

## **Partnering with New Communities Best Practices**

### **Delaware Division of the Arts - Teaching Artists 2024**

#### **Dane's Group:**

- Assess the level of experience in the room.
- Communicate expectations in promotional materials. Share testimonials from previous participants to demonstrate what participants can expect.
- Emphasize the importance of the planning meeting for expectation management. In the planning meeting, establish roles and responsibilities.
- There may be a potential challenge of existing individuals within a community being resistant to newcomers with fresh ideas. Navigate this situation carefully by asking questions, actively listening, and being adaptable.
- Be flexible and adaptable, with a smile.
- Use creativity to find solutions.
- Seek support from the Delaware Division of the Arts if in doubt or struggling.

#### **Asma's Group:**

- Emphasize the importance of humility when entering a new community.
- Listen to administrators and participants.
- Be clear about expectations from the start. This includes your own expectations, participant expectations, and host organization expectations.
- Cultivate trust over time.
- Position yourself as a learner about the new community.
- Find courage to ask uncomfortable questions.
- Plan for universal design availability and address mobility issues.

#### **Jade's Group:**

- Recognize the significance of both formal and informal communication channels.
  - Informal Communication:
    - Encourages friendliness and active engagement with community members.
    - Highlights the value of sharing Teaching Artists' (TAs) experiences to establish connections with participants.
  - Formal Communication:
    - Emphasizes the importance of formal communication methods, such as emails and meetings.
    - Recommends preparing questions to aid in program planning and understanding community needs.
- Establish trust - through professionalism, punctuality, eye contact, and a strong commitment to the community.

- Learn from previous community programs and build on existing knowledge without duplicating efforts.
- Understand the organization's structure and identify key individuals:
  - Directors
  - Engage with staff: They offer great advice on day-to-day activities, routines, and offer useful information that helps with the execution of the program.
- Be open to communicating needs and making reasonable concessions. Set some limits (such as class size, budget needs) at the beginning and be flexible at the same time.
- Learn from mistakes.
- Time management and accommodating diverse needs. Focus on aspects such as time management, setting limits and goals, and being adaptable to accommodate diverse needs (e.g., hearing impairment, wheelchair accessibility).

### **Vinny's Group:**

- Leverage your existing partnerships, such as Arts Guilds, to establish connections within the community.
- Identify other stakeholders in the community who can contribute to the success of the program.
- Showcase credentials, including sharing resumes, CVs, and relevant work experience to build credibility. Don't be afraid to share where you are coming from in your own art practice.
- Collaborate with established institutions that the community already trusts, facilitating the building of new partnerships.
- Show up and be consistent.
- Be adaptable to change and unforeseen circumstances.
- Don't take yourself TOO seriously!
- Read the room, and be willing to pivot.
- Utilize the expertise of others - avoiding the pressure of having all the answers.
- Learn from your mistakes, don't sweat the small stuff.
- Set clear boundaries to manage expectations, ensuring flexibility is seen as a valuable skill rather than a weakness.

### **Lynda's Group:**

- Align with influential individuals in the community.
- Make friends within the organization and show friendliness and respect. This includes staff, administrators, participants, and others not involved in the program.
- Acknowledge and appreciate the individuals who play essential roles, such as those who open doors, hold keys, and maintain cleanliness.
- Build trust through transparency, responsibility, courtesy.
- Take down communication barriers – be clear, transparent and listen.
- Demonstrate commitment to the work.
- Observe before starting to understand organizational structure and community.
- Reach out to people for assistance when needed: staff and other teaching artists.

- Create a safe learning environment by asking questions, considering participants needs, connecting with participants and organizational staff personally.
- Have the community create their own list of expectations and goals for the class.
- “Working hard builds trust.”