In 2005, the Oregon Arts Commission awarded $117,000 through the Arts Build Communities grant program. Those funds supported 24 diverse projects — more than in past years, thanks to a funding partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts and the USDA Forest Service. The recipients, 24 arts and community organizations, leveraged those funds to benefit thousands of Oregonians throughout the state in underserved communities.

The ABC funding was just a fraction of the resources required for these projects; the balance came from a wide variety of sources and partners. The signal value of state support is validation that the arts play a strong role in the broad social, economic, and educational arenas of our lives. This work is important, because the health and well-being of our communities is important.

The ABC projects recognize that “community” is not really bricks and mortar or names on a map, but people. A social fabric interconnected by our differences as much as our agreements. People are like ... well, like mushrooms, to risk a characteristically Northwest metaphor: individual beings to the casual eye, yet connected by a million threads hidden in the earth. It’s that network of connections beneath - the nerve-fine fibers botanists call the mycelium - that nurtures us and give us strength. Art has the power to dig below the surface, to illuminate those fibers and nourish them.

The arts are uniquely qualified for their role as community builders.

They are, first of all, intimately concerned with humankind: our concerns, relationships, ideas, fears, and dreams. “Art can amuse or entertain or distract or educate or agitate or ennoble or debase,” wrote The Oregonian’s film critic Shawn Levy in a review. “It can dig into the human unconscious and reveal the deepest, most unknowable of truths. It can do almost anything.”

And do it in surprising fashion. Art has always been interested in new ways of thinking, new ways of looking at virtually everything. Artists are creative thinkers by nature, a very good job qualification for confronting the tricky challenges that face some of our communities.

The arts exist to make connections between people and ideas, between people and people. “The Arts Build Communities projects,” says Arts Commission Chair Cynthia Addams, “connect the arts with issues facing Oregonians: at-risk youth, downtown revitalization, facility development, and community building. These projects speak to the vitality of the arts in community life.”

They provide a bridge to bring us together.

They provide a window to better understand our world.

They provide a mirror to better understand ourselves.

They provide a lens to focus on issues that matter.

They fuel our economy in surprising ways.

They teach us, entertain us, enrich our lives.

They make us think.

As the projects themselves demonstrate, the arts are not Portland or Ontario, urban or rural, dry side or wet side, blue state or red state. They are people. All of us. Community.
The 24 Arts Build Communities projects described in this report took place in every part of our state and touched Oregonians of all ages and origins. They involved music, dancing, drumming, theater, storytelling, basket making, heritage, painting, photography, film, teaching, learning, and the arts of working, talking, and listening together.

In every case, the defining purpose was to build community; art was the means to that end.

The ABC grant program celebrates the very great power of the arts to make a difference in our lives. And not merely through their ability to entertain or divert us, though that is important too. The arts are effective at building community because they make the connections that are necessary for community to exist: from person to person, from person to idea, from past to present to future.

Artmaking, after all, is a form of disciplined action that draws on one of our most powerful attributes: the human imagination. The arts make us think, of course; they also make us better thinkers. This is not a new idea. Philosophers, writers, artists, and others have been covering that ground for centuries. But it’s worth reminding ourselves from time to time, when other voices start to use the word “arts” in the same sentence with “expendable” and “elite.”

These ABC projects show clearly that the arts are far from the exclusive preserve of a select few. In many instances, art was made not solely by “artists,” but through collaboration with “ordinary” people, many of whom gained a new understanding of their own interests and talents and of the nature and power of art.

As we read through the descriptions of these projects—a surprising diversity of medium, expression, purpose, and audience—we may find ourselves asking, “What exactly is art, anyway?” It’s a question that has intrigued artists and critics since the days of cave painting, and we’re not likely to settle it here. But Leo Tolstoy, the great Russian writer, took a broad view that speaks very clearly to the goals and accomplishments of Oregon’s Arts Build Communities program:

“All human life is filled with works of art of every kind,” Tolstoy wrote, “from cradlesong, jest, mimicry, the ornamentation of houses, dress, and utensils, up to church services, buildings, monuments, and triumphal processions. It is all artistic activity.”

And who are the artists who create these works of passion, grace, and power? Why, we all are, of course.

– Christine D’Arcy
Executive Director
Jefferson Nature Center

Marking Our Place: Exploring the Natural World and Our Place in It

“My skin turned to the transparency of water. I dissolved into the river. As I flowed down, the salmon swam up and through me, until there was just the energy of teeming life. I was everything imaginable.”

– Jane H. Anderson

The Not Too Wise Woman Meets a Daldal Brother

Artists are explorers by nature. Equipped with brush and pen, they strike off into uncharted territory, seeking essential facts of life. This search is one of their chief duties, one of the reasons we listen to them. Or should.

In 2005, Jefferson Nature Center, headquartered in Medford, created a project designed to make the exploration physical as well as metaphorical. Marking Our Place would send artists and writers off into actual wilderness to explore the relationships between community, art, and nature. If, as we’ve been told, there are tongues in trees, books in the running brooks, sermons in stones, and good in everything, we’d do well to pay attention.

The project faced the issue of community building head-on: Connections to the land and the cycles of the land erode. Communities dissolve, become unrecognizable. Stuff happens. In the face of constant change, asked Susan Cross, the center’s director. “Can we find a brotherhood based on place? Can we arrange a constellation of ideas, hopes, longing, and creativity around our love for the landscape?”

It’s a particularly apt challenge here in the Northwest, where the land is so elemental a part of our lives, and our ties to place are both powerful and intimate. Nowhere is this more evident than in the Southern Oregon-Northern California border region. In the 1940s, strong-minded citizens here mounted a serious movement for statehood. Today, the State of Jefferson exists as more of a Jefferson State of Mind with no fixed borders, but that strong regional identity and close connection to the land still endure.

Marking Our Place brought together 32 regional artists and writers who normally would not have had an opportunity to work together. They were connected with local naturalists and sent off in artist-scientist teams to ten different locations – urban, agricultural, wilderness. There, they spent a day bonding with each other and the land, recording “ground truths” about those relationships, seeking hidden paths to community.

In the process, Marking Our Place sought to benefit its community through three goals:
1. Strengthen awareness and understanding of the landscape
2. Support artists and writers by providing stipends and venues for their work
3. Add to a growing body of art and literature focused on the State of Jefferson.

Collaborating on a Community of Place

Artists are sometimes thought of as solitary creatures. But creating art is often a team effort – just as community-building takes teamwork. The art born of Marking Our Place was inspired by nature-art collaborations – by community, in other words. Those works, produced by pen, brush, camera, computer, stone, sky, water, and wood, were then shared with the greater community in a series of public readings and exhibits at local libraries. In the fall of 2005, they were collected in a handsome 40-page magazine, Marking Our Place: A Place-Based Arts Project.

Building community takes work, director Cross wrote in her introduction to Marking Our Place. “It takes desire. It takes attention.... It becomes a work of creation; a work of affiliation, assembly, selection, association.” It must be done a step at a time, community by community. Marking Our Place took essential first steps by forging connections between art and nature, and between neighbors. “I was even surprised,” Cross noted, “to see how many people who were involved in visual arts or writing in our modestly sized community still had never met one another, let alone worked together.”

The artists discovered how working together can open new channels of creativity. “It felt as if we were doing something spiritually important,” wrote one participant. “The work...allowed us to talk fairly openly about our emotional feelings of what we were doing and our connections to salmon, the land, and to this particular place.” Another called it “a fertilizing event.... It fostered relationships that will be producing collaborative work for years to come.”

“As we climb, we take turns leading and following. And as we climb, the solid soul of this ancient rock, with its message of endurance and perseverance, encircles us like an unexpected endowment.”

– Anne Batzer

A Deeper Magic

Project
Marking Our Place

Organization
Jefferson Nature Center, Medford, Oregon

Principal Partners
Rogue Valley Audubon, Bureau of Land Management, Klamath Bird Observatory, Rogue Gallery, Arts Council of Southern Oregon, Jackson County Library System

To Obtain a Copy
Copies of Marking Our Place are available for $10 from Jefferson Nature Center, 112 E. 6th Street, Ste. A, Medford, Oregon 97501.
Ethos Music Center: THUMP

Reaching Underserved Kids Through a Hip-Hop Beat

Music may have charms to soothe the savage breast, as that old English playwright Congreve famously observed. But geniuses of an earlier age went much further. Music, they believed, has ethical powers that can change your thoughts, moods, and actions. It doesn’t just shape emotions, it molds character.

The ancient Greeks called this the “Doctrine of Ethos.” We bring it up here because it’s still very much alive in classrooms on Portland’s north and northeast sides, thriving where traditional music programs are as rare as, well, living Greek philosophers. The doctrine provides both a name and a guiding principal for Ethos Music Center, a Portland-based nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting music and music-based education for youth in underserved communities.

Ethos was established in 1998 in direct response to budget cuts that limited music education in public schools. It’s based on the belief that every child should have the opportunity to make music, regardless of income level. Its programs are offered on a sliding scale to keep them affordable, and free instrument rentals are available for students with financial need. Under a contract with Portland Children’s Investment Fund, the organization provides music instruction to more than 300 underserved youth in North and Northeast Portland.

Rather than limit itself to traditional music programs, Ethos offers a variety of options to ensure that music making is an enjoyable activity for a wide diversity of students.

Teaching Today, Touching Tomorrow

In 2005, Ethos was awarded an Arts Build Communities grant for The Hip-Hop and Urban Music Project—THUMP, for short. THUMP’s aims are … well, one word that comes to mind is “sneaky.” But sneaky in a positive way. The project is carefully constructed to co-opt the negative forces associated with hip-hop and, through a kind of musical jujitsu, flip it into a positive learning experience. Youth in grades 4 through 12 are taught how to create their own beats, write and record their own songs, film their own DVDs, and use high-tech equipment.

And as they write their songs, they learn language skills. The process of counting and dividing beats becomes a math lesson. They discover how important learning is to achieving what really matters to them.

The project is well managed and extremely popular, but is it effective? In a word, yes. A study conducted by Portland Public Schools found these results at the five schools where THUMP has been implemented:

- 79% of Ethos students had no discipline or behavioral referrals
- 67% improved their grades
- 65% made progress on meeting state standards in math
- 58% made progress on meeting state standards in reading.

Other studies point to reduced absenteeism and
fewer discipline issues among THUMP participants. “This class makes me want to come to school,” said one 12-year-old.

The success has been especially noteworthy among at-risk youth. Ethos executive director Charles Lewis reports that teachers and administrators “talk about a renewed energy and excitement since we started our hip-hop program. Students themselves use the song writing as a positive, cathartic exercise that is literally turning lives around.”

As an added benefit, THUMP provides paid employment for urban music artists while giving them an opportunity to serve their communities.

All in all, the Ethos story goes a long way toward demonstrating that if you find something kids are interested in, you’re halfway to teaching them. And that the educational power of the arts is one more reason why it’s a false economy to cut them from our classrooms.

The ancient Greeks had a concept for that, too. It’s called “logic.”

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**Project**

The Hip-Hop Urban Music Project (THUMP)

**Organization**

Ethos Music Center, Portland, Oregon

**Principal Partners**

Portland Children’s Investment Fund; Boys & Girls Clubs; Self Enhancement, Inc.; Police Activities League.

**More Information**

www.ethos-inc.org
Witness Our Schools: Creating a Real-Life Dialogue for Change

From the day some 3,000 years ago when actors first stepped onto a stage, theater has delved into the deepest and most debated issues of our lives. The uses of power, the power of love, the meaning of life, school funding.

School funding? That’s hardly the kind of universal theme Shakespeare would wrap his iambic pentameter around. Yet, here in Oregon, it has all the earmarks of long-running drama: political intrigue, conflict, comedy, tragedy. And, of course, relevance. There’s hardly an Oregonian alive who doesn’t see this as one of the most critical challenges facing our state.

Enter Sojourn Theatre, an eight-year-old Portland-based ensemble company with a strong view of its responsibilities as a contributing member of society:

“Our core beliefs lead us to examine the values that bring Americans together, and that keep us apart. We believe art, and theater in particular, can act as a bridge; that it can offer spaces for illumination, recognition, and above all else, dialogue.”

—Statement on Sojourn Theatre Website

In 2004, Sojourn began developing a community dialogue project that would both explore public education in Oregon and “reveal the arts as part of the civic solution.” Company members conducted more than 500 interviews throughout the state with students, parents, educators, policy-makers, activists, and others. They then spent months turning those voices into Witness Our Schools, a highly physical performance piece intended to illuminate the issues, recognize the voices, clarify existing values, and launch the reasonable dialogue critical to a solution.

The performance itself would be Act 1. Act 2 would be a post-performance discussion with the audience as means of energizing the interaction between leaders and citizens.

Sojourn then took the show on the road, to the state school board association conference, to the state Capitol Building for a performance for Legislators, to more than 20 communities throughout the state. They lined up hosts and partners in each community, and they secured funding so the events could be offered free of charge.

Building Dialogs in Eastern Oregon

In 2005, Sojourn was awarded an Arts Build Communities grant to support an Eastern Oregon tour. In Ontario, a committed and engaged group of citizens from the Ontario, Nyssa, and Vale areas turned out for an in-depth discussion — even on Super Bowl Sunday. In Pilot Rock, a community of 1500 facing the threat of school closures, reaction was vocal and passionate; the event served as a conduit for the critical public forum the community had been aching to have.

The project has sparked debate, dialogue, and partnerships between education leaders, citizens, and policy makers wherever it’s played. Transcripts of the interviews were added to the Oregon Historical Society’s

Project
Witness Our Schools

Organization
Sojourn Theatre, Portland, Oregon

Principal Partners
The Chalkboard Project; Eastern Oregon Regional Arts Council; Oregon Historical Society; many high schools, educators, elected officials, business leaders, funders, and policy advocates throughout Oregon

More Information
www.sojourntheatre.org
research library. Thanks in part to Witness Our Schools, Sojourn was accepted into the Americans for the Arts Exemplar Program, funded by the Ford Foundation to recognize organizations for their high level of artistic merit, innovation, and civic engagement. Sojourn is one of only 12 companies nationwide supported by the program.

Finding the Other Side

Critical to the project’s success was making sure that all voices and all sides of the debate were included, both in the performance and in the dialog that follows it.

“We believe that polarization and ideological stalemate … are central to our nation’s inability to move forward on important social-justice and economic-justice and human rights issues.”

- Michael Rohd
Sojourn Founding Artistic Director

“We put the heat of ideology onstage, so the dialogue that follows does not start with extremes shouting to be heard — they’ve already been heard.”

- James Ingersoll
Ensemble member

“Our shows ask questions. Lots of questions. The dialogues give people a chance to dive into those questions with a framework, and a starting point.”

- Hannah Treuhaft
Ensemble member

Sojourn’s wide-open approach “is one way across the famous political divide that splits the U.S. population over so many seemingly intractable social issues,” noted Linda Frye Burnham, co-director of the Art in the Public Interest, a national organization that supports the efforts of culturally engaged artists and organizations. “After decades of ‘activism,’ of seeing everything in black and white, Americans find ourselves at a standoff, with both sides neutralized. Many community-based artists (like Sojourn) think we need to spend more time listening to each other.”

“Every time we do the show, somebody always says, “I have never considered this issue from perspective X, and now I have to reconsider my perspective.”

- Michael Rohd

Theater is an outspoken art. Throughout most of its history, it’s dared to utter uncomfortable truths, for which pleasure it’s gotten in trouble with many different governments. The power of theater, as with any artform, lies in its courage to speak those truths in public. The value of programs like Witnessing Our Schools lies in its ability and ambition to wield that power for the common good.

From left: Ryan Keilty, James Ingersoll, Rebecca Martinez.
Creating Jobs.
Building Community.
Realizing Dreams.

It started one warm summer night about a decade before the bears showed up. Infected by a bug from other places where, according to reports, this idea had worked, a group of organizers brought together artists, musicians, businesses, and nonprofits to create a monthly celebration of community, food, music, and the arts in downtown Grants Pass.

The public came. And kept on coming. Before long, First Friday Art Night was attracting over a thousand people to the Old Town area and the rest of downtown. Businesses stayed open late, freed space for displaying artwork, for musical performances, for readings by local authors. They made friends, had a good time, did business.

A Second Friday Art Walk soon started in Cave Junction. People began to see what the arts and arts-based businesses could do for the vitality — economic and otherwise — of the community. A seed had been planted.

In 2003, Rogue Community College established the Art Works Community Initiative with the mission “to develop the arts and arts-related activities as a vital component of regional economic development, and of the quality of life in our community.

That July, the bears arrived.

Summer of the Bears

There were 21 of them, boldly occupying the sidewalks of Grants Pass, forcing visitors to stop and touch and say things like “aww” and “wow” and “cool.” They were every color of the rainbow, and every one was a work of art painted, decorated, or embellished by a local artist.

This was Bearfest, brainchild (braincub?) of Evergreen Federal Bank, a local institution with a strong commitment to community service. Evergreen bought the fiberglass bears, adopted them out to artists, and relocated them to new territory downtown. At summer’s end, the artbears were auctioned off, with proceeds going to local nonprofit agencies serving community needs. Josephine County embraced its new ursine citizens with a passion. Sixty bears showed up the next year, 62 in 2005.

The bear community wasn’t the only thing growing along the Rogue. So was the conviction that art can be a significant economic driver, along with the determination to do something about it. This was true not only of the artists and arts lovers in town, but also among the general public, civic leaders, and, perhaps most significantly, the business community.

That interest coalesced around the Art Works Community Initiative. In 2004, Art Works made its initial public presentation, showcasing the scope of

**Project**
Art Works Community Initiative

**Organization**
Rogue Community College

**Principal Partners**
A comprehensive spectrum of businesses, city agencies and bureaus, artists and arts organizations, visitor and business associations, chambers of commerce, and individuals throughout Grants Pass and Josephine County

**More Information**
www.artworksgp.com
local art and artist and art business success stories, and launching the Art Works website. Soon, representatives of the private, public and nonprofit sectors were meeting on a regular basis to identify methods and strategies that would further the initiative’s mission and support efforts to increase the economic impact of the arts throughout the community and region.

A Public-Private-Nonprofit Partnership

In 2005, Rogue Community College was awarded an Arts Build Communities grant to continue its planning efforts. There followed an intensive and focused community process involving dozens of focus groups, community meetings, and interviews. Businesses, artists, youth, educators, arts groups, seniors, community leaders, people of all ages, backgrounds and perspectives participated.

The result, after weeks of gathering, collating, massaging, and discussing, is a cohesive, visionary ten-year community strategic plan. It outlines five major goals, with emphasis on several achievable first-year tasks with identified leaders and partners. Presentations to community groups and potential partners about the plan’s key concepts and needs are taking place in 2006. In May, for instance, more than 80 artists attended an "Artrepreneur” workshop to learn about making a living through their craft.

The Art Works core work group continues to meet monthly to keep the process moving forward. That group includes representatives from the cities of Grants Pass and Cave Junction, local businesses, Southern Oregon Guild, and the Art Council of Southern Oregon.

Grants Pass and the surrounding area have a long arts tradition, a fact once hidden in shadows thrown by the region’s historic economic giants. No longer. Like many Oregon communities, Josephine County seeks a more diversified base than the timber and agricultural dependencies of the past. Critical to the success of Art Works is that new and existing businesses are stepping forward to play a leading role in reinventing how the community supports itself.

Charlie Mitchell, Economic Development Coordinator for the City of Grants Pass and a key player in the Art Works Initiative, puts it like this:

“"The arts are really more of a means than an end, more of a catalyst of community change than an independent industry. The arts can change the way a community looks at itself and can change the way outsiders view the community." Citing Richard Florida in Rise of the Creative Class, he says, "A city’s creative quotient equates to economic success."

Periodic visits by highly creative, very embraceable bears doesn’t hurt either.
Building Bridges with Light and Sound

A young man, educated abroad, returns to his African homeland full of hope for what he can achieve for his country. Ten years later, illusions turned to dust, he seeks a more fulfilling life among the traditional — and innocent? — Baaka people. But “education” does not always mean “understanding,” and good intentions do not guarantee happy endings.¹

It can be a challenge to know and respect other cultures, but if we are to build strong communities, whether at home or abroad, it’s critical that we do exactly that. So how do we go about it?

One way, of course, is through the arts. For more than 15 years in Portland, the Cascade Festival of African Films has been using the art of film to foster an appreciation of the richness, complexity, and diversity of African peoples and their cultures.

The magic of the festival lies in the fact that it features far more than actors on a screen. Each year’s films are selected based on quality and their ability to raise provocative questions, says Executive Director P. Michael Drake, “but it is the post-film discussions that really create the enduring bonds that build community.”

The festival achieves its greater purpose by bringing people together in a forum where open and honest dialogue can flourish.

In a Dakar shantytown, a black man in a garish red dress and a blond wig stumbles drunkenly on high heels into a shack, where a woman in traditional dress crouches with her daughter and baby. She points a pistol at him, orders him out. But he takes the gun from her. Cut to the outside. Shots are fired. The man staggers out and collapses, bleeding from multiple bullets.²

The first festival in 1991 showed four films and drew 400 people. The 2005 festival ran five weeks and screened more than 20 films representing all four corners of the African continent, as well as the African diaspora. Three preeminent African filmmakers were brought to Portland for screenings and discussions, thanks in part to funding from the Oregon Arts Commission.

The 2005 audience exceeded 4,000, highest in festival history. As in years past, it was a spectrum of nationalities, ethnicities, social strata, and ages who came from throughout the region.

In the beginning, the festival was organized and run by unpaid volunteers from the community and offered to the public free of charge. It still is. Today, it also maintains the African Video Collection, one of the largest libraries of African films in the Pacific Northwest. Housed at the Cascade Campus of Portland Community Colleges, the films are accessible to students, faculty and staff, and the public.

Embracing Complexity, Respecting Difference

The films are selected to show Africa through the eyes of Africans, not a vision of Africa framed primarily for...
Western viewers. They explore thorny issues: the role of women in Africa, the legacy of slavery, the conflict between tradition and the lure of the modern, Western-influenced world. And when the films have had their say, the audiences take over. “Sometimes Americans just want simple answers,” a viewer noted, “but Africa is not a simple place. Nor are we a simple people.” Nor, one might add, are any of us.

“For me,” wrote another viewer, “Africa was a place where all the old stereotypes lived on in my head. In my mind, fed by TV and American movies, Africa was a place where life was all about the struggle for survival and maybe the oppression of women. But these movies show women as very powerful change agents, and people in general as complex individuals searching for meaning in their lives.”

Souleymane Cissé, one of Africa’s leading filmmakers and a participant in the 2005 festival, has stated that it’s not his job to interpret his films. Audiences have that responsibility. Drake, the festival’s executive director, believes that’s what makes the festival work. “The life of the project … extends far beyond the 90 minutes that a film is being shown. It is in the post-film discussion, the handouts, the context in which the art is experienced.”

Context is the key to understanding. We achieve it by seeking connections. By embracing exposure to different cultures, different experiences, different beliefs. By examining those differences through the prism of art.

The festival correctly sees film as a medium for artistic expression and illumination. The illumination comes as much from those who gather to experience the art as it does from the artists themselves.

Waati [Time] is like a book. It is our memory. Each time there is a need, we will open up this book and look at it…. Let us hope that there is reconciliation around the whole planet and that people of all races would pay less attention to what races they belong so that man emerges victorious…. This film is not a bitter film, but an understanding one, so that people can mutually pardon each other and tell each other the truth.3

1. *The Forest* by Didier Ouénangaré and Bassek ba Kohhio;
2. *Madame Brouette* by Senegalese director Moussa Sene Absa;
3. Director Souleymane Cissé discussing his film *Waati* (Time).
**Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw Indians**

**Songs of Our Ancestors, Voices of Our Children:**
Finding Community in the Sharing of Culture

*It gave me goose bumps — it feels magical, singing with my ancestors.*

The wax cylinders were 80 years old, and they sounded terrible. But behind the scratches and static was the unmistakable voice of traditional songs and drumming, just as Melville Jacobs had recorded them in 1930. A noted anthropologist and folklorist, Jacobs had made it his life’s work to preserve the languages and traditions of the Indian peoples of Oregon and Washington.

Now, the Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw Indians were engaged in a project to reclaim their cultural heritage, pass it on to new generations, and share it with others. Under the project, they would create an intertribal drum and dance group that would carry the tribes’ cultural traditions out into the community at large.

Through computer magic, the old voices and drumming on the cylinders were recovered, cleaned up, and transferred to CD, becoming a “soundtrack” for the tribes’ newly formed drum and dance group. And then the human magic began.

The people who sang on the original cylinders were people of the 19th century. The adult singers at the new drum sessions had been born in the 20th. The youngest ones who joined them were children of the 21st century. And so, said Howard Roy, the tribe’s cultural development coordinator, “we had drummers, singers, and dancers from three centuries singing together harmoniously.” This was the first time many tribal members had been able to hear their traditional drumbeat or language or to see their traditional dancing. And for at least one 9-year-old, it was powerful, goose bump-producing magic.

**Restoring Pride in an Ancient Heritage**

By restoring connections with ancestors, the old recordings deepened tribal members’ respect for a cultural heritage that had been interrupted in its passage from generation to generation. “Spiritually,” noted Roy, “our ancestors seem to live again, through the words and songs they left us. Now, because of this project, our native language is forever captured.”

Now, too, that language and the heritage it expresses can be shared with others. Throughout 2005, the drum and dance group participated in festivals, pow-wows, ceremonies, and other gatherings throughout the region. These included the Florence Folk Festival and the Tsalila Festival in Reedsport, where more than 4,000 children were introduced to the tribes’ ancestral culture. Tribal members participated in culture classes for underserved communities, held at the Florence and Springfield outreach offices. They fashioned moccasins, dance shawls, ribbon shirts, ribbon dresses, and necklaces out of leather, beads, and fabric. They gathered tules, cedar bark, vine maple, yew wood, hazel shoots, salt-water sedge grass, and wild iris; from these, they made clothing, hats, baskets, bows and arrows as in older times.

They forged valuable new partnerships with other artists and organizations – with drum groups and dancers, regalia and necklace makers, story tellers and flute circles; with schools and chambers of commerce; with federal, state, and local agencies – all joined in community to preserve Native American culture.

The work started under this project will continue. The catalyst for its success, Roy said, “was creating an environment of exuberance that seemed magical because it featured the wisdom of tribal elders overseeing drumming, singing, dancing, and the gathering process.” That sentiment was perfectly reflected in the words of a tribal elder, who spoke at an early gathering:

“You people here today are the last of the past seven generations of your tribe. It is your responsibility to pass on your culture and your traditions to the next seven generations.”

**Project**
Intertribal Drum and Dance Group

**Organization**
Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw Indians

**Principal Partners**
Tribal Culture Committee, Tribal Cultural Coalition Committee, Florence Intertribal Drum Group, Coyote Singers Intertribal Drum Group, Title Seven Natives’ Program, Umpqua Discovery Center

**More Information**
www.ctclusi.org
Snapshots: Summaries of Arts Build Communities Projects

The Oregon Arts Commission awarded $117,000 through the Arts Build Communities grant program in 2005. Those funds supported 24 diverse projects, including the six featured in this publication. Here are capsule descriptions of the remaining projects. Descriptions are excerpted from reports made by the project organizations, and have been edited for brevity and clarity.

**Asian Health and ServiceCenter**

**Cultural Enrichment, Integration, and Harmonizing Program**

The Cultural Enrichment, Integration, and Harmonizing Program, presented by the Asian Health and ServiceCenter, in partnership with the Beaverton Arts Commission, applied ABC funding to art classes and exhibitions designed to integrate non-English speaking Asian immigrants into the community and enrich cultural diversity. The program included 10 art classes and drew 190 students, ranging in age from 6 to 88. “We realized that people communicate through different channels. The students in the classes may use different languages or dialects [but] they can all understand each other through the art they learned in class. We are not only helping them to utilize their talents, but at the same time, we are enriching our community with art and beauty.” (www.ahscpdx.org)

**Broadway Rose Theatre Company**

**Assistive Listening Devices**

Broadway Rose has been producing a season of musicals each summer for over 14 years and is the only professional theater company in Washington County. More than 12,000 of its patrons are age 65 or over; many are reluctant to drive to downtown Portland, making Broadway Rose an important cultural resource and community gathering place. In 2005, the company purchased 16 assistive listening devices (ALD) for use by audience members free of charge. “Without the ALDs, many of our patrons would not be able to attend our shows and enjoy the thrill of a live performance. Because our patrons come to our musicals not only to see an excellent show, but to socialize with their friends in the community, we strive to make our performances as accessible as possible.” (www.broadwayrose.com)

**Bump In The Road Theatre**

**Adventures in Ill-Care**

Bump in the Road Theatre, partnering with Providence Center on Aging and Northwest Parish Nurse Ministries, used a community-involvement approach to create a new play intended to illuminate the mysteries of today’s health care system. “While a solution to the health care crisis was not discovered, the play did spark intense feelings in the audience and creative team. Most people acknowledged that they learned about aspects of the system they were not aware of before. The project was a success, if only for that reason. The audience served was an interesting mix of health care professionals, patients, the elderly, and college students. This diverse group had radically different takes on the show, but almost all were affected enough to stay and talk during the talkbacks.” (www.bumpintheroad.org)

**Columbia Gorge Arts in Education**

**Week of Words**

Week of Words, the second annual celebration of literary arts for children and adults in the Columbia Gorge, presented two well-attended adults workshops and two successful sessions of the Summer Literary Camp for youth, one each in Hood River and The Dalles. “The project did a wonderful job of bringing together young writers, their parents, adult writers, and song writers in the Gorge. The fruits of this project are being seen through a newly developed writing component to the annual Plein Air Art Event (in July); through increased literary residencies in the school; and through a recent proposal to serve our writers more effectively. We supported local writers by bringing high quality writing workshops at low rates and facilitated the formation of several writing groups. Finally, we hired (and trained) several local writers and artists as instructors in our Summer Literacy Camp. (lagaines@hoover.k12.or.us)

**Coquille Indian Tribe**

**Field Study on Traditional Fishing Methods and Habitat**

Each year, the Coquille Indian Tribe’s Cultural Preservation Conference presents a series of lectures, presentations, and workshops focusing on particular cultural traditions or themes of the Native peoples of Southern Oregon and Northern California. In 2005, the tribe, in conjunction with Siskiyou National Forest and the community of Powers, presented a field study on fishing methods and habitat, with an emphasis on fishing traps and basketry to correlate with a lamprey research project then underway on the South Fork Coquille River. The conference “experienced its highest attendance ever (207 persons), in large part because of the expanded emphasis on basketry. The project certainly exposed a whole new audience to the importance and relevance of the lamprey to all Northwest Native fisheries, and it created new awareness of the importance of lamprey not only to traditional cultures, but as an indicator of health rivers and ecosystems.” (www.coquilletribe.org)
Snapshots: Summaries of Arts Build Communities Projects

**Estacada Arts Commission**

**Estacada Summer Festival**

More than 3,500 people attended the fifth annual Estacada Summer Festival, a three-day art and music celebration held in conjunction with the annual painting of the Artback Artists Cooperative mural. “One of the most powerful aspects of this project is the way it brings the diverse members of our community together around the arts. Our rather plain downtown is transformed for a weekend into a vibrant, fun-filled, joyous coming together of all kinds of people. Smiles and dancing were contagious. One older woman commented that she had lived in Estacada for over 75 years and she had never seen the downtown so attractive and happy. The success of the Summer Celebration builds community pride.” (www.estacasummercelebration.org)

**The Haven Project**

**Afield Program**

The Haven Project continued its Afield Program, which pairs underserved and at-risk youth with professional theater artists in six intense two-week residencies. Over the course of the project, each young person writes a play that is ultimately performed by professional actors for the community. The 2005 program included three two-week residencies, including one bilingual Hispanic and one in collaboration with Portland State University; workshops for artist/mentors, and a think tank/workshop on Native American story-telling. “The power of the program is that ... it is simple, straightforward, and allows each young writer to truly experience the creative process. What is ‘new’ is the creation that emerges from each writer each day. The impact is long lasting, deeply personal, and offers the community both artists and young people who ‘get’ the arts.”

**Homowo African Arts & Cultures**

**Rural Tour to Southern Oregon**

On its 2005 Southern Oregon tour, Homowo African Arts and Cultures visited five communities in seven days, in a part of the state where only 1.6% of the population is African or African American. Homowo artists performed five school shows featuring African music, dance and drumming, two community shows, six workshops for youth, and three for adults. “We were welcomed with open arms in all five communities.” In Roseburg, Homowo worked with Jason Heald from Umpqua Community College to invite 900 students from kindergarten through 12th grade into the college’s auditorium to experience Ghanian arts. According to Pete Maluk, principal at Lorna Middle School and presenter for Homowo’s activities in the town, it was the most successful program he has been part of in Cave Junction. (www.homowo.org)

**Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization (IRCO)**

Creating Access for Refugee and Immigrant Artists (CARITA)

CARITA was developed as a bridging project to help refugee and immigrant traditional artists connect with other artists, art event organizers, public schools, and neighborhoods to introduce their work to a wider public. A key element of the project was a series of 14 workshops to help artists build capacity, establish collaborative networks, and learn event management skills. “At the start of the project, only five out of the original 16 active participants had a U.S. art event/festival experience. By the end of the project, that number tripled.” This success was due to the networking skills developed as CARITA artists built relationships with area arts community people.” (www.irco.org)

**Lower Nehalem Community Trust**

**Artmaking and Visioning as a Community**

More than 300 community members and visitors, artists and nonartists alike, participated in a series of artmaking events cosponsored by the Lower Nehalem Community Trust and the Manzanita Creative Arts Council. Lighting and wall materials were purchased to improve community gallery space. “Together we painted or drew over 200 prayer/vision flags on pieces of old bed sheets ... and created three 4 x 8 plywood map murals to articulate our personal relationships to and visions for the Nehalem Bay area. The new gallery is inspiring more artists of all ages and experience levels to do shows. Every child from Nehalem Elementary School - 163 children - visited Alder Creek Farm and painted vision flags of animals and natural places that they
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cared about. It was an important blending of disciplines that enabled the children – who do not have regular art classes in their rural school – to find a way to express their caring for their local environment. The project overall, both the gallery and the artmaking aspect, increased the presence of art in the community. School children, the young artists and the general public were all encouraged and inspired by taking part in the project.

**MediaRites**

Refugee Dreams Revisited

MediaRites, working with the Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon, Asian Family Center, Cambodian American Community of Oregon, and Lu-mien Association of Oregon, created a week-long camp where Asian youth listened to stories of former Southeast Asian refugees and then created art based on those stories. “The large number of youth who participated (34), the quality of the art, the number of attendees at the arts event (>150), and the positive feedback makes us feel we created a successful program. The youth could listen to stories once removed from their own lives. Likewise, by having their interviews recorded and played later, the elders could share their stories without feeling pressured or judged. This made for a very honest exchange of stories into words, words into art, and art back into stories for the whole community to see. Many youth in the program were lacking arts education in their schools. This project opened their eyes to episodes in history they had never known and to ways of expressing themselves that were new and exciting.” (www.mediarites.org)

**Oregon Coast Council for the Arts**

Jazz at Newport

More than 4,500 music fans attended the second annual Jazz at Newport festival, a three-day event in September sponsored by Oregon Coast Council for the Arts in partnership with 40 local businesses and over 100 volunteers. “We were able to attract new volunteers and new audience members. We formed new partnerships with sponsors in the community as well as with venues serving our jazz around town function. The greatest community building was done through the extensive volunteer network established to carry out the many functions required. Clearly the festival had an economic and artistic impact on the community. It brought national artists to mix with local artists and drew a sufficiently large audience to nearly break even in our second year of operation.” (www.coastarts.org)

**Oregon Symphony Association**

Community Music Partnership

The Community Music Partnership is a key Education and Community Engagement initiative, designed to help rural and smaller Oregon communities develop and sustain music education programs in the schools and the greater community. For the 2004-2006 program, the symphony partnered with North Bend School, in collaboration with the Oregon Coast Music Association, to present ensemble performances, master classes, clinics, coachings, instrument petting zoos, two youth concerts, a full orchestra community concert, and staff development activities. The program reached more than 13,000 students and adults from throughout Coos County. “The concerts attracted a new North Bend audience, as evidenced through the comments of a spouse of one of the North Bend teachers: ‘I don’t know how you did it, but you got the same audience I see at North Bend wrestling matches to show up tonight.” Inspired by first-hand experience of how music impacts the lives of students and community members, a Coos County Steering Committee member expanded his company’s areas of support to include the arts. Initial plans are to allocate up to $20,000 to support partnerships between local arts organizations and area schools.” (www.orsymphony.org)

**Portland Festival Symphony**

Free performances in the parks

In its 25th season, Portland Festival Symphony presented six classical musical concerts in Portland area parks, all free of charge. Five concerts featured classical works for orchestra. One of them featured Michael Allen Harrison performing works he wrote specifically for the symphony. The sixth concert featured the premier of a work composed by Obo Addy for orchestra, choir, and African drums. “By bringing people from a neighborhood together for a positive communal event, our concerts foster a sense of community, commonality, and neighborhood pride. We hear from neighborhood associations who tell us that our concerts have had a positive effect on their neighborhoods and help to make people feel more connected to each other and to their local parks.” (www.portlandfestivalsymphony.org)

**Tears of Joy Theatre**

Higher Stages Arts Academy

Higher Stages provides after-school arts programs for students in elementary and middle schools in the...
Jefferson cluster of Northeast Portland, an at-risk community where 70% of the students live at or below the poverty level. The program includes showcases and Family Arts Nights designed to bring parents to events in support of their children. "Many do not speak English at home and through lack of time or of feeling uncomfortable, they have minimal involvement in their children’s school activities. We have found that eating together at the Family Arts Nights is a big draw in getting families to come. These evenings are often multigenerational with grandparents (nanas), parents, guardians, kids in the classes, brothers, sisters, and cousins. The showcases are a crucial element of teaching performing arts classes. They build such self-confidence in the students and such a sense of pride on the part of families." (www.tejtoj.com)  

**Teatro Milagro (Miracle Theatre Group)**  
**Puentes! (Bridges!)**  
In 2005, Teatro Milagro collaborated with schools in Jackson and Tillamook counties (both with growing Hispanic populations) to create a multidisciplinary education and outreach program. Puentes! offers workshops in which young people create stories and bilingual acting scenes that they perform alongside professional actors in a community performance. "Milagro actors are now engaged in helping students to write stories as part of Milagro’s literacy campaign. The storywriting helps students to connect to the theme of the residency in a personal way. Community literacy groups are contacted for their joint support. By working with area social service agencies, Milagro is able to reach community leaders, who can in turn use the theatrical residency as a new tool in reaching out to their client base. Families who avoided the school or community center because of language barriers are drawn in, sometimes for the first time. Milagro’s bilingual programs engage the whole community in the effort of outreach to the Hispanic population, and share a positive view of Hispanic life, contrary to negative stereotypes often seen on television.” (www.milagro.org)