

Art Builds Community (ABC)

Completed and Funded Grant for 2019-2020



Project Title:

Bubba's Fables

Bubba's Fables was a series of performances by members of the Key West High School Drama Club for young children in Truman Waterfront Park.

Primary Applicant:

The Studios of Key West

Partner Organization:

Key West High School Drama Club



Project Goals:

Bubba's Fables aimed to broaden cultural equity in two particular ways: by empowering local teens to create original, community-based theater; and by reaching younger audiences in and around Truman Waterfront Park in Key West. The performances consisted of vignettes based on classic Aesop fables, but adapted with local Key West history and characters.

Project Outcomes:

Bubba's Fables served the community in a number of ways:

- 1) providing theater opportunities to local high school students, with real responsibility for all aspects of the production;
- 2) by providing free, entertaining theater programming for young audiences and their families, with stories that reflect their lives; and
- 3) enlivening the Truman Waterfront Park with cultural programming to give both the teenage presenters and their audiences a sense of ownership over this shared public space. Truman Waterfront Park is a jewel in Key West's crown, and it was a treat to see our Bubba's Fables audiences light up at the prospect of a free children's show in this unexpected space.



Comments:

We're excited about the national movement to focus on cultural equity as a guiding principle for arts funding, and grateful for the Art Council's leadership in bringing it to Key West. For many, it's a new concept, and I hope the program will remain in place long enough for it to take root.



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Project Title:

A Reading of
Ma Rainey's Black Bottom
by August Wilson

African-American Pulitzer prize winning playwright August Wilson's Ma Rainey's Black Bottom, was performed with script in hand with music.

Primary Applicant:

Fringe Theater of Key West

Partner Organization:

William Weech American
Legion Post 168



Project Goals:

This project was successful in showcasing and connecting our African American performers, community, and history to the performing arts community, thereby, strengthening our relationship as an island community. Our goal was to attract 200 people to see our Black History Month play reading. We maximized our audience reach with sold-out performances each night, and so exceeded our goal of 200. We worked to support the renovations and re-opening of the William Weech American Legion Post 168, an historical venue in Key West built during segregation to meet the needs of African American men and women who served in the armed forces by donating \$3,000 to the cause.

Project Outcomes:

Fringe is committed to creating a more diverse theater experience by nurturing nonwhite performers, playwrights, directors, and by presenting works that reflect the history of the black community. Ma Rainey's Black Bottom included 7 nonwhite performers (out of 10) and an African American director/project manager. Our readers were diverse in age range (17 to 70) and came from diverse backgrounds including lifelong Conchs and recent immigrants to the US. Ma Rainey's audience was far more diverse than typically seen at any theater production in Key West.



Comments:

We are so grateful for the opportunity to partner with the Florida Keys Council of the Arts on this project. Diversity doesn't just happen, and these projects are not inexpensive because of their size and scope. It's sometimes hard to decide between doing the right cultural thing and doing the right fiscal thing.

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Project Title:

Smilemaker:

Tooth Fairy Art

To build community awareness of the importance of good oral hygiene, beginning at an early age.

Primary Applicant:

Clarice M. Yentsch

Partner Organization:

Florida Keys Area Health Education Center (AHEC)



Project Goals:

The two-part program known as SmileMaker was launched in March 2019. The goal of the clinical component is to provide comprehensive dental care to underserved children in the Florida Keys; a mobile dental clinic would be the most efficient and self-sustaining option. The goal of the second component, education, is building community awareness of the importance of good oral hygiene, beginning at an early age, and the unmet needs of Keys children for access to dental care. Two main events were the month-long SmileMaker exhibition at the Key Largo Library Community Room, and a Family Dental Fair and Tooth Fairy Parade.

Project Outcomes:

We believe our goal of creating community awareness was successful. It was achieved through the Arts in the form of visual displays with colorful canvases and photographs, x-rays of teeth, and a 1:12 scale model of a Mobile Dental Clinic, musical performances at the Family Fair, and costumes created by and worn by children in a joyful Tooth Fairy Parade.



Comments:

The 2020 SmileMaker Project was a success on many levels. Qualifying as a "labor of love", it is a culmination of the skills, talents, and drive



of many individuals, powered by their passion to make the world a better place. Having good dental health is so important, both physically and socially, and has such an impact on one's

life. The impact of the proposed Mobile Dental Clinic will be felt for generations of kids in the Keys, providing access and availability, and potentially, changing their lives.