

Cultural Arts Council of Douglasville/Douglas County Strategic Plan 2008-2012

Executive Summary

Organizational Overview and Context

The Cultural Arts Council, better known as the CAC, provides Douglasville and Douglas County with a variety of arts and cultural programs and operates two facilities: the historic Roberts-Mozley House, which contains the gallery, community meeting space and offices, and the adjacent Wynn Building, which is used for classrooms.

The CAC operates in an environment that is rapidly changing. Douglas County is primarily suburban, a bedroom community for Atlanta and the western metro counties. Light industry, retail and medical services are among the county's primary business concerns. Douglas County is experiencing constant and continuous growth, especially among families with children – the school system adds one new school each year without meeting demand. Demographics are shifting as well, as more Hispanic families move to the area; 2006 census records indicate the county is 63% White, 34% Black, and 5% Hispanic.

The CAC has grown from following its previous (and first) strategic plan, which covered the years from 2004-2008. Most of the goals in that plan have been achieved, including consistent 100% board contributions, plans for facilities upgrades, and more and better attended local programming. Many of the challenges the organization faces remain the same: increasing awareness of its activities among its many different publics, reaching donors who care about the arts, introducing potential philanthropists to the benefits of locally supported art activities. This plan addresses those concerns, and strives to move the organization toward its long-term goal of operating at \$500,000 per year budget by 2013.

Major goals included in this long-term strategic plan address building participation and membership in the CAC, serving effectively as the coordinating hub for arts activities in Douglasville and Douglas County, and continuing to pursue cultural facilities improvements both at the Cultural Arts Center and community-wide.

Strategic Planning Process

Creating the 2008-2012 Strategic Plan for the CAC began with a survey of preferences and behaviors of arts supporters and others in Douglas County. More than 100 people completed the survey, most of whom were not members of the CAC; in fact, many reported that they didn't know membership was an option.

The majority of respondents were people who attend arts events occasionally – more than once a year, but less often than once a month. Their top three CAC offerings were the gallery, concerts, and Taste for Douglasville Arts. They hear about events through newspapers, word of mouth, and email, and make their decisions to participate within a week of most events. The majority of respondents want more theater programming in a dedicated theatre space -- and want more arts education activities in dedicated, appropriate classroom spaces. Most heartening of all, more than 90% of the respondents felt it is very important to have a local organization promoting and presenting the arts; and more than 95% of respondents want children in their community to have educational opportunities in the arts.

As the survey results were received and analyzed, the staff and board leadership crafted a set of initial goals for the organization for the next four years. The executive committee of the board considered those goals and outlined a set of obstacles that have impeded the organization's past progress including uncoordinated

information flow, conflicting community goals, an uncertain economy, and a diminished commitment to the organization on the part of the board. Finally, the full board and staff created a set of goals and action steps to address these obstacles and move the organization toward its next stage of evolution. The staff and board members identified specific strategies and objectives, and then the whole document was synthesized into the planning log that accompanies this executive summary.

The objectives and strategies included in the Strategic Plan, 2004-2012, will result in new programs, approaches and systems for the Cultural Arts Council for the benefit of residents of and visitors to its community. This summary includes a list of major outcomes from this plan; many more are embedded in the strategies articulated in the detailed planning documents.

Outcomes:

- More prominent mission statement
- Annual City/County arts summit
- CAC Youth Arts Council
- Expanded electronic presence – email and other social networking
- More robust marketing, often in partnership with other businesses and organizations
- Events at multiple locations throughout the county
- Support for an appropriate and modest capital campaign
- Improvements to the buildings and grounds
- New and continuing community-wide events
- An expanded volunteer infrastructure
- Board self-evaluation and recruiting processes
- Improved fund raising tools
- Increased contact with potential and current donors

Strategic Directions, Goals and Objectives Overview

The board and staff members who created this plan understand that big things can be achieved when plans are contained in brief, comprehensible statements (the Strategic Directions), supported by a set of clear goals and objectives.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 1: GROWING THE ARTS

Goal: Re-envisioning the Arts in Douglas

- Re-engage with the mission statement
- Create a community vision for the arts
- Serve as the coordinating hub for community arts

Goal: Consistent Marketing

- Implement a multi-year marketing plan
- Create tools for organizational promotion
- Coordinate marketing
- Use partnerships to expand reach

Goal: Growing and Using the Base

- Collect and use emails for members and audiences
- Use other electronic communication methods
- Ensure regular communication and engagement

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 2: CREATING COMMUNITY SPACES FOR THE ARTS

Goal: Expand Our Turf

- Use satellite and partner locations for events
- Market CAC-branded events at Arts Center

Goal: Maximize the Existing Facilities

Objectives:

- Prioritize maintenance and upgrade needs
- Pursue best uses of properties

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 3: DEVELOPING THE INFRASTRUCTURE TO GROW THE ARTS

Goal: Build Bridges

- Host activities that build connections with patrons and audiences
- Continue existing and identify new community-wide events
- Partner with organizations for volunteers, funders

Goal: Expand and Enhance Human Resources

- Strengthen volunteer resources
- Promote staff stability
- Create a mission-focused board
- Recruit the next generation of leaders

Goal: Expand Sources of Gifts and Support

- Continue fiscally responsible operations
- Prepare tools and individuals for increased fundraising
- Explore additional resources for fundraising support

Conclusion and Organizational Exhortation

The Cultural Arts Council of Douglasville & Douglas County has all the right reasons and many of the assets it needs to succeed in reaching the half-million dollar budget mark within five years by increasing its relevance to and contact with its constituents. The CAC has a capable staff, landmark facilities and excellent programming. Complementing those with a more engaged board, a deeper volunteer “bench” and increased earned and contributed revenues will make measured growth an inevitability.

The planning log that articulates strategies, timelines and responsibilities is a tool for the organization to chart its progress each quarter. As with any artistic endeavor, the key to success is in diligent practice. Completion of the goals and objectives in this plan will match the organization’s talent with resources, ensuring a consistent upward trajectory and furthering its mission to serve the community.

Respectfully submitted,



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