Partnering with New Communities Best Practices
Nebraska Arts Council - 2023 Teaching Artists

Clark's group:

- Getting active in your community tends to build trust and lead to more opportunities.
- Be true to your word when you say that you are going to do something.
- Be approachable.
- Balance between your personal priorities and community needs that you commit to.
- Folks may pick up on your giving personality and you can find yourself overextended.
- Be flexible, easygoing, you don't necessarily know what's going on with others.
- Communicate the skills to be learned and practiced, hopefully this will avoid dashed expectations of perfection (host beforehand, participant at the start of class).
- Find out the participant's interests and adapt into the specifics of your art form.
- Bring your art form to when and where folks can be!
- Adjust your offerings to make them accessible for more demographics.

Daniela's group:
- When working with new students, stay interested, confident and relatable. Always make your students feel safe.
- Stand up for your needs as an artist, and advocate for your students.
- Be sensitive and accommodating to people of all abilities.
- Try to spend time in the facility prior to your first class, this will help you to gain a better sense of the environment.
- Prior to working with a new organization check out their website and social media to get a feel for the environment in advance. Be informed about the other programs they may have going on.
- Never underestimate the benefits of "word of mouth" when entering a new community.
- Always make sure your students are having fun!
- Keep your class description simple. Don't use intimidating "art" or "skills" language when marketing your program.

Dane's group:
- Build collaboratively with partners. Working together on marketing and program preparation strengthens the working relationship.
- Make time to connect with new groups and attend their gatherings/events/programs, and invite them to join yours. For example, veterans groups. Doing so can build your contact list for future programs and events.
- Look at the students as artists.

- Sometimes Cold calling is required: "Do you have an activity director? May we speak. Would you be interested in having an activity come in?"
- Sometimes you join by just "jumping in"
- Treat people with respect, and be transparent about your intentions.
- Be kind, open, listen actively, and be willing to "adjust accordingly," when situations require adaptation.
- Seek like-minded folks (fellow Artists, similar age,etc…)
- Get out and meet new people, make connections within the community before arriving, build relationships with spaces/hosts and partner with them to recruit participants.
- Follow up, thank people, digest the experience.

Antonia's group:

- Get involved to get to know the community, seek out volunteer opportunities.
- Ask questions and listen to those you will work with.
- Share a little about yourself to help establish trust.
- Have open conversations with the people you're working with.
- Modify your mannerisms to communicate better.
- Find allies to help you get established.

Annie's Group

- Assess the vibe of the community - what is the culture like?
- Be accountable to mistakes and acknowledge when there is friction.
- Make adjustments for the community that serve the learning needs of the students.
- Get the host staff involved through demonstration opportunities.
- Be the welcoming person - especially when the host staff is busy or overwhelmed. Introduce yourself and say hello!
- Once you start a program, see it through - you never know who is positively impacted - even if there are challenges - be consistent and keep returning.
- Observe - get to know all you can. Observe the culture of the community.
- Follow through to establish trust. Listen to suggestions and follow through with resources.
- Find connections to people - what are the similarities you have with folks?
- What are the mutual self interests of the participants? Can you match what you need and want to their needs and wants?
- Simple tools like name tags - learning names and calling someone by their name establishes trust.
- Be supportive to the community - how can you help?
- Contracts for both parties - memo of understanding - outcomes and mission we are both working towards.
- Applying for grants helps articulate plans clearly, a useful skill for communicating with host organizations.