

Cultural Development Network *Cultures Communities Councils*

“Connecting Schools and Communities;

How are school and community facilities contributing to creative and connected local communities, lifelong learning and successful local partnerships?’

One day conferences presented at COPACC Colac; Williamstown Town Hall and La Trobe University, Albury-Wodonga Campus, June 20-23 , 2008

Presented by Cultural Development Network in partnership;

- in Colac with Colac-Otway Shire, Neighbourhood Renewal, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Colac Network Schools, Otway Community College and Colac-Otway U3A
- in Williamstown with Hobsons Bay City Council, Brimbank City Council, Victoria University, Gallery Sunshine Everywhere and VicHealth
- in Wodonga with Centre for Regional Education, La Trobe University, Wodonga City Council, Rural City of Wangaratta, The Centre and Wodonga Middle Years Campus.

These one day conferences sought to increase creative partnerships between schools, community facilities and local communities, by inspiring and challenging participants about possibilities for their own context. One significant and very successful aspect of all of these events was the mix of delegates (90 each attending in Colac and Wodonga, and 140 in Williamstown) from very diverse professional fields. Educators, teachers, school leaders, welfare staff and education bureaucrats from state and catholic education offices were a significant majority ; local government, from areas including youth work, community services, arts and culture, artists and artworkers, gathered for a full day of discussion, debate and workshops on the topic ‘Communities, Accessibility and the Arts’.

Each event was co-ordinated by a committee of local professionals representing a diversity of interests, education (schools and tertiary level), state and local government and community organisations and the co-operation from these group members was excellent. Good partnerships for CDN were developed as a result.

The program included keynote speakers from academia and practice, case studies from organisations and events that engage with schools and communities and workshops for more in-depth experience. Networking opportunities were facilitated through small group discussions and activities, to ensure that delegates left inspired and encouraged with useful new contacts and ideas.



Keynote speaker Lisa Fitzhugh, Executive Director and Founder of Artscorps, USA, shared her experiences in establishing an organisation to provide creative arts experiences for young people from low income communities. The partnerships established by Lisa and her team at Artscorps included 47 different schools, YMCAs, community centres offered lessons and ideas for Victorian artist, support workers and organisations. Lisa's presentation focussed on ideas around powerful learning, the kinds of learning

experiences that motivate young people and lead to greatest achievement and positive change, which Artscorps seeks to offer its program participants. Conference participants were unanimous in their positive feedback about the inspiration provided by Lisa.

'Great to have Lisa speak about spirit and humanity in the arts - very warm and inspiring' - 'Learning about ArtCorp was extremely interesting and inspiring' - 'Keynote speaker was inspirational, interesting and useful'.

Academics, Professor Maureen Ryan from the Education Faculty at Victoria University spoke in Williamstown, on *'Learnings From Research: How Do Our Communities Benefit Through Developing Creative Partnerships?'*; Robert Brown, researcher from Melbourne University addressed the Colac audience about his research on *'Creative Partnerships: What can we learn from Artplay'*; and Mark Selkrig from LaTrobe University spoke in Wodonga on *'How do our communities benefit through creative partnerships?'*.



Mark Selkrig at LaTrobe University

At each event, Michael Tudball, the Director of School-Community Partnerships for Department of Planning and Community Development introduced the state government's new whole of government approach to school and community partnerships, while local department representatives Mark Donehue, Regeneration Officer, Barwon South West Region, and David Cummins, Senior Education Officer, DEECD, Hume region, spoke about their activities locally: how school and community partnerships work in practice, and what we gain if we work together.

Local government speakers included Rob Robson from the City of Greater Shepparton who discussed in depth his experiences with school-community partnerships in a performing arts centre and Michael Scholtes, Library Services Co-ordinator, from Melton-Caroline Springs who discussed school and community partnerships in libraries.

Panels of local artists, artworkers, local community organisations, and researchers followed the lead speakers, describing their practice, the opportunities and challenges they experience. They responded to questions about what could be done to improve access and engagement in the local community.



Photo: Taiko drummers from Wodonga Primary School

All three events included some artistic experiences. In Williamstown, wire sculptures made by students participating in programs from Gallery Sunshine Everywhere were displayed. In Wodonga, students from Wodonga Primary School demonstrated their skills in Taiko drumming, developed through a partnership with a visiting performing company. In Colac, the program was augmented by the exhibition, *'Ladies Please Bring A Plate'* curated by Irene Pagram, of Colac Otway Shire, of objects and memorabilia

from community halls in the region, choir Hats Apella entertained after lunch with lively music, including some participatory songs, and local poet Annabel Tellis presented her response to the day's events, written on the spot as an artistic conclusion to the day.

Feedback from delegates about the events was extremely positive, with comments like: 'Every single speaker was fantastic', 'Fantastic to have both international and local models', 'Great to find out about so many fine local projects'. And this comment from a speaker at Wodonga: *This was an outstanding conference on all levels.....one of the best conferences I have attended. I hope I can represent the Immigration Museum at other events the CDN co ordinates.*

Jan Molloy, Community Engagement Manager, Immigration Museum

Other outcomes include the publication of a book of case studies of creative local partnerships written by Neighbourhood Renewal in Colac as a way of extending the learnings from the day. The Colac group have made a commitment to get together again in six months time to do a long term follow-up of delegates to find what outcomes there may have been as a result of their attendance. The national journal for education leaders, Curriculum Leadership, have invited us to write a follow up article, detailing the outcomes of the event.

Conference papers:

Numerous papers from the conference have been published on CDN's website:

The arts organisation's perspective: Providing creative opportunities through successful partnerships with schools, sporting and community organisations,

Lisa Fitzhugh, Artscorps, USA

How the Live Arts Incubator Came About, Jude Anderson, Artistic Director, Punctum Skills Connection, Marita Brady, Manager, Community Connection

Creative Partnerships: What can we learn from Artplay? and Making the Most of Creative Partnerships: collaborations between learners, teachers and artists,

(Discussion notes), Robert Brown, University of Melbourne,

Schools as Community Facilities, Mark Donehue, Regeneration Officer, Dept Education and Early Childhood Development, Barwon South West region

Community Partnerships, Mandy Grinblat, Senior Arts Officer, Arts Victoria

School and Local Government Partnerships: Performing Arts Facilities and Programmes, Rob Robson, City of Greater Shepparton

Poems about Community Spaces, Annabel Tellis

The Policy Perspective: School and Community Partnerships, Michael Tudball,

Director, School & Community Partnerships, Dept Planning & Community Development

Sound Links: collaborations between musical communities and schools in Victoria, Dr.

Brydie Leigh Bartleet, Queensland Conservatorium Research Centre, Griffith University

Schools as Core Social Centres, Lesley Hyde, Catholic Education Office

The Song Room: Providing Opportunities for Enhanced Learning and Development for Disadvantaged Children Through Music and the Arts, Deborah Nicholson, Program Manager, The Song Room

Learnings From Research: How Do Our Communities Benefit Through Developing Creative Partnerships? Maureen Ryan, Professor, School of Education, Victoria

University, and Director, Gallery Sunshine Everywhere

Active After-School Communities Program, Kate Simkovic, State Manager, Victoria,

Active After-School Communities Program

Taking Learning to the Learners: Developing a Learning Community, Angela Craven, Yarrunga Primary School

Creative and sustainable mental health promotion through the arts in schools and communities, John Lane, Festival for Healthy Living

Museums and Education- Linking Students, Teachers and their Communities,

Jan Molloy, Programs Co-ordinator Humanities, Immigration Museum

How do our communities benefit through creative partnerships?: a tricky question, Mark Selkrig, La Trobe University, Albury-Wodonga Campus

Connecting Schools and Communities, Kim Dunphy, published in Curriculum Leadership Journal, Volume 6 Issue 17

Poems about Community Spaces, Annabel Tellis

Come one, come all

Come one, come all
Come one, come all
come down to your hall,
come swing your partner,
come hit a ball.

You've joined us at COPACC,
a space not so small,
and Lisa Fitzhugh's here,
in America's fall.

She sadly didn't bring
her cowboy-girl drawl,
but she's inspired the whole shire
to go LOVE YOUR HALL.

Community Halls

Community Halls
Community teacups
Community jug
Community sink
Community jug
Community sing song
Community play
Community disco
Community weh-hey
Community meetings
Community minutes
Community serious
Community limits
Community knitting
Community chess
Community worship
Community bless
Community weddings
Community kiss
Community baby
Community bliss
Community playgroup
Community balls
Our lives are enhanced
by community halls

4pm

The playground is empty
but the school is at play
with artists and locals
all seizing the day.

The Queen on the wall of the Community Hall

The Queen's in her frame,
young again
and faded but still quite a beauty.
She's looking on those
who are touching their toes
it's Tai Chi and this is her duty.
She's been here for years,
watched kisses and tears
at the dances that happened last
century.

now the loved ones are older,
they're all into yoga,
and spending their money on
dentistry.
She turns to the notice board
heavy with paper
it tells us to all learn First Aid,
and life drawing classes start
Tuesday next week,
we'll all learn what part shade we
should shade.
There's weight watchers, rock and
roll,
patchwork quilt parties,
sculpture and music and chess for the
smarties.

Drama and dog training,
crochet a hat,
floral art, gymnastics, care for your
cat.

The Queen looks on placidly
still sporting her crown
and wishes she lived near this hall, in
this town.