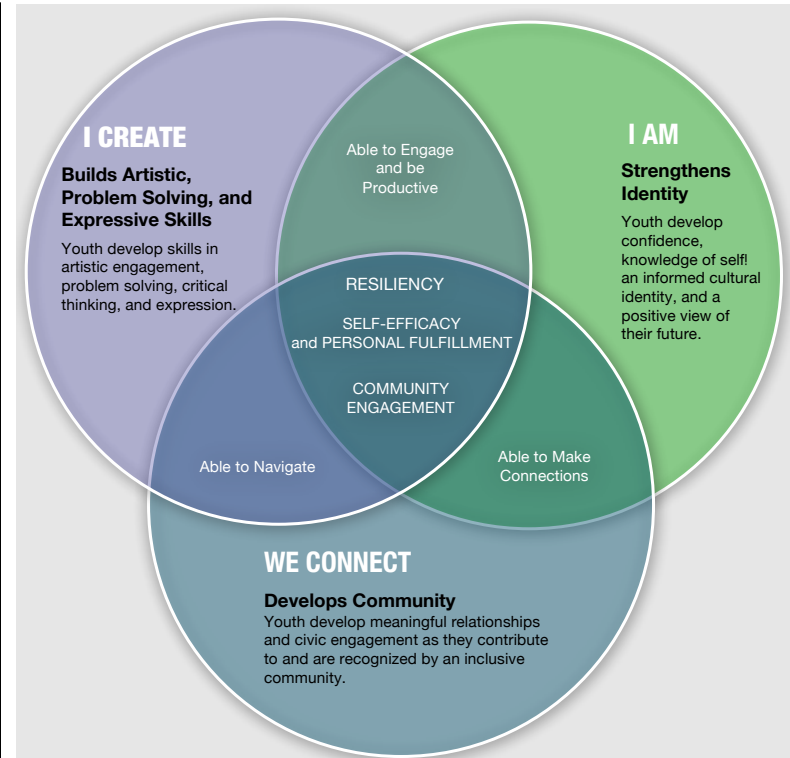
*“What (if anything) is changing because of your involvement here?”*

The following pages contain the BYAEP Framework and one example for each of the themes that have emerged from teens over the past three years at Raw Art Works. An extensive archive of drawing evaluations are available for review upon written request.

# I CREATE, I AM, WE CONNECT



D., G2G, 2007



In 2008-2009, BYAEP developed a framework centering around the outcome areas of:

**“I CREATE, I AM, WE CONNECT”**

In this presentation, these outcomes and their indicators have been expanded to capture the complexity of the drawings, according to what is most prominent. The wealth of subjects that they have chosen to represent often can fit in more than one BYAEP outcome area and we have set up a new category that distinctly speaks to this overlap entitled “Closed to Open” – a distinct theme that was apparent even in the first drawings from 2007.

# 10 “Drawing It Out” Themes

**I CREATE:** Builds Artistic, Problem-Solving and Expressive Skills

- 1. Increased Artistic Engagement:** From BORED to ENGAGED with increased skills
- 2. Develops Expressive Skills:** From QUIET to EXPRESSIVE
- 3. Problem Solving/Critical Thinking:** From BROKEN to FIXED

**I AM:** Strengthens Identity

- 4. Builds Confidence:** From POWERLESS to POWERFUL
- 5. Increases Knowledge of Self:** From OUT OF CONTROL to IN CONTROL
- 6. Develops a Positive View of the Future:** From the “WRONG PATH” to finding the “RIGHT PATH”

**WE CONNECT:** Develops Community

- 7. Increases Support and Belonging:** From being ALONE to being with FRIENDS
- 8. Builds Contribution:** From feeling USELESS to feeling USEFUL
- 9. Gains Recognition:** From NOT SEEN to APPRECIATED

10. (Additional Theme) **From Closed to Open**

# I CREATE


Builds Artistic, Problem-Solving  
and Expressive Skills

## 1. Increased Artistic Engagement: From BORED to ENGAGED with increased skills


**DRAWING IT OUT...**

What (if anything) is changing because of your involvement here?

Draw -- "Before coming here..."



Draw -- "After being involved here..."




Look at your drawing and PLEASE write a few words below to tell us the story of what has changed.

*I went from a few short strokes of undiscovered talent to a(n) expressive and confident artist. Before coming here I was just a few mere circles that had nothing to show and nothing to say to the world. After being involved here I have found my inner artist and now I never want to be separated from him again. I am an artist and I will shine through! – A., Real to Reel, 17*


**2. Develops Expressive Skills** and the ability to convey feelings and thoughts artistically and verbally: From QUIET (few communication skills) to EXPRESSIVE (many skills)

What (if anything) is changing because of your involvement here?

Draw -- "Before coming here..."



Draw -- "After being involved here..."



Look at your drawing and write a few words below to tell us the story of what has changed.


*Before I wanted to basically be silent. Now I want to be me.*  
- D., W2B, 15

**3. Problem Solving/Critical Thinking:** From BROKEN to FIXED


**DRAWING IT OUT...**

What (if anything) is changing because of your involvement here?

Draw -- "Before coming here..."



Draw -- "After being involved here..."



Look at your drawing and PLEASE write a few words below to tell us the story of what has changed.

*My life before coming here was a broken window and after being involved here my life is a beautiful stained glass window.* - H., CORE, AFA, 17

I AM  
Strengthens Identity

4. Builds Confidence: From POWERLESS to POWERFUL

**Raw Art Works: DRAWING IT OUT...**

What (if anything) is changing because of your involvement here?  
Draw -- "Before coming here..."

Draw -- "After being involved here..."


Look at your drawing and write a few words below to tell us the story of what has changed.

*The world is a place of unpleasant things, but I'm starting to think I can brave through it. - R., Real to Reel, 17*

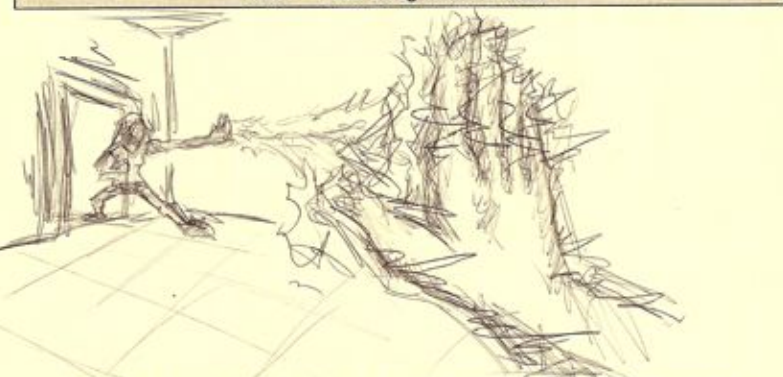


**5. Increases Knowledge of Self** through self-awareness, self-reflection and self-regulation: From OUT OF CONTROL to IN CONTROL

What (if anything) is changing because of your involvement here?  
 Draw -- "Before coming here..."



Draw -- "After being involved here..."

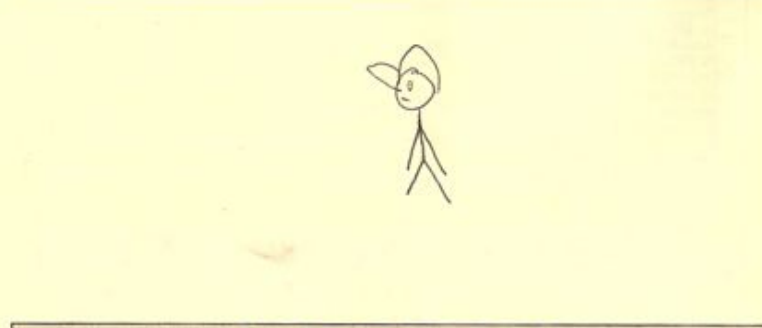


Look at your drawing and write a few words below to tell us the story of what has changed.


*Instead of hiding from my past demons, I have not accepted feeling cornered and have faced them head on, because I am strong enough to do so. Since being here, I have felt a lot less negative toward myself and less afraid to say exactly what is on my mind. I have given off a stronger sense of independence at home and confidence at school. I carry myself higher around others in my community. - E., AFA, 18*

**6. Develops a Positive View of the Future:** From the "WRONG PATH" to finding the "RIGHT PATH"

What (if anything) is changing because of your involvement here?  
 Draw -- "Before coming here..."



Draw -- "After being involved here..."



Look at your drawing and write a few words below to tell us the story of what has changed.

*Since being here, my actions have changed with me looking more into what I really want to do in my future. Now I want to become an industrial designer at Wentworth. I have learned to take my work in with absolute pride and to put every effort and emotion into my artwork. That helped me to realize what an amazing artist I am and what I can become. - D., AFA, 15*

# WE CONNECT


Develops Community

## 7. Increases Support and Belonging: From being ALONE to being with FRIENDS

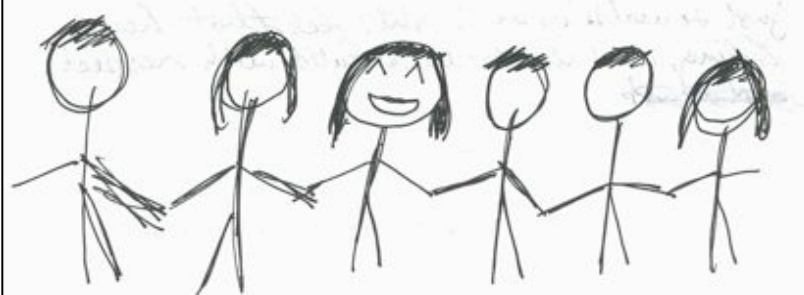
**Raw Art Works: DRAWING IT OUT...**

What (if anything) is changing because of your involvement here?

Draw -- "Before coming here..."



Draw -- "After being involved here..."



*What I have liked most at RAW is the connections between everyone. Walking into RAW each time is like walking into my comfort zone. Everyone at R2R is my family, and when I walk in, I kick my shoes off and just relax. - A., Real to Reel, 17*


**8. Builds Contribution** by finding opportunities, exchanging ideas, and working together to create something in the community: From feeling USELESS to feeling USEFUL

**9. Gains Recognition**, appreciation and/or acknowledgement for an achievement, service, or ability in the eyes of others/ community: From NOT SEEN to APPRECIATED


**DRAWING IT OUT...**

What (if anything) is changing because of your involvement here?

Draw -- "Before coming here..."



Draw -- "After being involved here..."




I am active, outgoing, and more daring since I have come to RAW.

*I used to be housebound. Stuck to a TV screen with this in my hands. After being involved here, I am active, outgoing and more daring since I have come to RAW. I also used to be a lazy kid and be in trouble all the time now I am an active young male teen that contributes positively to my community. – K., RC, 14*


**Raw Art Works: DRAWING IT OUT...**

What (if anything) is changing because of your involvement here?

Draw -- "Before coming here..."



Draw -- "After being involved here..."

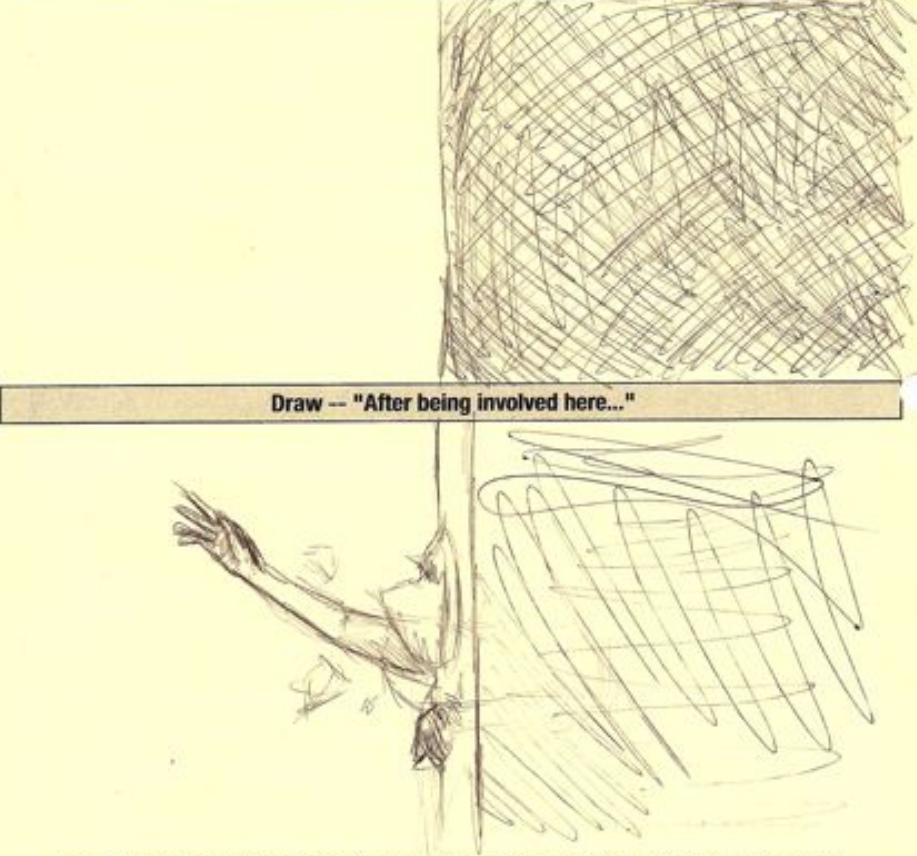


*RAW has helped me make friends who share my love and passion for art. RAW Staff always make sure I'm excited and confident in my pieces. I have learned so much about myself as an artist and I know my voice has been heard. – J., AFA, 17*

**Other common theme** integrating more than one BYAEP outcome area:

## 10. From Closed to Open

What (if anything) is changing because of your involvement here?  
Draw -- "Before coming here..."



Draw -- "After being involved here..."

Look at your drawing and write a few words below to tell us the story of what has changed.

*I've broken out of my comfort zone and learned how to take a risk. I am not afraid to take a risk knowing there are people here to help and support me. This group nourishes me to be successful in the arts. It helps me to keep in touch with who I really am. – H., AFA, 17*

**DRAWING IT OUT...**

What (if anything) is changing because of your involvement here?

Draw -- "Before coming here..."



Draw -- "After being involved here..."



Look at your drawing and PLEASE write a few words below to tell us the story of what has changed.

*Before RAW I felt alone, unheard, belittled. After RAW I feel like me more everyday - happy, supported by people who care, and like I have a voice that's being heard. - S., RC, 16*

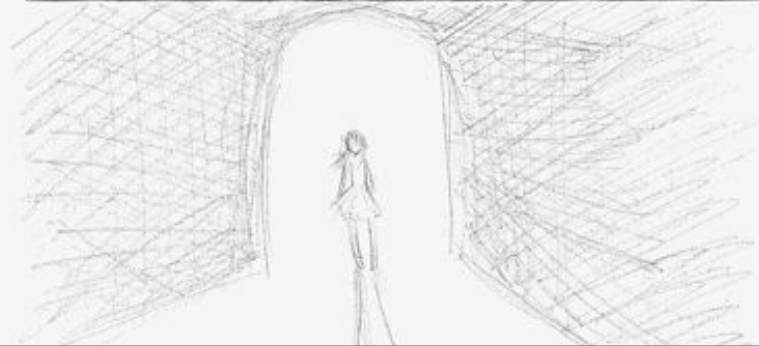
**DRAWING IT OUT...**

What (if anything) is changing because of your involvement here?

Draw -- "Before coming here..."



Draw -- "After being involved here..."



*Tunnel Vision Reversed. - K., CORE, 16*

# Boston Youth Arts Evaluation Project

Images, Numbers, Stories

# The Theater Offensive: True Colors

*Our play inspires others—our play helped others become more aware of our community...at least one member from every audience leaves impacted.*

- True Colors youth





*In True Colors I've learned to not always hide in my shell from everyone 99% of the time. I've learned that having fun while being yourself is the most sensational feeling ever. - True Colors youth*





*My goal was Creativity and Innovation. I used to play it safe and now I think outside the box and dare to be different.*

- True Colors youth

100% agree or strongly agree that they have improved in Leadership because of the program.

*This year I have become more of a leader in the community and have come to realize how proud I am of how far I've come.*

- True Colors youth



*I made a lot of good friends and got rid of bad ones. I feel like I have restored relationships that were being lost. Overall I've had very good relationship with friends and family. - True Colors youth*



# Hyde Square Task Force: Ritmo en Acción

*This year, I don't really get in trouble. I'm more friendly. I changed my attitude. Now I care more about things. One big thing I changed about myself is making healthy and better choices. - Ritmo youth*



93% agree or strongly agree, "I think about how my past experiences and choices have influenced who I am."

*They (my relationships) changed a lot—more friends and more community involvement. Before I was alone. Now I have friends. - Ritmo youth*



In Ritmo, 100% of teens agree or strongly agree, “This year, I have done something valuable for or in my community.” This shows an increase of 43 percentage points from the beginning of the year.

86% agree or strongly agree, “I use feedback (criticism and praise) to improve my work.”



*I have been learning how to listen and talk to others. I also am learning how to respect the decision of others, how to create, and how to be responsible and organized. - Ritmo youth*



*This program is like the sound of Bachata music and the feel of the wind because it reminds me of when we turn a lot in dance class. - Ritmo youth*



*This program made me open up my eyes and made me realize that if I do my best, I can achieve a lot. The more I listen, the more I will learn. - Ritmo youth*



ZUMIX

*I wanted to become someone who meant something. I have.* - ZUMIX youth



92% of ZUMIX youth agree or strongly agree, “I have improved as an artist and feel proud of my contributions.”

*Collaborating with three other guys seemed like a challenge at first, especially if we were to create three original songs, but through communication and determination we did it. - ZUMIX youth*



*ZUMIX is like a portal. ZUMIX is a place to switch gears and cool off, let life breathe while still being productive and having fun. - ZUMIX youth*



*I've been more focused on college-related work to improve my future.  
I am taking bass lessons again to improve my talent and find a way to interact with  
other people and bond with my talent. - ZUMIX youth*



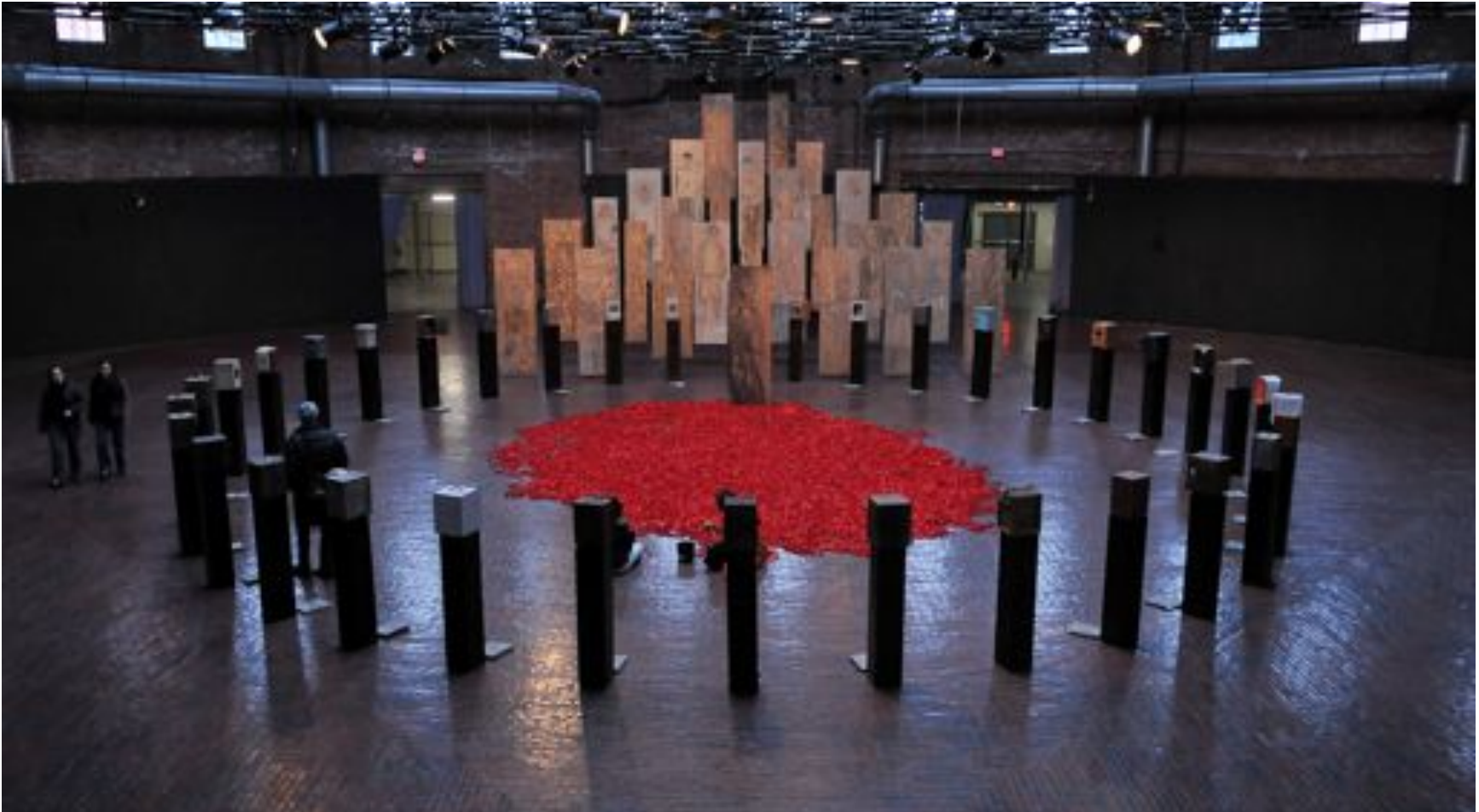
*ZUMIX is like a never-ending cone of ice cream with many different and  
incredible flavors. - ZUMIX youth*





# Medicine Wheel Productions

*At Medicine Wheel, I learned talents in art I never knew I could do.*  
- Medicine Wheel youth



*Last year if someone told me to work on art I would have laughed in their face and walked away. But now I would be the person walking up to people telling them to make art. - Medicine Wheel youth*



*Before coming here I never really listened or cared about much, now I understand how people work and what I need to do to do my job.*

- Medicine Wheel youth



93% of teens agree or strongly agree, “I am comfortable working on projects with people from different backgrounds.”

*This program is like love, you always feel accepted.*  
- Medicine Wheel youth



*I see the Medicine Wheel employees to be honest hard working people who are just trying to make a difference in today's world. That is something that keeps me motivated. - Medicine Wheel youth*



*I came in here a drug addict, left, and returned a soldier and honored member of society—only because of this program, honestly.*

- Medicine Wheel youth



# Raw Art Works





*Before this year, I didn't really use my talents to make anything, while now I'm filled with creativity.*  
- Raw Art Works youth

88% of RAW teens agree or strongly agree, "I have knowledge of the artistic process and have skills in the arts." This increased 22 percentage points from the beginning of the year.

*In school, I learn how to read and write, but here I learn how to speak, and how to express thoughts, ideas, and feelings.*

- Raw Art Works youth



*RAW is like the ease to rainy days. The take-away to my problems.  
The scratch of an itch that has been there for the last five minutes.  
A getaway. - Raw Art Works youth*



*You all changed me and granted me a new perspective  
on who I am and exactly what I am capable of.*  
- Raw Art Works youth



*RAW is like the father  
I never had.*

- Raw Art Works youth

