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Name of Candidate: **Jill E. Scheibler**
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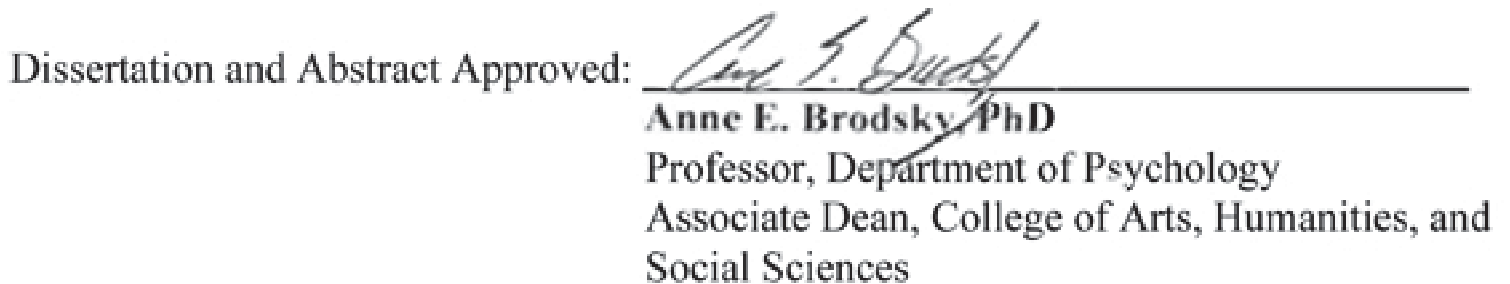

Dissertation and Abstract Approved: ______________________________
Anne E. Brodsky, PhD
Professor, Department of Psychology
Associate Dean, College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences

Date Approved: 1-23-14

NOTE: *The Approval Sheet with the original signature must accompany the thesis or dissertation. No terminal punctuation is to be used.

Jill E. Scheibler
j.scheibler@make-studio.org / jscheib1@umbc.edu

Curriculum Vitae

EDUCATION

Ph.D.	2014	University of Maryland, Baltimore County, Baltimore, MD Human Services Psychology, Community and Applied Social track
M.A.	2005	The George Washington University, Washington, DC Art Therapy
B.A.	2000	Franklin & Marshall College, Lancaster, PA Anthropology and Studio Art, double major

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

8/13 to present: Adjunct Instructor I, Psychology Department
University of Maryland, Baltimore County
Baltimore, MD
· Teach Introduction to Community Psychology at the undergraduate level

1/12 to present: Evaluation Research Assistant
Carson Research Consulting
Baltimore, MD
· Provide support on a variety of evaluation research projects for nonprofit, human services, education, and public health programs
· Tasks include assisting with qualitative and quantitative data collection, management and analysis, and data visualization strategies

1/10 to present: Director / Program Administrator (Co-founder)
Make Studio Art Program
Baltimore, MD
· Complete a wide variety of tasks— from administrative to grant writing to art therapy and art instruction— for start-up nonprofit organization that serves artists with disabilities

09/08 to 12/13: Graduate Research Assistant, Psychology Department
University of Maryland, Baltimore County
Baltimore, MD
· Conduct qualitative research as part of the *Making Words Count* research lab, under the supervision of Anne Brodsky, Ph.D.

08/08 to 05/12: Graduate Teaching Assistant, Psychology Department
University of Maryland, Baltimore County
Baltimore, MD
· Provide general support to faculty in the Psychology Department
· Courses include Introduction to Community Psychology (as TA and Instructor), Research Methods, Developmental Psychology, and Psychology of Aggression and Antisocial Personality

10/08 to 12/09: Art Therapist and Arts Mentor in Private Practice
Baltimore, MD
· Conducted private, in-home sessions for young adults with Autism Spectrum

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Disorders

07/04 to 05/08: Art Therapist/Marketing & Studio Associate
Art Enables, nonprofit human services organization
Washington, DC
· Implemented rehabilitation curriculum for adults with disabilities and completed a wide variety of administrative and organizational tasks

LICENSES

Licensed Clinical Professional Art Therapist, Maryland Board of Professionals Therapists and Counselors, November 2013

CERTIFICATIONS

Registered Art Therapist, Art Therapy Credentials Board, December 2005
Board Certified Art Therapist, Art Therapy Credentials Board, March 2008

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Brodsky, A.E., Mannarini, T., Buckingham, S.B., **Scheibler, J.E.** Advances in qualitativemethods for community psychology. (Invited Chapter in preparation.) M.A. Bond, C.B. Keys, I. Serrano-Garcia (Eds.). *APA Handbook of Community Psychology*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

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Brodsky, A.E. & **Scheibler, J.E.** (2011). When empowerment isn't enough: An argument for multi-level resilience in the face of extreme power inequalities. *Psicologia di Comunità. Gruppi, ricerca-azione e modelli formative*. (*Italian Journal of Community Psychology*.)

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Rheingans, P., Brodsky, A.E., **Scheibler, J.E.**, & Spence, A. (2010). The role of majority groups in diversity programs. *ACM Transactions of Computing Education, Journal of the Association for Community Machinery*.

Brodsky, A.E. & **Scheibler, J.E.** (2009, August). CWIT/COEIT Baseline Climate Report. Baltimore, MD: University of Maryland, Baltimore County, The Department of Psychology.

RECENT PROFESSIONAL PRESENTATIONS

Scheibler, J.E., & Rooth, D.H. (2014, July). Presentation at the ?? Annual American Art Therapy Association Conference, San Antonio, TX.

Scheibler, J.E. (2014, June). "Art is like you can't say 'no.'": Community Arts and social change. Paper presentation at the 10th Biennial Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues, Portland, OR.

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Brodsky, A.E., Buckingham, S.L., **Scheibler, J.E.**, Talwar, G., & Emery, L. (2014, June). Community, diversity, and interaction: Contextualizing theories of action and change. Panel presentation at the 10th Biennial Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues, Portland, OR.

Scheibler, J.E., & Goucher, C.K. (2012, November). A practitioner's guide to community-engaged art therapy practice. Presentation at the inaugural Healing Arts Conference, Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art, Johnstown, PA.

Scheibler, J.E. (2012, May). "What we call empowerment": Understanding the language and tools of change in community arts organizations. Paper presentation at the Eighth Congress of Qualitative Inquiry, Champaign-Urbana, IL.

Talwar, G., & **Scheibler, J.E.** (2012, May). "Being Qual" in community psychology: Finding research identity and place in a quantitative landscape. Roundtable presentation at the Eighth Congress of Qualitative Inquiry, Champaign-Urbana, IL.

Scheibler, J.E., Mulvey, A., Cloutier, K., Faigin, D., & Williams, A. (2012, June). Creative community in action: Why community psychology needs the arts. Presentation at the 4th International Community Psychology Conference, Barcelona, Spain.

Portnoy, G.A., Talwar, G., Makhzoumi, S., Buckingham, S., **Scheibler, J.E**., Jansson, A., Brodsky, A.E., & Cattaneo, L. (2012, March). Resilience or empowerment? Disentangling constructs to better serve women and communities in Afghanistan and beyond. Panel presentation at the Association for Women in Psychology Annual Conference, Palm Springs, CA.

Permut, M., Makhzoumi, S., Portnoy, G., **Scheibler, J.E.,** & Brodsky, A.E. (2011, Aug) Exerting power through limited choices: Resilience as a pre-empowerment process among women in Afghanistan. Poster presented at the Annual American Psychological Association Conference, Washington, DC.

Scheibler, J.E. & Goucher, C.K. (2011, July). Empowering visionaries and "outsiders": Making passions visible and putting neurodiversity to work. Advanced Practice Course presented at the 42nd Annual American Art Therapy Association Conference, Washington, DC.

Scheibler, J.E., Gutierrez, L.M., Wernick, L., Woodford, M., Campbell, L., Chimka, M., & Kulick, A. (2011, June). Creative power and community vision: Evaluating community arts as a vehicle for social change. Symposium presented at the 13th Biennial Conference of the Society for Community Research and Action, Chicago, IL.

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

American Evaluation Association
Society for Community Research and Action, APA Association Division 27
Maryland Art Therapy Association
American Art Therapy Association

HONORS AND AWARDS

American Art Therapy Association Anniversary Scholarship, 2005
Potomac Art Therapy Association Schoebel Writing Award, 2000
Phi Beta Kappa Honor Society, 2000
Pi Gamma Mu National Social Science Honor Society, 2000
Magna cum laude, Franklin & Marshall College, 2000

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An Abstract of

Constructing Change that Lasts: A Grounded Theory Study of Community-Based Arts' Creation of Social Impacts

by

Jill E. Scheibler

Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy Degree in Human Services Psychology

The University of Maryland, Baltimore County
January, 2014

The body of literature concerning social impacts of the arts, including research substantiating individual-level outcomes of arts participation, has grown a great deal in recent years, as has the Community Arts field's pursuit of more rigorous and useful evaluation approaches in light of challenging, contemporary demands on organizations. However, extant research has not fully answered how community-based arts organizations (CBAOs) conceptualize their pursuit of outcomes, what mechanisms underlie those pursuits, and how this translates into external impacts. In order to help fill gaps in the literature and contribute to evaluation efforts, this study applied a community psychology approach and utilized Constructivist Grounded Theory (Charmaz, 1995) to build upon a previous study that explored one CBAO's conceptualization and enactment of its goals (Scheibler, 2011). Through a close, multi-phased analysis of pre-collected ($n=7$) and newly collected interviews ($n=11$) of long-term and former participants of three representative CBAOs, the present study pursued new understandings of how participants' subjective experiences of program-fostered change processes convert to external and potentially longer-lasting impacts. This research revealed how participants

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were engaged by strengths-based program structures that fostered sense of community; how they were impacted by four change mechanisms— 1) fostering healthy maturation, 2) developing professional competencies, 3) building a creative foundation, and, 4) promoting change agent characteristics; and how transformative meaning-making enabled them to form new understandings of themselves, others, and society, which may enable them to be critical, productive, and life-long learners who can enact change in their communities.

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A Dissertation

Entitled

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Community-Based Arts' Creation of Social Impacts

by

Jill E. Scheibler

Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the University of Maryland,
Baltimore County in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Human Services Psychology
2014

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For all those who **make** things, especially the young artists who kindly gave their time and shared their candid reflections with me for this study.

"Don't think about making art, just get it done. Let everyone else decide if it's good or bad, whether they love it or hate it. While they are deciding, make even more art."

— Andy Warhol

"I am interested in art as a means of living a life; not as a means of making a living."

— Robert Henri

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Table of Contents

Dedication ii
Acknowledgements iii
List of Tables vii
List of Figures viii
Introduction 1
Context of the Present Study 3
Contemporary demands and challenges for nonprofit organizations. 5
Getting inside and beyond the "black box" for program evaluation. 8
Community Arts and Community-Based Arts Organizations 11
Community-Based Arts Organizations & Community Psychology 14
Human service paradigms and community-based arts nonprofits. 15
Community psychology and the study of community-based arts. 18
Literature Review 21
The Current State of Community Arts Research and Evaluation 22
Community Arts Research: Current Evaluation Issues and Barriers 25
Calls for better evaluation. 27
Arts-based social inclusion. 28
Representative Literature on Social Impacts of Community-Based Arts 31
Art for social justice perspective. 33
U.S. 34
Empowerment. 37
U.K & Australia. 40
Community development and health promotion perspectives. 42
U.K. & Australia. 43
U.S. & Canada. 51
Alternative literature about community-based arts. 59
Art Therapy literature on community-based arts and art for social justice. 59
Photovoice literature. 60
Photovoice with youth. 64
The Present Study 65
Method 66
Foundation 66
Participants 68
Sampling: Procedures, sample size, and rationale. 69
Sampling for group 1. 70
Sampling for group 2. 70
Descriptions of participating organizations. 73

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

Access Art. 74
New Lens. 74
Wide Angle Youth Media. 75
Design. 76
Design components. 80
Reanalysis and interview guide procedures. 80
Stage 1 (reanalysis) phases. 82
Interview guide development. 85
Data collection procedures. 86
Stage 2 (final analysis) procedures. 87
Qualitative verification: Validity and reliability considerations. 89
Credibility and confirmability. 91
Transferability and dependability. 93
Results 94
Introduction to Participants 94
New Lens. 96
Wide Angle Youth Media. 99
Access Art. 101
Participant summary. 105
Interview Findings. 105
How do long-term participants experience CBAOs' pursuit of outcomes? 106
Engaging program offerings build on preexisting characteristics and needs. 107
Strengths-based agenda invites participation. 107
Participation requires openness to engagement. 115
"Not school": participation fulfills select relational needs and skills gaps. 117
Engaging program settings foster sense of community and commitment. 120
Overall setting is welcoming and supportive. 121
Engagement via peer-to-peer social support and mentorship. 132
Engagement via reliable, respected, and respectful adult mentorship. 140
What mechanisms underlie/emerge from CBAOs' pursuit of outcomes? 146
Healthy maturation process is collaboratively fostered. 146
Professional competencies are developed and interests honed. 153
Creative foundation for future activity is built. 159
Change agent capabilities are fostered. 175
How do in-program experiences translate into external and long-term impacts? 185
Discussion 198
Limitations 211
Future Directions and Implications 214
Concluding Remarks 218

المنارة للاستشارات
www.manaraa.com

References 220
Appendix A: Preliminary and Final Process Models for Previous Study (Scheibler, 2011) 243
Appendix B: Reanalysis Highlights: Five Thematic Domains Charts 244
Appendix C: Semi-structured Interview Guide from Previous Study 249
Appendix D: New Interview Guide for the Present Study 255
Appendix E: Participant Consent Form 261
Appendix F: Process Model of Program Engagement and Change Processes 264
Appendix G: Tentative Process Model of External Change Pathways 265

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List of Tables

Table

1 Participants summary 105

المنارة للاستشارات

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List of Figures

Figure

1	The grounded theory process	79
2	Research design components and phases	81
3	Engagement and change mechanism process model	207
4	Depiction of in-program effects translating into…	210

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Constructing Change that Lasts: A Grounded Theory Study of Community-Based Arts' Creation of Social Impacts

In June of 2012, Baltimore nonprofit Art on Purpose ceased operations after an almost seven-year tenure of bringing together local schools, students, teachers, seniors, advocacy groups, local businesses, and other organizations to create transformative community dialogue through art. Although Art on Purpose was known throughout the city for providing innovative and high quality services to the community, the organization could no longer survive challenging programmatic and financial circumstances that had escalated in the prior year (Brunn & Rabino, 2012; personal conversations with arts practitioners). Other local arts nonprofit organizations (NPOs), small and large, have also grappled with lingering, sometimes snowballing effects of the national recession that year. This includes youth arts program Access Art—forced to cancel its 2012 summer program within less than a week of its start date—and the Contemporary Museum, which closed in May of 2012. Noted Community Arts academic Doug Borwick opines that although the arts will always exist— for "as long as human beings live in community"— it is uncertain if "the not-for-profit organizations serving as the principal arts infrastructure today will survive through the next generations" (2012, p. 12). The arts nonprofit "status quo" in the U.S. has been fairly critiqued for not fulfilling its community engagement potential. However, the overall decline of nonprofit "arts delivery systems" (Borwick, 2012) is of concern to community-minded academics, practitioners, and citizens because this situation could result in sharply limited access to arts experiences, particularly for marginalized populations.

The decline of the U.S. economy in recent years has hit the nonprofit sector particularly hard, with 87% of NPOs reporting that this decline has impacted their operations, even as 57% report an inability to keep up with demand for their services and 85% report that they anticipate

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even more demand in upcoming years (Nonprofit Finance Fund, 2011). Nonprofit sustainability in this climate is at best elusive and uneven, if not unsound, because, as cultural and social dimensions of sustainability researcher Meg O'Shea has written, "[sustainability] has been described as a multi-legged stool that stands strong only when the economic, ecological, social, and cultural dimensions are equally weighted and meaningfully integrated" (2011). The entire nonprofit sector has been increasingly called upon to be more self-sustaining and to do more with less as systemic factors cause their primary funders' priorities to shift to also doing more with less.

The closure of a small nonprofit organization, even a seemingly successful one like Art on Purpose, is not unusual. At least one-third of new NPOs fail in their first year, and an estimated 16% of *all* NPOs closed between 2000-2005 (although that number might be far greater because many organizations gradually close without informing the IRS) (NCCS, 2012). Even when economic conditions are good, smaller and younger NPOs are more likely to fail, particularly if their income streams are not diversified and/or they are not connected to diverse stakeholders (Bielefeld, 1994; Hager, Galaskiewicz, & Larson, 2004; Vance, 2010). However, there are potentially further compounding issues for organizations like Art on Purpose, arising from their specific circumstances as community-based arts organizations with ambitious agendas of effecting transformative community change. For entities such as Art on Purpose, that are "resource-poor organizations serving resource-poor communities," tensions can "arise over political access, voice, and allocation" (Stein & Seifert, 2010, p. 54).

Over the last few decades, federal policies favoring deinstitutionalization, devolution, and privatization have effectively made community-based settings, which are often NPOs, among the foremost deliverers of social support services to the poor or otherwise marginalized populations

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(Marwell, 2004; Stein, 1990). Over roughly the same period of time, community psychologists have worked with organizations to surmount contextual tensions by documenting, understanding, and building participatory aspects of program processes among recipients and providers of services (Bess, Prilleltensky, Perkins, & Collins, 2009; Evans, Hanlin, & Prilleltensky, 2007; Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2005; Perkins, 1995). Like other NPO organizations, community-based arts organizations have emerged, grown, thrived, and failed in this multiply challenging context. Also like other NPOs, in order to maximize their impacts on individuals and communities and to evaluate and substantiate them, arts organizations have tried to establish a clear conceptualization of what they are doing. However, while these efforts have produced some substantiation of outcomes, they have yet to delineate effective program mechanisms and the translation of internal change to external impacts. The purpose of the study documented here was to describe and explore, from a community psychology perspective, how change mechanisms produced internally within community-based arts organizations translate into external and potentially long-lasting outcomes for individuals and their communities.

Context of the Present Study

This study builds upon a previous study (begun in 2008) of the Access Art organization[1]. This earlier study addressed the overarching question of "How do community-based arts organizations and their membership define empowerment?" (Scheibler, 2011). The impetus behind that study was community-based arts organizations' common use of the "language of empowerment" to describe their approaches and outcomes (Purcell, 2009), even though their conceptualization of empowerment was not clear. As a student of community psychology and an arts practitioner, this issue was of keen interest to me. Empowerment is not only a popular notion

[1] Due to Access Art's inclusion in this present study, as well, details about this organization can be found in the Methods section of this paper.

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in the community arts world, but a key concept for community psychology (Perkins, 1995; Rappaport, 1987, 1995), "help[ing] us to form a quite different mind-set than construing people primarily as healthy or unhealthy" (Rappaport, 1995, p. 799). An overarching goal for that research, then, was to make a useful contribution to both the arts evaluation and community psychology literatures. Community psychology and the field of Community Arts share a similar value orientation, but no community psychology literature had looked at community-based arts organizations in any depth.

In addition to its lack of a clear definition of empowerment in the arts, extant arts literature reviewed during the course of my prior study lacked clarity about the nature of these organizations' work more broadly, particularly how organizations "work" to produce stated outcomes of individual and community well-being and social change. By looking, in vivo, at one representative community-based arts organization, that study suggested both a need and the entry points for building a broader understanding of how such organizations can best conceptualize what they are doing in order to be more effective, adaptive, and sustainable. Although organizations vary in their interest in and ability to express their theories of change, the field overall can benefit from enhancing its ability to uncover, describe, and document important self-knowledge, in order to share it with stakeholders and funders and apply it back to programming.

A key finding from my previous study was that psychological sense of community (PSOC) (McMillan & Chavis, 1986), was of great consequence to participants' internal program experiences, experiences that they and other stakeholders linked to positive organizational outcomes. Although that study was primarily inductive, it began with an a priori model for how social-psychological processes, suggested by extant social science literature, at work within Access Art may have related to one another and were situated within the larger context of

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organizational change. This a priori model was then revised in light of my findings. (Both models can be seen in Appendix A.) My findings, in combination with other promising findings reported in the extant literature about the social impacts of community-based arts, suggest that positive, individual change processes are facilitated within arts programs, and this change can have radiating community impacts. Yet it was still not clear how these processes translate into enduring, external change.

The present study builds upon that prior study to further its goal of making a useful contribution to the arts evaluation and community psychology literatures. Although the body of literature concerning the impacts of community arts and arts evaluation had developed further in the intervening years, guiding research questions of how community-based arts organizations conceptualize their pursuit of outcomes, what mechanisms underlie those pursuits, and how this translates into external and long-term impacts, continued to be unanswered at the start of this research. Explained in more detail in my Methods below, this study extended my investigation of these unanswered questions by applying an inductive research approach to the study of change processes experienced in three community-based arts organizations.

Contemporary demands and challenges for nonprofit organizations.

The impetus for pursuing the core questions of this study is most comprehensible if one understands the chief elements of the broader, contemporary landscape in which NPOs operate and evaluation occurs (as also documented in Scheibler, 2011). NPOs have been providing a "public safety net" (Perkins, et al., 2007) to a notable degree for some time, but more recently their role has substantially increased. Mental health consumers are increasingly being removed from institutions, families are less likely to rely on traditional public school systems to meet the entirety of their children's educational needs (including traditional academic and enrichment

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experiences) and the government has shifted from being a broad provider of services to an "overseer" of service provision (Proehl, 2001, p. 2). Local and state governments have increased the practice of contracting human services NPOs for the delivery of services that government would have traditionally provided (Stein, 1990).[2] Changing social conditions, such as an aging and more highly stratified population, have factored in to the increasing demand for services (Proehl, 2001). Significantly more individuals also seek assistance from human services NPOs during periods of economic instability and high unemployment rates. As illustration of the current scope of their service provision, in Baltimore City alone there are over 400 NPOs providing direct services, consultation, or advocacy in areas such as mental health, youth development/ educational support, and community development (Maryland Association of Nonprofit Organizations, 2011).

The already demanding landscape for NPOs has worsened in recent times due to shifting fiscal priorities, at various levels of government, away from social services and the lack of an accompanying reallocation of funds to community-based providers (Levine, Perkins, & Perkins, 2005). Government systems that are now in place for outsourcing services to these providers continue even as governments are constrained in their ability to pay them. State and local-level contracting processes for the distribution of government funds also are increasingly more

[2] Although an aim of this study is to produce knowledge that is applicable for community arts organizations serving a variety of populations, it must be noted relative to this study's context that the sometimes tense positioning of youth-serving arts organizations relative to arts education in public schools is a manifestation of devolution. In recent times the arts education partnership literature has contained some criticism of private organizations for essentially "bailing out" public school administrators who choose not to fund arts programming (Borwick, 2012). Baltimore provides an interesting case for unpacking this criticism, however, in that many of its schools do have full or part-time arts teachers (who follow curricula meeting State standards), it works with contracted arts providers, and it has an innovate arts integration program (part of Ford Foundation's Arts Integration & Education Reform Initiative) in 35 schools (Hill & Bruun, 2013). Yet Baltimore schools face many challenges complicating provision of arts programming. It has had five different superintendents in five years, has gone from a centralized organizing structure to a decentralized one with fewer human resources, and changes in funds allocation resulting in a roughly $7,000 allocation per student that principals can use at their discretion. This creates an environment where arts in curriculums can be eliminated at principals' discretion (Beachler & Rosenkrans, 2011). It is beyond the scope of this study to explore the ramifications of these dynamics, but it important to note that the types of arts education provided in schools and outside of them can work in a complementary fashion for the greater benefit of young people. Findings presented later in this study will also demonstrate that out-of-school arts programs can fill an important niche for many youth in light of current dynamics.

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competitive for community providers when budgets are tight (Marwell, 2004). During periods of economic downturn, other important income sources for NPOs, such as individual giving and foundation funding, are severely limited. Donors must exercise greater discretion in how they allocate their charitable funds. Even though NPOs often collaborate with one another by pooling resources in strategic partnerships, they frequently must directly compete with one another for funding from the same sources due to limitations on investment from both public and private sources (Cleveland, 2005; Nelson, Prilleltensky, & MacGillivary, 2001).

Whether situated in urban, suburban, or rural settings, many human services NPOs provide interventions in the context of relatively intractable problems related to poverty and entrenched oppressive systems. NPOs that have stated missions of addressing these related issues, such as literacy, housing, and basic healthcare, can find their limited resources further taxed when they also have to adapt to dealing with the impact of mental, emotional, and behavioral (MEB) disorders, which are often co-occurring (National Academy of Sciences, 2009). Perkins, Bess, Cooper, Jones, Armstead, and Speer (2007) identify the contemporary service funding context as one in which NPOs are compelled "to think and act differently as they work to increase their capacity to target the root causes of the problems they seek to address" (p. 304). The remediation of MEB disorders in children, adolescents, and young adults may not be part of many NPOs' missions. Yet, these disorders often arise as a direct result of and also exacerbate the very social ills that NPOs seek to address. NPOs that are not focused on mental health often face unanticipated burdens as they are expected, sometimes simply by virtue of having contact with affected individuals, to address issues that otherwise would go untreated because of ongoing devolution of treatment to the community level. MEB disorders create

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substantial costs for families and communities in part because of the higher cost of interventions that are administered after their onset and their resulting, radiating, negative outcomes.

In summary, nonprofit, community-based organizations are currently facing increased demand for their services, diminished revenue streams coupled with greater competition for limited funds, and the complicating presence of otherwise untreated MEB disorders that affect their direct service recipients and their wider communities. As was also the context for my previous study (Scheibler, 2011), societal changes and shifts in the role of government are compelling both public and private sector service providers to change, sometimes rapidly, their scope of and approach to services to stay relevant and financially solvent (Marwell, 2004; Proehl, 2001). NPOs are ultimately called upon to provide more services, with greater impact, to more individuals for less cost in the contemporary service landscape as well as to clearly articulate, document, and evaluate the mechanisms through which they can create positive change in the populations with which they work.

Getting inside and beyond the "black box" for program evaluation.

Program stakeholders at all levels of program contact, particularly funders, have increasingly sought assurances that delivered interventions are both high quality and cost-effective. Evaluation efforts picked up to help meet this expectation but at same time are not necessarily satisfying it. The prevalent mode of program evaluation has been overly focused on outcomes measurement and does not either assess or inform better development of programs' theories of change or, in other words, the underlying theory of how program interventions change behaviors. Although there is an overall dearth of arts program evaluation literature, it is also true that within the broader body of program evaluation research there are also relatively

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few studies that have attempted to look inside the "black box"[3] of intervention effectiveness. Such efforts would allow for a more useful examination of which components, of a given program, have been more or less effective (Harachi, Abbott, Catalano, Haggarty, Fleming, 1999; Leeuw & Vassan, 2009; Linnan & Steckler, 2002).

Evaluations known as "black box outcome evaluation," or "input-output evaluation," have as their primary goal the assessment of the relationship between intervention and outcome (Chen, 2005). They do not systematically evaluate change processes that turn interventions into outcomes but seek out information about a program's merits. If evaluators and stakeholders, including practitioners, need to understand the merits of a program and how change processes can be tailored to improve the intervention then another evaluation strategy, such as theory-driven and process evaluation, is a better choice (Chen, 2005, p. 231). Looking inside the "black box," in order to get beyond it, still recognizes the role of outcomes measurement but also examines implementation fidelity and other issues to determine if it is a specific intervention, an entire program, or merely aspects of either of those that actually succeeded or failed (McLaughlin, 1987).

In recent times there has been a growing awareness of the need for, and accompanying move toward, program evaluation approaches that can "elaborate on the mechanisms through which changes in the outcomes operate" (Harachi, et al., 1999, p. 712). Since the late 1990s, there has been a notable spike in the number of published studies that include extensive process evaluation components (Linnan & Steckler, 2002). Part of this increased interest in process evaluation is that social and behavioral interventions have become more complex and multi-leveled over time, such that researchers have sought ways of clarifying to what extent, and at

[3] This use of the term "black box" in the evaluation context is based upon its use in science and engineering contexts, where a black box is essentially an "opaque" object or system that can be viewed in terms of its inputs and outputs but without any information about its internal workings.

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which level, each component of an intervention is implemented and how components work together to produce outcomes (Linnan & Steckler, 2002). With the awareness of increased intervention complexity, there has been growing support, within the evaluation scene, for the premise that program evaluations are more useful when grounded in theoretical contexts (Finney & Moos, 1989; Harachi, et al., 1999). This context elucidates the mechanisms through which program intervention effects occur by examining the basis of the program, as well as the intervening factors that facilitate the relationship between program components and outcomes (Harachi, et al., 1999). In the case of the present study's research questions, this is also relevant for understanding how internal program effects and immediate outcomes do or do not translate into potentially enduring, external outcomes.

Process evaluation serves an important role for program evaluation both when interventions produce significant outcomes and when interventions do not produce intended impacts. When outcomes are significant it is important for stakeholders to have some way of knowing which intervention components actually contributed to the outcomes; when outcomes are not significant, process evaluation can help explain why they were modest or insignificant (Fisher, 1995; Linnan & Steckler, 2002; Susser, 1995). Programs can also learn whether or not their theories of change clearly specify the intervening processes or mechanisms that link their activities to their intended outcomes, which is of key importance (Finney & Moos, 1989; Lipps & Grant, 1990). Practitioners can readily apply this type of evaluative information, and it is just such information about how to assess quality and accuracy of interventions that is currently sought after by community-based arts. In this manner, program interventions informed by a particular theory of change can be improved and there is greater understanding of which theoretical constructs, and which mechanisms within them, actually make a difference (Glanz,

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Lewis, and Rimer, 1997). At the present time, as will be discussed further below in the literature review, extant research about community-based arts programs is particularly lacking in a research base to help in the evaluation of how and/or to what degree a program's theory of change is operationalized and produces intended outcomes.

Community Arts and Community-Based Arts Organizations

Community-based arts organizations, which primarily operate under the broad moniker of the "Community Arts" field[4], are a unique form of human services NPO (Borwick, 2012; Geddes, 2004; Kagan, Sixsmith, Siddiquee, Bol, Lawthom, & Kilroy, 2005). As also documented in the introduction to my previous study (Scheibler, 2011), the Community Arts field was established contemporaneously with the Civil Rights Movement, and adopted a clear social justice agenda from its inception (Cleveland, 2005; Ewell, 2004). Community-based arts organizations are now often promoted as viable service providers for disadvantaged or troubled youth, the elderly, the homeless, the chronically mentally ill, or persons with disabilities. These settings face the same daunting service climate, including the rising demand from a more troubled population, financial pressures, and competition for funds, which other NPOs contend with. However, their circumstances are sometimes more tenuous as support for arts-based endeavors has been particularly uneven. In the 1990s, the so-called "Budget Wars" radically changed the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), among other agencies, resulting in gutted budgets for organizations in existence at that time and lingering effects on organizational practices and culture (Borwick, 2012). Further, like other types of NPOs, community-based arts settings are now more likely to grapple with a heightened presence of MEB disorders in their constituents, which they perhaps did not envision they would be addressing when they designed

[4]Although the terms "community arts," "community-based arts," and "community-focused arts" are often used interchangeably in literature and in practice, for clarity here "Community Arts" will be used to describe an overarching field, whereas "community-based arts" will refer specifically to organizations, programs, and settings.

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their service models. Community-based arts organizations are perhaps more challenged by this situation than other social service NPOs because they are often led and staffed by artists or arts-educators who have less training and experience with special needs populations.

In the U.S., a chief contributor to the growth of artist-led community-based arts endeavors in the latter half of the 20th Century was the NEA's establishment, in 1971, of the Expansion Arts Program (Bauerlein, 2009). Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, funding and other supports via this program and the related Community Foundation Initiative (1985-1994) enabled the growth of hundreds of mid-size and small CBAOs in urban, rural, and tribal communities, several of which became nationally-renowned. Much of the contemporary community-based arts work recognized by the Community Arts field draws also from the heritage of programs developed under the Comprehensive Education and Training Act (CETA) of 1976, building upon the legacy of thousands of artists having been put to work through the Works Progress Administration (WPA) throughout the 1930s and early 1940s (Borwick, 2012; Cleveland, 2005). Coming on the heels of the Harlem Renaissance, an early context for "African American activist art" (Cohen-Cruz, 2002), the WPA sponsored numerous public art demonstrations, free art classes, and thousands of artworks including community murals and public sculptures, many of which documented the rapidly shifting social conditions of the time, the totality of which marked a turning point in the federal government's relationship to cultural work.

The successes of the WPA "suggested the possibility of a permanent role for artists in community service" (Goldbard, 2006, p. 113), which informed the development of CETA such that it became a major funding vehicle for artists working in communities during the prolonged recession of the 1970s. CETA established a unit to document the best practices, at that time, in the emerging community-based arts field and to share that information with artists, arts

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administrators, and agencies involved. CETA-related arts projects were recognized as the act's most effective programs. In spite of the early track record for ongoing evaluation informing practice, the number and scope of community-based arts programs has greatly increased in recent times, and evaluation efforts and funding streams for those efforts have not kept pace with the growth of the field. In addition, the ongoing pattern since the establishment of the field is for "short-term" community engagement, which limits outcomes and their measurement (Cleveland, 2005). There appears to be a need for new research endeavors that can work around or within these limitations to help the field document contemporary practice that more often involves long-term engagement and aims for broad social impact.

In spite of funding challenges and other barriers, community-based arts programs have been a steadily growing presence, particularly in urban centers. They are identified as public art, art for democracy, arts-based training, or "arts and healing"/arts in healthcare programs, among other labels. The numerous titles demonstrate that there are diverse practices and orientations in the field, even though the traditional definition of Community Art stemming from the Civil Rights Movement focuses on the public and social justice possibilities of art rather than on individual wellness (Cleveland, 2005). Their activities are often still based squarely in the creative arts— painting or photography education and exhibition, large-scale public art projects such as murals, and the like— and are often led by artists and not human services professionals. Yet, their intended outcomes go well beyond artistic achievement. When arts organizations are targeted toward health, youth development, and/or skills-training for marginalized populations, they often pursue outcomes that would be considered ameliorative or competency-based prevention (e.g., improved mental health and daily life skills). However, many community-based arts organizations targeting the same populations, instead adopt a blatant, transformative, social

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justice values stance and hold related policy changes as an aspirational, if not a readily achievable, goal.

Community-Based Arts Organizations & Community Psychology

Community-based arts organizations are a unique type of human services provider because they often blend paradigms of individual-level and systems-level change and, are a "personal relationship industry" (Borwick, 2012, p. 26) that can enhance quality of life at multiple levels. Maryo Gard Ewell, a noted contributor to and "historian" of the Community Arts field, describes that, in this original conceptualization, community-based arts' meaningfulness was derived from its ability to create communities populated by empowered individuals (Ewell, 2004). In Cleveland's (2005) large-scale study of the expanding and "largely disconnected" Community Arts field, he found that the most routinely voiced tenets in the field "are 'accountability to the community' and 'participatory democracy'" suggesting "a commitment to community participation and power" (p. 104). As suggested above, and also discussed in my previous study (Scheibler, 2011), community psychology shares comparable values that are embodied in the field's prioritizing of processes and outcomes reflective of empowerment, psychological sense of community, and other concepts.

Outcomes claimed by community-based arts organizations are numerous and not mutually exclusive. Individual-level outcomes for individuals include improved self-esteem and quality of life enhancement, improved coping skills and decision-making, enhanced cognitive capacities (geriatrics and disabilities), self-efficacy and ability to self-advocate. Words and phrases such as "healing", "personal growth", "mindfulness", "fostering empathy", and "personal voice" are often used by such programs (Borwick, 2012; Burnham, Durland, & Ewell, 2004; Cleveland, 2005; personal experience with NPOs and review of organizations' websites).

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Sometimes the programs provide creative therapy in the strict sense (involving Masters-level, credentialed therapists) or have the oversight of a psychologist or psychiatrist, but often they do not. Thus, the social and intrapersonal aims of community-based arts resonate with clinical and counseling psychologies as well as community psychology, but the connections between them are often unofficial. Higher order goals include the fostering of social inclusion and demarginalization at a community or societal level, and the building of networks of social support and a sense of community (Cleveland, 2005).

A dialogue between community psychologists Thomas and Rappaport (1996) about the importance of art to communities, and the need for the substantiation and replication of arts programming, was published over a decade ago. Since that time, however, very little research directly linking the fields of community psychology and Community Arts has emerged despite these fields' shared language and shared values orientations. This study builds upon and extends my previous study's (Scheibler, 2011) attempt to make a contribution to this scanty body of knowledge and to help stimulate further research in support of the betterment of both fields.

Human service paradigms and community-based arts nonprofits.

As discussed in my previous study (Scheibler, 2011), in spite of daunting circumstances, varied interventions offered by non-profit human services organizations are proving to be efficacious. Such interventions include those that would be considered "traditional" (Bess, Prilleltensky, Perkins, & Collins, 2009), as well as the less traditional types advocated by community psychology— strengths-based, wellness promotive, and preventative (Levine, Perkins, & Perkins, 2005). Programs utilizing traditional interventions follow the predominant medical model approach to health and human services, in which care is retroactively provided to individuals who are already afflicted with ailments and professionals dominate the decision-

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making process (Bess, Prilleltensky, Perkins, & Collins, 2009; Evans, Hanlin, & Prilleltensky, 2007). As detailed above, a number of community-based arts programs continue to employ non-traditional, social justice-oriented interventions, stemming from the birth of Community Arts during the Civil Rights movement. However, external pressures to treat MEB disorders and to secure funding from sources more comfortable with traditional methods has pushed many to change focus. It is important to be aware of the impetus behind programs' use of various methods, based in their adoption of different service paradigms, because programs' theories of change, resulting activities, and ultimate effects on participants, are impacted by the direct and indirect implications of the choice of paradigm.

Although it has been changing over the last couple of decades, the reigning paradigm in community services historically has been informed by the above-mentioned traditional, or "ameliorative," approach, which is primarily reactive and deficit-based. This general paradigm persists among NPOs even though a growing body of researchers and policy-makers agree that there is marked potential for widespread benefit from moving beyond treatment to a focus on the prevention of MEB disorders (National Academy of Sciences, 2009). An increasing number of NPOs are undertaking nontraditional, or "transformative," approaches, or, in the case of community-based arts, returning to their social justice roots. Altogether, this shift is contributing to an accumulating evidence base that collective wellness via the improvement of community conditions surpasses modest gains made by treating individuals alone (Bess, Prilleltensky, Perkins, & Collins, 2009; Nelson, Prilleltensky, & MacGillivary, 2001). Transformative approaches emphasize strengths instead of deficits, prevention rather than treatment, participation of service recipients, and changing community conditions (Bess, Prilleltensky, Perkins, & Collins, 2009). Transformative approaches necessitate thinking about organizational

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processes in terms of second-order change at various levels—individual, organizational, and community—rather than in terms of first-order change (Perkins, et al., 2007), which attempts to create change at the level of the individual only.

Although community-based arts NPOs historically were aligned with social justice goals, they have varied in how closely they have subscribed to the traditional paradigm from their inception to the present, as well as in their ability to undertake paradigmatic change in pursuit of transformational goals. However, community psychology's track record of working collaboratively with NPOs of all types, and community-based arts organizations' own use of empowerment language, suggests that many are interested in going beyond the status quo. In addition to action based on values alone, there are a number of benefits NPOs can gain by adopting non-traditional approaches: 1) differentiate themselves from their closest competitors by offering broader services, those that also target the root causes of social problems, which make them appear superior to funders (Barman, 2002); 2) help an NPO remain relevant to its recipients' needs and its funders' concerns (Evans, Hanlin, & Prilleltensky, 2007); 3) become more entwined with their community environments (Maton, 2000); and 4) engage in systems-oriented change that allow them to function more as flexible "open systems" that are adaptive in contending with causes of adversity in the external environment (Proehl, 2001, p. 56).

One reason that community-based arts organizations are a unique type of service provider and perhaps are more challenging to evaluate, is that for them, ameliorative and transformative outcomes are not mutually exclusive, and they often pursue both. The terms "empowerment" and "inclusion," used too often by community-based arts organizations, would typically reflect transformative goals from a community psychology perspective. However, in an arts program context these terms and their related aims could be directed at individuals-only, and could be

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either ameliorative or transformative, due to organizations' differing conceptualizations and inconsistent outcome definitions (Adejumo, 2008; Bedoya, 2008; Cleveland, 2005; Ewell, 2004; Green & Tones, 2004; Burton & Kagan, 2010; Lawthom, Sixsmith, & Kagan, 2007; Matarasso, 1996a). Community-based arts organizations' "mixed" approaches can be quite adaptive, given the pressures associated with serving their target populations. It has been recommended that the non-traditional, transformative paradigm should be used to enrich the ameliorative paradigm, but it cannot fully replace the ameliorative (Evans, Hanlin, & Prilleltensky, 2001). As Perkins, et al. argue, "individuals, organizations, and communities need stability as much as they need change . . . Ameliorative approaches provide a vital safety net of community services" (2007, p. 309). Studies such as this one contribute to academic and practical understandings of why, how, and in what measure different service paradigms—traditional or non-traditional— allow community-based arts organizations to be more effective and create sustaining, external impacts.

Community psychology and the study of community-based arts.

Community psychology provides frameworks for understanding and strengthening organizational practices to help community-based arts NPOs in what they do and to contend with the challenges they face. Throughout its history, community psychology has aspired to offer a values-orientation and innovative, systems-oriented approach that supports promotion, prevention, and social change to address the root causes of social problems (Maton, 2000). The seven values adopted by community psychology that collectively guide its practice— Individual & Family Wellness, Sense of Community, Citizen Participation, Collaboration & Community Strengths, Empirical Grounding—together challenge the status quo of service provision and provide the necessary ingredients to pursue change in communities across ecological levels (Dalton, Elias, & Wandersman, 2001). Keys and Frank (1987) have proposed that a "dynamic

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community psychology perspective emphasizes the primacy of individual well-being, and the importance of settings, change, process, and paradox in understanding social reality" (p. 239). Boyd and Angelique (2007), in their introduction to a special issue of the *American Journal of Community Psychology*, contend that the application of organizational studies to community psychology leads to a focus on multiple levels of analysis that is conducive to supporting alternative, non-traditional approaches to complex settings such as the ones under examination here.

As described above, community psychology's values stance, interest in and track record of studying alternative and organizational settings, and perspectives on different human services paradigms, together indicate that this field has a great deal to offer the study of community-based arts organizations. In combination with individual community psychologists' interest in creative approaches to research and intervention, there has been a recent uptick in community psychologists interfacing with arts practitioners and the Community Arts field and undertaking research on this topic, as evidenced by an increase in related conference presentations, opinion essays (published and online), and networking amongst interested individuals. Yet, to this point there has been little published literature by community psychologists about community-based arts organizations.

Aside from a few notable exceptions (the ongoing work of Kagan, Lawthom, and their colleagues in the U.K.), community psychology perspectives have only been minimally applied to community-based arts organizations. In recent years, a handful of community psychologists have published articles about their work with community-based arts projects and programs, such as an essay on the interaction of public art and feminism (Mulvey, 2005), a case study of a community arts and mental health project serving LGBTQ individuals (Mulvey & Mandell,

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2007); and a case study of a theater program to support veterans' recovery (Faigin & Stein, 2010). However, this small body of literature is limited to case studies and essays, none of which are of direct relevance to the present study. In an example of a more rigorous research endeavor, Perkins and colleagues (2007), give some attention to arts organizations. They looked at arts organizations as potential settings in their research on organizational learning and empowerment, lumping them together with cultural and philanthropic organizations. Unfortunately, they ultimately discarded these settings from consideration because arts organizations did not appear to fit with the others because they were "less oriented toward community change" (p. 312). This assessment sharply contrasts with the practices and philosophical underpinnings of Community Arts. Because Perkins and his colleagues do not provide any detail about the arts organizations they considered, it is impossible to tell which arts organizations they were critiquing, and if that group included community-based arts settings. While it is true that many large-scale arts organizations are not focused on community change, many smaller, possibly lesser known, arts NPOs decidedly do pursue community change. If such a lack of awareness of community-based arts organizations is typical of organizationally-minded community psychologists, the need for research bridging the two fields is all the more apparent.

A recent, ongoing initiative to document "lessons learned" by community psychologists working with arts projects and/or with arts-based research methods is being conducted by researchers Katherine Cloutier and Kyrah Brown. This initiative is promising but has yet to be disseminated. However, at the time of this writing, it and other arts-related studies are now under review for an upcoming special issue of the American Journal of Community Psychology. Another promising development in tying together community psychology and Community Arts was community psychologist Kien Lee's (of the Community Science consulting research group

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in Gaithersburg, Maryland) initial contribution of a chapter on community-based arts projects to the extensive on-line “Community Toolbox”, which has recently been re-launched. At the present time, that chapter remains off-line, but earlier this year a working group (including this author) began discussions with the Toolbox organizers to complete this chapter. It will hopefully provide guidance to community psychologists interested in this subject area in the future.

Literature Review

The contemporary context, described in the above introduction, highlights the need for, and delineates the challenges in undertaking, improved evaluation strategies for community-based arts NPOs. In addition, community psychology’s values stance and interests align with the field of Community Arts, as well as offers theories and frameworks for helping community-based arts organizations in their ongoing efforts to describe, understand, and substantiate the outcomes of the work that they are doing.

Even though, as described in the introduction, there is a lack of literature directly comparable to this study, in recent years an extensive body of research about hypothesized arts impacts —cognitive, psycho-emotional, educational, social— has been conducted. This body of research has contributed to a growing evidence base for understanding how arts experiences can impact individual and, to a lesser extent, community-level outcomes. A portion of this research is more focused on community-based arts than others, and studies with this focus are the core of this literature review. The extant research reviewed for this dissertation is wide-ranging, and includes: theoretical papers and descriptive case studies that argue for the social impacts of the arts; empirical literature ranging from large-scale mixed methods analyses to single case ethnographies, which evaluate the arts impacts on disadvantaged individuals and communities; policy and practitioner literature aimed at identifying effective means of evaluating outcomes of

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arts initiatives; and some secondary literature that synthesizes key findings and describes useful theory and/or research methods.

The following review illustrates the main research perspectives applied to community-based arts, the state-of-the-art developments that are occurring in the wider global context, the most common methods being applied to this topic, recommended courses of action for future evaluative research, and key social impact outcomes. The review begins with an overview of the current state of research, as reflected in extant literature, in the Community Arts field including evaluation challenges and trends, followed by a discussion of literature reflecting the predominant perspectives that have been applied to studying community-based arts organizations and social impacts of the arts.

The Current State of Community Arts Research and Evaluation

An ongoing issue, noted by researchers and practitioners, for the field of Community Arts is that it is severely lacking in empirical research (Borwick, 2012; Burnham, Durland, & Ewell, 2004; Cleveland, 2005; Richardson, 2008). This issue encompasses problems of general and evaluative research output, methodological rigor, and consistency in terminology. The latter issue includes the field's overly broad umbrella, encompassing several different types of program models with various populations, approaches, goals, and outcome criteria.[5]

There has been a recent surge in efforts by practitioners and partnering researchers to remedy the lack of community arts-specific empirical research and related issues, particularly in the area of arts program evaluation (Borwick, 2012; Jackson, 2009; personal conversations on

[5] Examples of issues resulting from this breadth of the field and inconsistent use of terminology include the following: various types of arts participation are often conflated by researchers as well as policy makers; "passive" participation—participating as audience or recipient of an end product of arts activities—and "active" participation— participating in developing or producing activities are not distinguished from one another (Barraket, 2005); non-arts specific concepts are increasingly being applied to the arts. A notable concept, "community cultural development," is now frequently related to the conceptualization and measurement of community-based arts outcomes but, adding further confusion, this term has particular connotations within the context of different countries (Barraket, 2005; Jermyn, 2004; Mulligan, et al., 2006; Scheibler, 2011).

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October 25, 2012 at the American Evaluation Association Arts & Culture Topical Interest Group roundtable). However, researchers and practitioners alike continue to struggle with how to implement credible research, and to define reasonable outcomes and evidence of change to look for and document (Borwick, 2012). Similarly, outside of anecdotal style case studies, there has been little effort even to describe the processes of change in community-based arts.
Reviews (first conducted in 2008, and revisited in 2010 and 2012) of the field's major "clearinghouse" for research in the U.S., the Community Arts Network (CAN; www.community artsnetwork.org) and the output of its partner, the Community Arts Research Convening (CARC; last convened in 2011, sponsored primarily by the Maryland Institute, College of Art), corroborates this overall dearth of empirical research. CAN-reviewed papers primarily consist of case studies of arts projects or essays involving some application of pedagogical and/or aesthetic theory. The organizers of CARC have for the past several years been working to create their own journal, but their peer-reviewed papers are now only available on a web archive of the original CAN website.[6]

American's for the Arts "Animating Democracy" project provides another online compendium of resources, including evaluation "toolkits" and research/policy briefs relevant to Community Arts. Their Arts & Civic Engagement Impact Initiative is a working group of arts practitioners, researchers, and funders with the aim of understanding the "social and civic impact of arts-based civic engagement work". However, at the time of this writing, they have few reports that are publicly available and, similar to CAN, those reports that are available are mainly case studies. In addition to traditional academic search vehicles, I also conducted searches within

[6] The Social Arts Practices Network (SPAN; http://www.socialpractices artnetwork.org) has actively picked up the torch of carrying new material that would have previously been carried by CAN, but its current focus is more journalistic than academic. Other initiatives, such as the Baltimore Art + Justice Mapping Project (http://baltimoreartplusjustice.wordpress.com), are reflective of current activity in the field.

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the Americans for the Arts' Art Policy Database and the U.K.'s Culture and Sport Evidence (CASE) database, which mines a broad range of arts research from all over the world. There was a great deal of overlap between the research that was available from CAN and these other two sources. Despite this overlap and even though, to date, the research has not been able to answer the most pressing questions for arts evaluation, the extensive quantity and diversity of material found across these sites is indicative of the wider interest in this subject on the parts of the social sciences, in addition to the Community Arts field's strongly expressed interest in establishing and communicating best practices in evaluation.

The Community Arts field's desire to better evaluate its work has been further confirmed in conversations I have had with well-regarded arts practitioners and academics, beginning at the 2009 CARC convening, prior to starting my previous study (Personal conversations on April 20, 2009 with: Rebecca Yenowine, Founder/ Director of Kids on the Hill, now New Lens, Baltimore, MD; Ken Krafchek and Cinder Hypki, MICA faculty, among others). At the same time, their interest was tempered by a strong concern about the nature of the research process and a distrust of researchers. These individuals' general view was that most researchers try to forcefully fit arts evaluations into quantitative models that are insufficient for capturing the impact of the artistic process. They also questioned the motives of researchers, but did not elaborate on why they were leery of researchers' motivations. In the ensuing years, additional conversations with arts practitioners and evaluators (most notably at the inaugural Arts & Disabilities Providers' Conference in San Francisco, CA on September 16-18, 2011) have indicated that research efforts have advanced somewhat but practitioners continue to struggle with evaluation and are turning to social scientists for assistance even as a distrust of the research process remains.

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Concurrent with Community Arts' own pursuit of evaluative research, social science researchers from other fields have been developing bodies of related research that varies in rigor and focus. The most rigorous research about community-based arts settings comes in large part out of the United Kingdom, although bodies of work are growing in Australia, Canada, and the U.S., as well as other parts of Europe and Asia. Although most of this research is evaluative in nature, it is important to note, related to the present study, that it is heavily focused on individual outcomes, appears in policy position papers, and/or focuses on large-scale cultural institutions, audience response to public art, or workshop programming. Therefore much of it is not very applicable to the present study. However, it is important to attend to a selection of this literature from those predominant perspectives, and other, noteworthy approaches to the study of community-based arts because they contain some relevant findings and illustrate the predominant approaches to and the challenges for evaluating arts programs.

Community Arts Research: Current Evaluation Issues and Barriers Found in the Literature

Both the desire for and challenges posed to Community Arts research efforts, generally and specifically related to evaluation, are nested within issues faced broadly by the arts. As noted above, arts fields have long struggled at the policy level because of the difficulties of quantifying and communicating their value to society (Borwick, 2012; Galloway, 2009; Geddes, 2004; Matarasso, 1996a; Putland, 2008). In a position paper for Animated Democracy, Urban Institute researcher Maria Rosario Jackson (2009) argues that praiseworthy arts organizations are burdened by unrealistic expectations about their impacts and their ability to undertake certain methods to prove them. She makes a case for both practitioners and funders to have more realistic expectations of arts-based social impact and civic engagement both on the part of

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practitioners and funders, addressing existing presses on organizations, such as an over-emphasis on proving economic impacts that inhibit realistic definitions of impact and related goal-setting. Of great concern for the Community Arts field is that this situation can effectively push community-based arts to the "margins" of the art sector:

> In the cultural policy arena, as well as in other policy areas, the notion of "arts and culture" is still associated primarily with institutions concerned chiefly with the presentation of professional "arts for arts sake" products to audiences. On a related note, cultural participation is still typically associated almost exclusively with passive consumption. . . . Artists are viewed almost exclusively as the producers of artistic goods, and sadly any understanding of the full power of the artist and the creative process is diminished (2009, p. 9).

Of note for the present study, Jackson's recommended countermeasures to evaluation barriers for evaluation-minded researchers and community-based arts stakeholders include: 1) gaining a strong grasp of what arts organizations are actually poised to do toward their ultimate social impact goals, "rather than making claims for impacting conditions over which it has no direct control" (p. 6); 2) establishing relationships between practices and intended outcomes, rather than trying to fruitlessly prove causality. The extant literature related to arts impacts reflects an outcomes-focus that Jackson might argue is largely unhelpful to policy-makers, or to the cause of making the case for community-based arts based in the Community Arts fields' values orientation.

A 2004 CAN-sponsored report, which identified cultural development as the *main* objective of community-based arts, defined cultural development as concerned with democracy, the hearing of people's voices, social justice, equity, and diversity, rather than in stark economic terms (Burnham, Durland, & Ewell, 2004). These largely transformative goals do not square with the predominant audience-centric view of the arts that dominate policy-making. These goals can be difficult to substantiate and, as discussed above, are sometimes less compelling to

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traditionally minded policy-makers and funders. The extant body of research on community-based arts settings does reflect these challenges. Community psychologist Kagan and her colleagues conducted a large-scale evaluation of community-based arts projects in the U.K. (2005a; 2005b; 2007; 2010). In their review for this evaluation, they note a number of methodological shortcomings in similar studies, including that studies did not develop theories of change to go "beyond an 'arts for arts' sake' thinking" and emphasized "description rather than explanation" (p. 6). To some degree these shortcomings may result from attempts to effectively measure impacts that are challenging to quantify, while dealing with constraints imposed by the push to demonstrate instrumental and/or unrealistic outcomes. Woven throughout the two major trends that have come to dominate contemporary research efforts—the drive to improve evaluation and documenting arts for social inclusion outcomes— are the effects of and responses to the aforementioned challenges.

Calls for better evaluation.

Extant research, including evaluations of varying scale and approach, supports the need to build models of change in community-based arts practices especially as related to social impact goals. An emerging trend in community arts related research over the past several years has been to pilot evaluation strategies that are better suited to arts programs (Borwick, 2012; BYAEP, 2012; Jackson, 2009). Although numerous reviews have supported that the arts make a difference in people's lives, particularly by increasing sense of belonging and identity, reviews of literature on the specific linkages between arts and community well-being find that links appear relatively weak due to methodological and conceptual flaws in the research. These include: 1) a focus on a narrow range of projects funded by arts organizations or government agencies; 2) an emphasis on the "self-referential" assessments made by key project initiators

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and/or practitioners rather than participants; 3) the use of very limited and often inappropriate research tools (Jermyn, 2004; Mulligan, et. al, 2006). Such issues have inhibited research efforts across the various perspectives on community-based arts and the countries most actively engaged in this research.

Of particular relevance to the context for this study, Jermyn looked at how evaluation can be used by small/mid-size arts organizations and projects to support social inclusion work (2004). Based on an analysis of three broad models of arts intervention, including community-based work, Jermyn's review highlights that arts participants cite many positive benefits to participation, but that evaluation strategies are conducive to gathering descriptions of benefits that are mostly of a transitory and personal nature. At the same time, the high-level outcomes of interest to many stakeholders— direct impacts on health, crime, education, and employment— are largely applied to the arts in unrealistic ways that do not reflect the specific durations, program missions, or actual methods used. The present study has the potential to generate new understandings of how the individual-level benefits of the arts, supported in extant literature, can be realistically studied and understood to lead to larger social impacts and ultimately evaluated at a higher level.

Arts-based social inclusion.

Another predominant trend in arts research over the past decade has been to conceptualize the work of community-based arts in terms of social inclusion, reflecting wider trends in public policy and community development research. Because policy makers in various countries have been preoccupied with the promotion of social inclusion, the work of arts organizations and their evaluation efforts have increasingly been framed in terms of this concept (Barraket, 2005; Jermyn, 2004). Although not central to the present study, the arts-based social

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inclusion concept is notable because a substantial portion of the most rigorous research about community-based arts is concerned with inclusion and it has overlap with theoretical constructs of interest to community psychology, but it is not yet clear if its recent rise to prominence will positively or negatively impact Community Arts' research prospects.

The impetus for evaluating the arts for their potential to produce social inclusion outcomes has been inspired, particularly in the U.K. and Australia, by prevailing concerns within the community development sphere about the changing nature of social capital in the contemporary world (Mulligan, et. al, 2006). The concepts of social inclusion and social exclusion began to gain popularity in social policy discourse when the U.K.'s New Labour government established a Social Exclusion Unit in 1997. The Social Exclusion Unit defined social exclusion as "a shorthand term for what can happen when people or areas suffer a combination of linked problems" related to four key policy indicators: health, employment, education, and crime (Social Exclusion Unit, 2004, in Barraket, 2005).

Social inclusion has been defined simply as the "condition of not being socially excluded," but more meaningfully as an active process involving "measures taken to reduce the impacts of social exclusion in terms of specific outcomes, while also seeking to address the broader processes that bring about such exclusion in the first place" (Barraket, 2005). Social inclusion efforts in community development have been informed by Putnam's (2000) positions, presented in his influential book *Bowling Alone*, on the need to respond to a perceived decline of sense of community and changing social relationships in society, caused by increased social mobility (Green & Haines, 2002). Putnam advocates for an overall strengthening of social capital and connectedness, especially to improve health and well-being, and policy platforms in multiple countries have adopted his position in their shift to emphasize "social inclusion" to strengthen

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individual and community quality of life. Researchers note that the terms, and the sets of outcomes they convey, are problematically vague to the extent that it can be difficult to design clear strategies to increase them (Mulligan, et. al, 2006). Definitions of social inclusion have overlap with the concepts of "place-making"[7], sense of community, and social capital, all of which are also independently linked to social inclusion outcomes in some of the literature (Jermyn, 2004). Possibly because of the conceptual vagueness of social inclusion, policies designed to foster it are generally focused on the more familiar, but fairly broad, concept of local community-building (Barraket, 2005).

In the U.S., a concept for directed social inclusion strategy called "arts-based social inclusion" is gaining traction in community arts evaluation. The leading researchers utilizing this concept, Stein and Seifert (2010), defined arts-based social inclusion as, "the idea that a set of artists and cultural organizations are consciously using the arts as a way to improve the life circumstances of [marginalized people] and integrate them into community life" (p. i). This definition is quite broad and could apply to the work of many different arts initiatives. Relatedly, an important consideration for evaluation of community-based arts programs through a social inclusion lens, which is not dissimilar from some of the considerations mentioned above, is that not all arts programs and projects called "social inclusion work" would be considered as such per prevailing definitions of social inclusion. Or, they only would be insofar as they target groups that could be defined as socially excluded or at risk of exclusion (i.e., marginalized populations such as juvenile offenders, the homeless, etc.). Perhaps even more so than other human services NPOs, given the nature of the field, community-based arts programs that work with such groups can have a wide range of different purposes and intentions in their uses of art.

[7] In creative place making, cross-sector partnerships strategically shape the physical and social character of a locale around arts and cultural activities (Markusen & Gadwa, 2010).

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In light of the social inclusion's growing predominance in the evaluation of arts programs, it is important to be mindful of additional limitations to extant research that applies it. In addition to the overall limitations of arts evaluation literature discussed above, it has been noted that evaluative evidence of social inclusion outcomes is extremely limited (Barraket, 2005). For example, reviews of formal evaluations that have looked at the role of arts in health promotion noted a lack of rigorous longitudinal research on the social inclusion impacts of arts interventions (Barraket, 2005; Hamilton, et al., 2003; White 2003). This lack of longitudinal research is especially problematic, relative to evaluation of arts-based social inclusion, because it would be extremely difficult to identify the actual impact of arts on an "outcome" involving four broad policy indicators without measuring effects on participants and communities over time.

In sum, the limitations within the body of arts-based social inclusion oriented literature are consistent with the larger body of literature about social impacts of the arts, in that there is a lack of extant studies that can directly help programs to assess their outcomes relative to their theories of change. However, as mentioned above, a selection of the broader body of literature, which does include the social inclusion perspective, is noteworthy because it contains some relevant findings and illustrates the predominant perspectives about and challenges facing the study of community-based arts. Having now established the context of and part played by arts-based social inclusion studies within the larger community-based arts literature, I will review pertinent studies of this orientation in the section below.

Representative Literature on Social Impacts of Community-Based Arts

In order to meet the above-described goals of the literature review—to identify and describe what has been done thus far to research community-based arts, and to highlight pertinent findings on social impacts of the arts— this section includes those examples of rigorous

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empirical research, case studies, and reviews about the impacts of community-based arts and/or that highlight the pressing challenges to arts evaluation and offer solutions to them. In light of the cross-disciplinary nature of much of the extant literature, and authors' varying use of terminology, there is a great deal of seeming overlap between purposes, approaches, methods, and outcomes within this literature. Therefore it is difficult to parse categories for presenting the literature. For ease of navigation, literature is grouped by the overarching research perspective that informed, shaped, or inspired it: 1) Arts for Social Justice (critical, emancipatory, empowerment approaches and goals; studies are often smaller in scale); 2) Health promotion and Community Development (often aimed at individual-level heath and mental health outcomes and/or community well-being; often larger in scale and funded by government or major foundations); 3) Other noteworthy perspectives (art therapy field and Photovoice. Within each of the first two groupings, literature is further grouped by its place of origin—*U.S./U.S. and Canada*, or *U.K. and Australia*.). It is important to note that although certain types of outcomes are more or less associated with each of the different perspectives, there is a great deal of overlap. There is also a notable inconsistency in how outcomes are defined throughout the literature.

A subset of the literature will be given special attention, regardless of grouping, throughout the literature review: literature that is of direct relevance to this study, research that involves similar approaches, methods, and/or comparable, process-oriented foci within the primary research question(s) to this study, and literature that focuses on arts-based social inclusion. Literature focused on social inclusion aims in community-based arts, known sometimes as arts-based social inclusion (Stein & Seifert, 2010), is not uniformly of direct relevance to the present study. However, as discussed above, the arts' potential to effect social

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inclusion outcomes has emerged as a key interest of policy makers, funders, and practitioners in all countries in which community-based arts are of interest. Therefore I have made note of studies produced from this view because, as suggested above, the interest in this perspective impacts the arts evaluation landscape. Related literature from the past decade in which social inclusion has begun to dominate as the main outcome (or outcome composite) has been produced within the various perspectives of arts research, reflecting the general conceptual overlap.

Literature reflecting the art for social justice perspective is presented first because it is the perspective most commonly applied to the study of community-based arts in the U.S. and is most related to the practice of the study organizations. Literature reflecting community development and health promotion perspectives is presented second, but will comprise the bulk of this review because this body of literature has had the most involvement from social scientists, and is the most extensive and rigorous.

Art for social justice perspective.

This primarily U.S. body of research has been conducted by researchers from various disciplines and consists of evaluations and case studies of varied rigor. Much of it has been compiled and disseminated by the Community Arts field, as described above. Research reflecting this perspective manifests the field's history and the values associated with it, but there appears to be increasing overlap in their aims and intended outcomes with community development concerns, possibly because of funders' priorities. However, arts practitioners of a social justice orientation would likely prioritize the emancipatory and empowerment potential of their work, even if their stated program aims have shifted to satisfy funder expectations (Scheibler, 2011). Yet it remains to be seen if this potential tension between stated and implicit goals will be important for thinking about how to identify appropriate theories of change for U.S. community

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arts programs in the future. Studies that currently would fall under the arts for social justice heading tend to describe outcomes— such as empowerment, civic participation, engagement, and increased voice— that are clearly distinct from "arts for health" outcomes, in contrast to other bodies of literature (Burnham, Durland, & Ewell, 2004; Cleveland, 2005; Putland, 2008). A few representative studies are presented here.

U.S.

There are very few large-scale, rigorous studies that can be classified under the arts for social justice heading. Two examples are presented here. The first is an ongoing initiative called The Arts & Democracy Project, a project of The Center for Civic Participation (CCP). This study has the goal of documenting existing "arts-and-democracy" projects, which are defined as arts programs that use art for organizing and for encouraging civic participation (Richardson, 2008). The CCP commissioned profiles of 13 projects, ranging from well established to emerging settings, which they termed "exemplary" because they were found to produce positive individual and community-level outcomes and to have achieved high participant satisfaction. Researchers analyzed interviews conducted *solely* with project leaders, who were asked about project accomplishments, resources, and visions for increasing impact. CCP researchers found that a key underlying philosophy of projects was the role of art in enriching community life and in mobilizing social/political action. The programs all linked their activities to growing community-organizing know-how, research, the strategic use of technology, and the development of sustainable leadership structures. Many of the studied projects documented community members' autobiographical stories, reflective of personal and community struggles, as the starting point of their activities.

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The second evaluation is Cleveland's (2005) report on a multi-site study of community-based arts programs, conducted under the auspices of the Center for the Study of Art & Community (CSA&C). It focused on 10 "exemplary" programs. As in similar studies, exemplary here is used to denote standards of practice that other organizations should aspire to meet in the view of the entities that commissioned the research. In this case, exemplary programs are defined as those that have "a significant and sustained positive impact", defining impact as "*change leading to the long-term [10 years or more] advancement of human dignity, health and/or productivity"* (Cleveland, 2005, p. 7). Most noteworthy among Cleveland's extensive findings were that the studied arts programs shared these features: define success relative to community needs and assets established by constituents; have resilient organizational leadership structures; have leaders that are adaptive, collaborative and entrepreneurial; depend on the quality of the relationships they create in the community. A unique finding here, in relation to personal narrative, was that the programs used the concept of narrative both literally and metaphorically, with many interviewees referencing "story", "narrative", or "quest" in discussing their work (Cleveland, 2005, p. 114).

Another recent, noteworthy evaluation effort is being undertaken by Animating Democracy, the Art & Civic Engagement Initiative. Within the Initiative's "Field Lab", arts and cultural organizations and projects were matched with evaluators in a cooperative inquiry to explore how to gauge social change outcomes of their work. The initiative is innovative in its aim to pair "expert" know-how about evaluation methods with "on the ground" goals and concerns of arts participants and practitioners. A wide range of social justice oriented art programs have taken part, including: Terra Moto of Portland, ME, which focuses on performance, community arts projects, and civic dialogues to improve municipal government

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(Dwyer & Pottenger, 2009); Art & Soul Project of Starksboro, VT, through which town residents address community issues using digital storytelling, arts collaborations, and community events (Dwyer, Korza, & Bacon, 2008); Finding Voice of Tucson, AZ, an innovative literacy and visual arts program aimed at "encouraging and promoting" youth voices, particularly immigrant and refugee youth (Alvarez, 2009).

Another smaller scale study of potential interest coming from a social justice perspective is Hutzel's (2005) participatory action research dissertation, which described and analyzed the implementation of an asset-based community art curriculum in a disadvantaged Cincinnati, OH neighborhood. Hutzel utilized a qualitative research approach that incorporated interviews with adult and youth participants (N=14), observations, and document collection (including a drawing exercise). The art curriculum primarily employed the construction of "asset-based maps" of the neighborhood in order to change perceptions of that community and to increase resident participation in neighborhood improvements. The curriculum was constructed on the premise that the participating neighborhood was an "oppressed", socially excluded entity with the potential to develop strong social capital and collective identity, ultimately increasing empowerment at the community level. It is difficult to draw actionable conclusions about the success of the arts activity or the utility of Hutzel's approach for future evaluation because of the vagueness of the reported findings (e.g., participants' "perceptions" of the art program are mainly limited to their satisfaction levels, and the community's apparent interest in continuing similar arts projects was reported as "the best indication" that change had taken place in the community). However, Hutzel's study is of interest for this study because of its focus on participants' perceptions of a community arts activity relative to social change. In addition, it was the only identified study with a comparable aim to not only overcome gaps in existing

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literature but to help redress that multiple related fields (e.g., community development, community psychology, community art, art education, and "education for liberation") have yet to build extensively upon one another.

Empowerment.

Social impact goals in community-based arts settings are often termed "empowerment" by programs, often in connection to inclusion, and empowerment defined in this sense has been explored in various ways in the literature. Arts for social justice conceptualizations of these program outcomes and processes are of interest, relative to the present study, mainly because they were the focus of the prior study from which this study builds. In addition, the empowerment concept continues to be a key interest of community psychology and Community Arts, and the participating organizations in this study also use empowerment language to describe their goals (Scheibler, 2011). In Purcell's (2004) review of photography-based arts projects, he summarized how the general theories of Freire have been employed by social justice-focused Community Arts theorists and practitioners. Overall, the field has applied Freire's description of the process by which naive consciousness transforms to a critical one through its use of "coded material" (visual artwork, literary and musical pieces) that facilitates reflection among community members and encourages them to take action to change their life's circumstances (Purcell, 2004, p.112). Purcell proposes that this process serves "both for individual and for community empowerment" (2004, p. 112).

In keeping with Purcell's assessment, empowerment is referenced within articles that are theoretical reviews or commentaries of practice and evaluation about community-based arts settings. Empowerment as a process and/or as an outcome goal is also referenced in multi-site evaluations or case studies/program evaluations of projects (Adejumo, 2008; Cleveland, 2005;

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Green & Tones, 2003; Strack, Magill, & McDonagh, 2004; Wang, 1996). However, the authors of such work vary in how clearly they define or describe empowerment outcomes, among others, and rarely describe or attempt to measure an empowerment process. It is not entirely surprising, then, that community-based arts programs that identify such goals do not unpack their use of this or other related terms.

There are a handful of studies that do report findings and observations about social justice outcomes and/or processes, including empowerment in connection to increased social capital, that are of note for this study. Adejumo's (2008) exploration of critical pedagogy in the Greater Tomorrow Youth Art Program (GTYAP), in Austin, Texas, is representative of such studies. This report is mainly theoretical, but found that an instructional approach, using what they called "reflective dialogue", encouraged critical consciousness to increase participants' understandings of how they could affect their community. In another example, Bedoya (2002), who opined that all "community-art practices" are "grounded in the ideology of empowerment" (p. 3), found that organizational structures allowing for collaboration with NPOs of different size or prestige were conducive to empowerment and engagement. Green and Tones (2003) asserted that art has the ability to facilitate a mutually reinforcing process between individual empowerment (evident in increased self esteem and self efficacy) and community empowerment (manifested in increased social networks). In the previous study that this study builds upon (Scheibler, 2011), I examined how a representative community-based arts organization understood, defined, and operationalized its "empowerment" goals. Findings of that study included that although the study organization was inspired by social justice aims, its stakeholders mainly connected positive organizational outcomes to other processes such as Psychological Sense of Community (McMillan & Chavis, 1986).

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Mattingly (2001) employed ethnography and two years of participant observation in her study of the “Around the World in a Single Day” community theatre program, targeted at at-risk youth and located in an economically disadvantaged neighborhood in San Diego, CA. Although this article is consistent with much of the literature found on CAN, in that it is more so a position paper, it is of note for this study because Mattingly argues that the empowerment that youth may achieve through opportunities for self-representation—here termed “narrative authority of the powerless”— are only meaningful in a wider context (p. 449). More specifically, self-representations that typically marginalized individuals create within the arts program context are actuated in the context of the representation of their neighborhoods. Mattingly does not describe any findings to substantiate how changes in the “relations of representation” that occurred in the program actually led to changes in power relations for youth in the rest of the world.

In summary, the U.S.-sourced body of research representing a social justice perspective on social impacts of the arts is of mixed relevance to the present study. This literature, primarily generated by the Community Arts field, is of varied rigor and consists primarily of smaller scale studies and case studies. Important take-aways from this research for this study are that findings suggested the important role of storytelling, voice, and the creation of self-representations in the change process, and that community arts practices of cultivating critical consciousness can spur individual and community-level action. Promising, but limited, findings, as well as methodological issues, found within this literature support the need for more rigorous evaluative research about mechanisms involved in creating persisting and systematic change through the arts.

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U.K & Australia.

Although the application of an arts and social justice perspective is not isolated to the U.S., there appear to be only a few notable examples of this work from other countries. This is perhaps because much of the extant international literature includes social justice aims under the umbrella of "social inclusion," and thus, as a part of community development. It is therefore harder to discern whether these studies align most closely with one perspective or the other. Arts for social justice literature that is comparable to the literature found in the U.S. also mainly consists of documentation of arts projects in the form of case studies and essays. A representative piece coming from the U.K. is Clemens' (2011) essay that theoretically explores and evaluates three community-based visual arts events that involved public participation. Clemens' "evaluation" consists of academic, rather than pragmatic, descriptions of these arts events, but he presents them as informative models for community arts educators who want to cultivate contextual, participatory engagement. He highlights the need to position community arts within discourses other than just aesthetics and commerce, and to be mindful of projects' orientations to access, inclusion, cultural identity, transformation and emancipation (similar to U.S. Community Arts' philosophy and praxis).

In addition to the great deal of Australian research on community-based arts reflecting a health promotion or community development perspective, there is also a handful of studies that apply an arts for social justice perspective. McHenry (2009), in order to examine the role of the arts as a vehicle for increased social and civic participation that can build "resilience to inequity," conducted semi-structured interviews with community arts participants in rural Western Australia. Results indicated that arts participation strengthened sense of place and community identity, encouraged and enabled civic participation, facilitated understanding

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between disparate groups, and provided opportunities for social interaction and networking, which are of particular importance to rural and remote residents. Although the tone of the piece was theoretical, and therefore does not elaborate details of the research methods and arts activities involved, McHenry's research is of interest because it prioritizes the participants' perceptions of social impact outcomes.

A final example of the arts for social justice perspective applied outside of the U.S. is Deans' (2009) report on a community-based arts project that was motivated by policy-directed social inclusion aims. The rationale for the project "was a commitment to real life experiences that reflected principles of human rights, social justice and inclusion rather than exclusion" (p. 3). It brought together a group of preschool children along with adults with disabilities to "explore relationship building through expressive art making" (p. 3). The description of the project's components and its outcomes highlights how visual arts activities can support mutually respectful relationship building between disparate populations that are not often served together. Although not a rigorous evaluation, this researcher's study is of note for the present study because he made some attempt to articulate a mechanism for social change (i.e., radiating impacts of relationships) that occurred within the arts project.

Research representing a social justice perspective on social impacts of the arts from the U.K. and Australia is limited, but provides noteworthy examples of research aims and methods relative to this study. As with the comparable U.S. literature, this body of research mainly consists of documentation of arts projects in the form of case studies and essays. However, it describes interesting findings about mechanisms of change within arts for social change projects such as participation's strengthening of community identity and targeted provision of social and civic opportunities. Participants' perceptions of the outcomes and processes were also

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emphasized in a portion of this research, which was informative for the development of this study's methods, and could inform the development of future evaluation efforts.

Community development and health promotion perspectives.

The vast majority of available literature that documents, describes, and/or evaluates the work of community-based arts organizations and projects applies, or is heavily influenced by, a community development and/or health promotion perspective. As suggested above, the trajectories of social science research that has focused on the social impacts of the arts have differed between and within disciplines and countries. At the present time, the disparate strands of research appear to be coming together mainly within the context of community development, but this context is in no way homogeneous and includes work that could alternately be described as arts for social justice work. For the purposes of this review, however, I have grouped studies that did not clearly arise out of the social justice research trajectory set by the U.S. Community Arts field under the heading of community development and health promotion perspectives. These studies mainly focus on individual-level outcomes such as health, mental health, and well-being, as well as higher order impacts including social inclusion and community-building. Studies grouped here are also more likely to have been funded by larger entities such as the government, large foundations, or consortium of funders.

A large portion of the community development and health promotion research arises from social and political trends in the U.K. This literature is informative for thinking about the applicability of various evaluation methods in different arts program contexts and indicates which community arts impacts have received the most extensive support in ongoing research. For many years, at the policy level, the U.K. has pursued the linkages between cultural development, health, and economic outcomes (Kagan, et al., 2005a). This suggests that policy

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makers hold high expectations for arts programs, and institutional pressures on programs subsequently result, in part, from systematic and practical challenges for conducting evaluations on arts and cultural development (Angus, 2002; Galloway, 2009; White, 2004).

As noted above, research on community-based arts settings reflects these challenges, and a portion of the U.K. and Australian literature provides general directions for circumventing or minimizing the challenges. Researchers found that the research process was more productive when: care was exercised in choosing data collection methods (e.g. questionnaires can be seen as stress-inducing) (Kay, 2000), the perspectives of all stakeholders were obtained (Kay, 2000), and sufficient time was allowed in order for outcomes to be made apparent (Goodlad, Hamilton, & Taylor, 2002). The comparable body of literature in North America has been influenced by developments in the U.K. but is not as well developed, in part because of the very different policy priorities between countries.

U.K. & Australia.

Several authors have described how a desire to better define and document the social impacts of the arts and cultural activities has grown since the early 1990s, particularly in the U.K. and Australia. This has led to a rather large body of literature that, to various degrees, supports benefits to health and well-being brought about through arts programming and advances a position that arts and culture "help to improve the social determinants of mental health and wellbeing at a community level" (Mulligan, et. al, 2006, p. 8). A focus on "well-being"— often emphasizing connectedness and inclusion— instead of specific "outcomes" appears to be the focus of health promotion and community development agencies in different parts of the world, even as other entities do desire quantifiable arts outcomes (Barraket, 2005; Jermyn, 2004;

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Mulligan, et. al, 2006). The extant literature from this perspective reflects these sometimes counter-intuitive intentions.

The body of arts evaluation literature from the U.K. is relatively advanced compared to other countries', consisting of a number of government-funded studies aimed at measuring the social value of arts programs in order to improve service delivery.[8] Another U.K. study of interest for this research is one conducted by the Ross Dawson evaluation firm on behalf of the Arts Council of England (2007). The aim of the overall research program that this work was a part of was to help the Arts Council explore how: 1) the arts are perceived and valued by the public; 2) the Arts Council can enhance its delivery to create greater value for the public; 3) different stakeholders' needs can be balanced against public aspirations (Arts Council of England, 2007). Of most interest for this study, two areas of exploration for the second stage of the research were perceptions of the role and value of the arts and perceptions of and preferences for the role of the public in decision-making about the arts. However, the evaluators only gathered feedback related to perceptions about potential impacts that were more distal (i.e., not related to inner arts program workings) with 24 interviewees representing a range of stakeholders. Like the majority of studies of this type, no feedback about the change process associated with arts participation and exposure was gathered from participants themselves.

Similarly motivated research by Hacking and colleagues (2006) was conducted as part of an ongoing effort to build upon the agenda put forward by the U.K.'s SEU and to develop better

[8] Of note for understanding the context of community development and health promotion perspectives research in the U.K. is that such research has received a great deal of government support. Relatedly, the focus of this research has been mainly on mental health indicators of well-being and inclusion. This stems from a definition of social inclusion resulting from a definition of "exclusion" primarily concerned with the social impacts of mental health. The U.K.'s Social Exclusion Unit, located in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, identified the causes of exclusion as arising in large part from the stigmatization of and medical framework for mental illness, "at the expense of enabling people to participate in their local communities" (Hacking et al., 2006). The U.K. Department for Culture, Media and Sport was charged with undertaking research to: identify appropriate indicators of mental health and social inclusion outcomes, to develop evaluation measures, and to use the measures, alongside qualitative work, in a realistic evaluation design (Hacking, et. al, 2006).

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arts evaluation. Like the Ross Dawson study, it also had an initial focus on stakeholders other than participants. However, the main intention for this work was to inform a second phase reflecting a potentially stronger evaluation design. The first phase was intended to develop measures for use alongside qualitative methods in a subsequent pre- and post- evaluation phase that would assess effectiveness via participant feedback about mental health, social inclusion and empowerment outcomes. Specific objectives in the first phase were to map current participatory arts activity and to identify appropriate indicators for the measures. The researchers surveyed 101 participatory arts projects for people with mental health needs, aged 16 to 65. Their questionnaire examined nine main topics: demographics served; funding and staffing levels; art forms used; project settings; referral sources; number of participants and methods of participation; intended outcomes; outcomes collected; and any evaluation methods used (Hacking, Secker, Kent, & Spandler, 2006). Survey responses of greatest interest for the present study are related to the projects' identification of "most common and most important outcomes". The four most identified (identified by more than 90%), were: improved self-esteem; improved quality of life; personal growth in the sense of a transformation of identity; increased artistic skill (Hacking, et al., 2006). The authors noted that although most projects worked toward social inclusion outcomes, none ranked these as most important, and their approaches to evaluate all outcomes were limited but entailed substantial effort.

Newman, Curtis, and Stephens (2003), focusing on the results of eight studies from their extensive review of the arts program evaluation literature, found that self-reported outcomes included a focus both on ameliorative (e.g., personal change-- being "happier" and reduced isolation-- and increased school performance) and potentially transformative change (e.g., social change— cross-cultural understanding— and economic improvements). These authors also

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cautioned that stakeholders should not have unreasonably high expectations about what any one program, "however well resourced, planned and executed, can execute in isolation" (2003; p. 318). Another large-scale study was prepared for Comedia, a producer of cultural development and arts research in the U.K. and Western Europe (Matarasso, 1997). The report consists of eight in-depth case studies and survey results representing 513 adults and child participants of approximately 100 arts programs. Matarasso found that 90% of all participants made new friends and 84% of adult participants reported feeling more confident, and that participation alone appeared to create "social impacts," rather than any particular art approach. Community cohesion and identity development were the most notable social impacts identified by Matarasso.

Kagan and colleagues' (2005a; 2005b) large-scale evaluations of a set of arts projects in the U.K., using participatory methods, are the only studies that were found that examine community-based arts within a community psychology framework. As in other arts evaluation studies, individual-level outcomes were their focus, but the researchers aimed to combine stakeholder and "organizational perspectives" and key aspects of their evaluation model are in keeping with community psychology values (Kagan, et al., 2005a). They analyzed the "Pathways" art project in Manchester, which addressed issues of mental distress and social inclusion by having artists collaborate with local residents on visual and expressive arts projects targeting emotional challenges (Kagan, et al., 2005b, p. 2). The researchers identified positive aspects of arts for mental health in their full analysis, most importantly that Pathways appeared to meet its primary goal of enhancing inclusion and well-being (Kagan, et al., 2005b). Lawthom, Sixsmith, and Kagan (2007) looked further into issues of power that emerged from the same Pathways evaluation data. They re-analyzed the data set and found that some people do benefit from participation in arts programs like those sponsored by Pathways, but in ways that were

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difficult to quantitatively measure. Notably for this study, they identified that the mechanism for achieving social benefits through the arts was the bringing together of routinely marginalized people to engage in activities that did not explicitly have to do with their mental health problems. This strengthened their confidence in their abilities across life domains.

As seen in the studies reviewed above, the majority of U.K. studies reflecting community development and health promotion perspectives are aimed at contributing to the evidence base for the social impacts of the arts but most of it is relatively shallow with regards to building arts evaluation strategies. However, taken together they are indicative of the types of outcomes that are the most commonly sought in community-based arts, and in how they have been evaluated in this context. Another Arts Council of England study explored organizational characteristics in 28 "exemplar" arts organizations that serve excluded populations (Jermyn, 2001). Project leaders and participants from 15 of these projects were interviewed to develop case studies. Findings here included that arts involvement helped participants to develop supportive social networks, increase feelings of well-being, develop new skills, and increase self-esteem and sense of control. Argyle and Bolton (2005) conducted a qualitative evaluation of an arts and mental health project, finding that perceived program "successes" (i.e., in achieving well-being outcomes) were related to the community-based arts activities being more versatile than traditional, professional-led art therapies. Other notable U.K. evaluations of community-based arts projects have identified the role of arts in building skills, providing opportunities for disadvantaged participants to construct new senses of self, and by encouraging civic participation with the ultimate goal of increasing citizen empowerment and community regeneration (Carey & Sutton, 2004; Galloway, 2009; Goodlad, et al., 2002). Unfortunately it was outside of the scopes of any of these studies to look at long-term effects or analyze their creation.

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Two other inclusion-focused studies from the U.K. are perhaps of greater interest for the present study because of how they applied qualitative methods to describe and examine community-based arts programs' social impacts based primarily on analyses of arts participants' narratives. In the first, interviews were conducted with participants from the Art Angel program, of Dundee, and Project Ability's Trongate Studios, of Glasgow. Content analyses of participants' narratives provided evidence of the following impacts on their lives: increased self-understanding, self-esteem, opportunities for self-evaluation, feelings of stability, positive "ripple effects" to friends and family, improved communications skills, and increased sense of resilience. Notably, their narratives also suggested that their art involvement achieved these effects through specific features of their programs, including: structures and regular routines, opportunities to build social and emotional capital, progressive participation in a range of activities, and training via Incremental skills development. In the second, smaller study in East Midlands, Stickley (2007; 2010) undertook research aimed at eliciting and analyzing participants' stories of involvement with a community arts program promoting mental health called Arts in Mind. In stage two of the research (stage 1 involved developers of the program), 11 participants were interviewed up to three times over a one-year period about their involvement in the program. Findings from the analysis of these interviews suggested that the program facilitated new personal, social, and occupational opportunities, including enabling participants to enjoy a sense of belonging and social identity with like-minded people.

An Australian example of a larger-scale, multi-site evaluation related to primarily mental health outcomes was funded by VicHealth[9], a major agency sponsor of community-based cultural events and community arts projects, was conducted to address "social determinants" of

[9] VicHealth is short for "Victorian Health Promotion Foundation", and was founded in 1987; it appears to place the highest emphasis of any health promotion agency in Australia on addressing well-being through community-building work.

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mental health and well-being (Mulligan, et al., 2006). This research endeavor is notable for its rigor and careful integration of quantitative and qualitative methods, including collation of existing data (e.g., extracted census data), social mapping, both random and targeted questionnaires, photonarratives, and both conversations with community arts practitioners and interviews with project participants. Although reported findings related to participant perceptions are limited to findings from questionnaires provided to participants of art-related community events, in total the researchers' findings relate sense of community, sense of place, and enhanced well-being via arts participation to reduced social exclusion. They highlight that participants' responses suggest that through their participation in projects they work to "make their experiences cohere" by creating a sense of 'narrative movement' in their lives, rather than being "passive" victims of dissolution in their communities (pp. 183–188).

Another representative research endeavor from an Australian community development perspective is Mills and Brown (2004) collection of case studies collected under the auspices of the Australia Council's Community Cultural Development Board (CCDB). These case studies were selected by the authors to demonstrate the connections that were beginning to be observed between community cultural development and government-funded arts and well-being initiatives. Specifically, the authors argued that case study evidence supported the contention that community-based creative processes were successful in strengthening the knowledge, engagement, social capital, and leadership required to achieve policy objectives when they were well-integrated in a collective process of cultural development and when the relationship between artist and community was a partnership rather than a relationship in which an "expert" shared with an "amateur." Also of note here is that the art and well-being concept adopted in the analysis of these case studies uniquely employs a social-environmental view of health (i.e.,

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including social, environmental and clinical policy approaches) for facilitating rural revitalization, community strengthening, and inclusion.

A smaller-scale study conducted by Ruane (2007) was similarly inspired by Australia's shifting focus away from a non-systems view of inclusion (i.e., mostly focused on employment skills training and outcomes) toward a more integrated policy perspective of inclusion that prioritizes the generation of social capital to enhance well-being. Past participants of the LiveworX program were interviewed. LiveworX has the aim of improving communities by enhancing opportunities for young people to engage in and benefit from arts and culture. The main components of its program are youth-led festival coordination and cultural center development projects, which included targeted mentor relationships. Interviewees were asked questions designed to shed light on the extent to which arts for community development activities can contribute to the nine elements of social capital thought to foster social inclusion: trust, reciprocity, collaboration, valuing diversity, participation, networks, information channels, competency and capability, and sense of belonging (Ruane, 2007). Their responses were coded for indicators of the nine elements. Findings indicated that many of these elements were at least activated for participants as a result of their involvement.

In summary, U.K. and Australian literature on the social impacts of the arts from a community development and/or public health perspective is of moderate relevance to this study. With an overall focus on outcomes related to well-being and inclusion, this rather large body of literature mainly describes findings that support the premise that arts programs create individual-level outcomes— such as enhanced mental health, increased self esteem and community relationships— via their impact on social determinants of health and quality of life. It also provides examples of the varied strategies undertaken—both quantitative and qualitative—to

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document arts participants' outcomes and, to a lesser extent, their perceptions of change processes. Although this body of literature is relatively advanced and rigorous in terms of contributing to an evidence base for arts outcomes, it is limited in its contributions toward building effective evaluation strategies that are relevant and adaptable for arts programs' use and for uncovering mechanisms involved in the production of outcomes.

U.S. & Canada.

The range, scope, and scale of North American community arts research from community development and health promotion perspectives are all smaller than that of research from the U.K. and Australia. This is due, at least in part, to the lack of comparable long-term and intensive government investment toward exploring the connections between art and social impacts, with Canada faring better than the U.S in this regard. The North American body of literature, though, is similar in many ways because much of it is inspired by ongoing work in other countries, as well as by earlier exemplars from overseas such as the work of Matarasso (1996a; 1996b; 1997). It has also perhaps been enriched, particularly in the U.S., by its overlaps with work being done within the arts for social justice perspectives. There a handful of notable North American studies from the community development and health promotions perspective. Because they are thematically and methodologically diverse, these will be presented in the following order: large-scale studies, smaller scale studies, and youth-focused studies of particular relevance to this study.

Representative of the community development perspective applied to community-based arts in the U.S. is ongoing work by the Arts and Culture Indicators in Community Building Project (ACIP), the flagship initiative of the Urban Institute's Culture, Creativity, and Communities program that was launched in 1996 (Jackson & Herranz, 2003). The ACIP has

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been tasked with integrating arts and culture-related measures into community quality-of-life indicator systems, and is built on the premise that arts and culture are only meaningful when they reflect the values and interests of the community at-large (Jackson & Herranz, 2003). The work of this initiative is ongoing and of high quality, overall, but does not provide findings of direct relevance to this study because much of the research focuses on passive forms of arts participation in response to large cultural entities.

Another prevailing direction for community development oriented research in the U.S. has focused on creative place-making and neighborhood revitalization (Markusen & Gadwa, 2010; Nowack, 2011). Creative place-making, mentioned above, is an increasingly popular focus for community development. Although vulnerable to criticisms of fostering gentrification to the potential detriment of long-term neighborhood residents, its supporters maintain that if it is done carefully it enlivens public and private spaces, “rejuvenates structures and streetscapes, improves local business viability and public safety, and brings diverse people together to celebrate and be inspired” (Markusen & Gadwa, 2010, p. 3). The Reinvestment Fund (TRF), in collaboration with the Social Impact of the Arts Project of the University of Pennsylvania (SIAP) (discussed further below), has been examining the ways community-based arts and culture can play a role in neighborhood revitalization (equivalent of “regeneration” in U.K. and Australian literature). A product of this collaboration is a widely circulating report, “Creativity and Neighborhood Development: Strategies for Community Investment,” which lays out a model for revitalization through flexible investment. As with the ACIP’s research, the work TRF/SIAP has a very different focus from this study, but it is notable for its production of rigorous evaluative research that is shaping the climate for community arts, as well as its impact on development in many U.S. cities, including Baltimore.

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Possibly the most rigorous research informing U.S. community arts perspectives at the present time is being produced by SIAP, under the direction of researchers Stein and Seifert. Their team had conducted several studies, of various scale and using varied methods, focused primarily on community-level impacts of the arts. Although much of their research does not focus on outcomes and processes of community-based arts organizations themselves, one SIAP study is of interest for the present study because it addresses practices that help or hinder organizations in serving their target populations. In this pilot study, based on their model for arts-based social inclusion, Stein and Seifert (2010) examined the role of nonprofit arts and culture organizations play in assisting Philadelphia's immigrant communities (primarily Puerto Ricans born outside the contiguous U.S. and their families) to both retain their identities and enter larger society. An online survey was first conducted to gather contextual information about relevant organizations. One hundred and fourteen Philadelphia-based NPOs participated, with only 20 reported that they worked with immigrants as part of their core missions, with multi-disciplinary and visual arts organizations reporting a higher rate of involvement. Subsequent interviews with organization staff revealed that most organizations did not have a deep knowledge of barriers to immigrant participation. A major theme that emerged from the interviews was that the organizations strategically positioned to engage immigrants were those that were created by immigrants themselves.

Another substantial thread in the body of North American literature from community development and health promotion perspectives, similar to the U.K., is focused mainly on individual-level mental health and well-being outcomes. There are numerous goals and outcomes of this type that have been defined in research on the effectiveness of community-based art organizations, and it is important to be mindful of the myriad ways that arts programs have

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defined and have evaluated their aims. The most prevalent outcomes in extant literature are self-esteem, social-emotional growth, mental health issues, intellectual gains, and new opportunities (Chung, Jones, Jones, Corbett, Booker, Wells, Collins, 2009; Congdon, 2004; Rapp-Paglicci, Stewart, & Rowe, 2009). Self-esteem and social-emotional growth have been repeatedly reported in research findings, to substantiate the claim that arts programs can impact mental health. One example of an arts for mental health project was examined by Chung and colleagues (2009), who completed a study about the application of an arts and health education intervention that helped an African American community group to increase self-esteem and better manage symptoms of depression. For adolescents, community-based arts programs have been advocated as a means to reduce behaviors such as delinquency and substance use. Rapp-Paglicci, Ersing, and Rowe (2006) evaluated a number of such programs and found that one program, Youth Arts, directed toward youth on probation improved attitudes toward school, reduced delinquency, and increased resistance to peer pressure. In their evaluation of the Urban Smarts program in San Antonio, TX, they found that involvement appeared to increase task completion, improve school attitudes, reduce delinquency, and increase positive peer and adult relationships.

Perhaps of greater relevance to the present research, but similarly interested in the impact of art on well-being, is Howells' and Zelnick's (2009) ethnographic study of an integrated studio that serves individuals with mental health concerns. The aim of their research was to understand the effect of the arts studio on participants' lives, insofar as the arts experience impacted feelings of social isolation, stigma, and discrimination. They also set out to study the role of participants' perspectives on the design and implementation of the studio program. A key finding from their analysis of semi-structured interviews with 20 participants (10 with a mental diagnosis, 10 without), observations, journal keeping, and document review indicated that "art making

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provided participants the opportunity to build new identities and roles" (Howells & Zelnick, 2009, p. 215). Of particular relevance to the present study, participants' narratives described how their engagement in the mutually meaningful activity of making art developed a "community of artists", and the impact of having that community in their lives. Art also was identified as a " bridge creating access to the larger community" (Howells & Zelnick, 2009; p. 225).

Two Canadian studies of differing scope, but similar intentions, also have findings that suggest that aspects of arts processes can serve a "bridging" function between individual and community level outcomes. Moody and Phinney's (2012) study of a community-based art program (sometimes termed "community-engaged arts (CEA) in Canada), the Arts, Health and Seniors Program in Vancouver, had the objective of exploring the program's role in increasing social inclusion for older, community-dwelling adults. The researchers conducted 16 hours of participant observation, nine interviews, and document reviews. Their findings indicated that the arts activities increased seniors' sense of community by encouraging group collaboration, as well as their capacity to "connect to community in new ways" by helping them create connections beyond their senior center. A larger-scale, mixed methods evaluation of a national Canadian arts program, the National Arts and Youth Demonstration Project, also demonstrated impacts on individual-level outcomes in a manner that conveyed their potential to create radiating impact. Wright and colleagues (2006) conducted their evaluation over three years in five sites across Canada, utilizing statistical analysis involving growth curve modeling of five waves of quantitative data and interviews with participating youth and parents. Their results indicated that the arts programs had a significant effect on youth's in-program behavior and social-emotional problems. Findings from the qualitative interviews elaborated on the quantitative findings, suggesting that perceived, in-program gains made by youth increased their confidence, enhanced

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art skills, and improved social skills and conflict resolution skills, all of which positively impacted their families.

An interesting and early— relative to this perspective on community-based arts— line of relevant research emerged from the field of education, rather than directly from community development and health promotion. During the 1990s, a coalition of over 100 corporate, philanthropic, and government entities commissioned several years of research that examined the impact of arts experiences on young people (Fisk, 2000; Heath & Roach, 1999). One of the affiliated projects had the broad agenda of helping social scientists and policy analysts achieve better understandings of non-school learning sites that at-risk youth choose for themselves (Heath, 1994; Heath & Roach, 1999). Over several years, researchers trained youth to work as ethnographers within selected programs, and they worked together to record everyday happenings both in the programs and, to a lesser extent, in surrounding communities. They also interviewed other participating youth and local residents. Their key findings included that the programs' structures allowed for the easy inclusion of young people in roles of responsibility that entailed challenge, practice, and high expectations (Heath & Roach, 1999). In addition, the specific language used within the programs was noteworthy. Compared to other environments, in arts programs there was a greater frequency of "what if?" questions, and modal (such as "could") and mental state (such as "believe") verbs used. Further, the critique process common to the arts, which relies on the "reciprocal give-and-take learning of assessing work to improve the outcome," was found to provide youth with practice in "thinking and talking like adults" (Heath, 1999, p. 26). Also of interest to this study is that, unlike most extant research, the trajectories of youth participants were followed for several years. It was found that most of the youth remained connected in some way to their former programs upon graduation and most also remained in

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their communities working and/or receiving post-secondary education. One former participant credited his program with providing him with an overall set of analytical thinking skills, leading to his current success as an architecture student.

Two more recent studies that are primarily representative of a community development and public health perspective on community-based arts for youth, but have overlap with the social justice perspective, are of interest to this study. The first is Larson's and Walker's (2006) intensive case study of an urban arts program, Art-First. The aim of the program was to provide youth with experiences that prepared them for the "real world" of arts careers, and utilized internships and mural creation as core activities to impart work skills. The researchers conducted 75 interviews with 12 youth and their adult program leader over three cycles, as the youth engaged with outside experiences. Their findings support that youth participants experienced a learning process marked by dissonance and challenge, which was followed by active adaptive learning. This study is of relevance to the present study due to its application of grounded theory, focus on the analysis of participating youth's interactions with external systems across time, and the community cosncientization aspects of the mural component. However, the foci of this study were general organizational structures and experiential learning in settings that varied in their creative focus, rather than the change mechanisms involved in an arts-based program.

The second recent youth-oriented study is the Boston Youth Arts Evaluation Project (BYAEP), a three-year initiative launched in 2008. Working at the outset with professional evaluation researchers, a collective of several Boston area community-based arts organizations—Raw Art Works, The Theater Offensive, Hyde Square Task Force, Medicine Wheel Productions and ZUMIX— sought to create a comprehensive set of evaluation tools designed specifically for youth arts organizations working with youth ages 13-23. This collective was motivated to better

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understand and communicate the outcomes (individual-level and "transformative") that they had witnessed being achieved by their own programs, with the ultimate goal of better serving youth locally and beyond. After three years of researching, developing, piloting, and modifying their framework and tools for data collection[10], the BYAEP team collected data, about the impact of their arts programs, utilizing surveys, observations, interviews, and arts-based methods. Their findings supported that self-reflection and goal-setting within activities was of key importance, and that participating youth felt more confidant and connected to their communities, with program alumni reporting that they had worked to improve their choices in life after being involved. However, the authors note that there were numerous challenges to the implementation that limited their findings, and the reporting on their methods and findings is rather vague. Despite involving multiple methods that may have gathered process information, the evaluations themselves were very outcome-focused (e.g., questions posed to youth were mostly to do with their satisfaction and perception of outcomes) and did not reveal information about the change mechanisms involved or what mechanisms would be involved in making ongoing changes in their lives and communities.

As a whole, the reviewed U.S. and Canadian literature related to community-based arts from a community development and/or public health perspective is of some interest for the devising of the present research. Although the scope and scale of North American research from this perspective are smaller than that of U.K. and Australian, this literature documents varied projects that utilize diverse sets of methods. Related larger-scale initiatives demonstrate that the foci of many of these efforts are not directly relevant to this study. A substantial portion of this literature, similar to that of the U.K., is focused mainly on individual-level mental health and

[10] The BYAEP Workbook includes the BYAEP Evaluation Tools themselves, which can be customized to meet different organizations' needs. These can be found at www.byaep.com.

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well-being outcomes. However, the North American variant of this research perspective is notable for its production of more rigorous evaluative research that has the power to shape the climate for community-based arts. Smaller studies, particularly those that involve youth arts, have produced findings that were suggestive of how this study's participants would reflect on their own program experiences. This body of literature is also relevant to the present study through its description of evaluation approaches that, to some extent, involve both process and outcomes, address organizational practices in the production of individual and community change outcomes, and are adoptable by arts practitioners.

Alternative literature about community-based arts.

Two separate bodies of research that do not fall under the headings provided by the above-described perspectives on community-based arts, but are of some relevance to this research, are provided by the fields of art therapy and Photovoice.

Art Therapy literature on community-based arts and art for social justice.

The field of art therapy provides another, albeit limited, body of research pertaining to community-based arts and arts for social justice that is pertinent to this study. Within this field, there has been some movement in recent years to more vigorously pursue empirical research that substantiates the impact of art practice on individuals and groups. Extant research here, as in related fields, consists mostly of case studies. Owing to its psychodynamic heritage and ties to the counseling field, art therapy has historically been ameliorative in approach. However, many art therapists work in community settings and there is increasing interest among them to explore how art practice functions in this milieu, rather than in traditional clinical settings. Articles such as Golub's (2005) "Social Action Art Therapy" and Kaplan's (2007) book *Art Therapy and Social Action* argue for the expansion of the role of art therapist as social activist. Kaplan

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describes how art therapists are currently working in “non-traditional” programs designed to address a variety of issues including gun crime, homelessness, racism, and experiences of terrorism. However, similar to other human services fields, art therapy’s ties to traditional mental health systems have made art therapists the subject of suspicion amongst some community-based arts practitioners, even as these individuals work in close proximity to one another.

Examples of such art therapy literature include case studies, evaluations, and theoretical works. These works primarily examine arts projects that are designed to encourage the full community participation of marginalized populations, such as persons with mental illness or disabilities, and so are in keeping with social justice aims. McGraw’s (1995) case study of an innovative studio program for persons with medical and physical disabilities, described a model for hospital-arts organization partnerships. Feen-Calligan and Nevedal (2008) found, in their “participant-led” evaluation of a community-based arts workshop, that all 120 participants reported positive changes, including increased self-esteem and/or confidence and increased capacity for self-expression, and 86% were satisfied with the workshop. Of a different scale is a study, conducted by art therapist researchers, of the characteristics of community-based art studios for persons with disabilities (Vick & Sexton-Radek, 2008). It broadly compares 12 programs in Europe with 10 programs in the U.S. and a key finding of it is that all of the programs situate their methods within the philosophies of normalization and inclusion, meaning persons of all abilities should live and learn in “normal” environments.

Photovoice literature.

Photovoice provides another body of literature with some relation to community-based arts, although it is arguably distinct because it is applicable to a number of fields and not a method of the Community Arts field alone. It has particularly been embraced by public health

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and education researchers (Baker & Wang, 2006; Booth & Booth, 2003; Ewald & Lightfoot, 2002; Goodhart, Hsu, Baek, Coleman, Maresca, & Miller, 2006; Lopez, Eng, Robinson, & Wang, 2005), as well as within the burgeoning field of visual sociology (Harper, 1998; International Visual Sociology Association, http://www.visualsociology.org). Photovoice practices emerge from and operate within the broader "participatory photography" field, which developed over the course of the 20th century as photojournalists working within a humanitarian tradition explored alternative approaches to documentary photography (Photovoice, 2003-2014). Such photographers worked to develop closer relationships with their subjects, such as by collaborating with them to create images and/or providing them the tools to make their own images. Notable, influential examples include photographers working independently— Wendy Ewald, Jim Goldberg, Julian Germain— and those who formed organizations to pursue this work— Nancy McGirr (Foto Kids), Zanna Briski (Kids with Cameras), Jim Hubbard (Shooting Back/Venice Arts) (Bestis, 2007; Photovoice, 2003-2014).

Specifically in community-based arts settings, "photovoice" includes photography used as a participatory research method, but is often a core activity in settings, albeit with multiple intents (e.g., purely for artistic creation, for skills-building, as a therapeutic intervention, toward the end of social justice through media campaigns; sometimes toward all of these ends). Purcell (2009), in a review of the use of photography in Community Arts, points out the skill-development use of photography is the most common form in community-based arts settings. This use of photography may be the primary one, but usually is accompanied by the exhibition of artwork or media campaigns. However, he opines that all photovoice-type techniques should be framed within the broader theoretical bases of community development and critical consciousness (Purcell, 2009). Further, the majority of photovoice studies utilize photography as

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a research method, rather than examine its uses within community-based arts organizations. Therefore, only a brief overview of photovoice and relevant studies is presented here.

Broadly speaking, the term photovoice can describe an overall philosophy and multiple, at times overlapping, sets of techniques (also including photo-elicitation and photo-novella). In 1992, Caroline Wang and Mary Ann Burris created the core practice that is now known as "photovoice" (Wang & Burris, 1994; 1996; 1997). In work with homeless men in Ann Arbor, Michigan, they gave the men cameras to document their lives in whatever fashion they chose. The resulting photographs were exhibited and used for a public awareness campaign (Wang & Burris, 1996). In subsequent work, Wang and colleagues further operationalized photovoice as an applied research tool, defining it as “a participatory action research method that entrusts cameras to persons who seldom have access to those who make decisions over their lives” (Wang, Burris, & Xiang, 1996, p. 1391). Outcomes of a successful photovoice project ideally include: empowering participants, assessing community needs and assets, and taking action in the community (Wang & Burris, 1994, 1997). Although contemporary projects vary in the details and in the extent to which they engage policymakers, in all cases photovoice participants learn, or expand their ability, to use cameras to take pictures of important aspects of their communities. To be called photovoice, a project should attempt to meet the following goals: (1) “enabling people to record and reflect their community’s strengths and problems”; (2) “promoting dialogue and discussion of issues through photographs”; (3) resulting exhibition and discussion serving “as a route for the engagement of policymakers” (Wang & Burris, 1994, 1997).

Noteworthy for the present study is that the three main goals of photovoice resonate with the enduring values of and recent research trends in community psychology. However, a brief review of social science literature suggests that psychology in general has not been inclined to

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embrace photovoice, barring a few exceptions. Brunsden and Goatcher (2007), generally support photovoice's use in psychology, but put forward a speculative, quantitative re-working of it that allows for more rigorous analysis appropriate specifically for research in psychology. A small number of studies have been conducted by community psychologists using photovoice as a research method (Graziano, 2004; Foster-Fishman, et al., 2005; Lykes, Blanche, & Hamber, 2003; O'Grady, 2008; Nowell, Berkowitz, Deacon, Foster-Fishman, 2006), but there appears to be a lack of community psychology research about those community settings that use photography.

A study that is relevant to the present study because it does address photovoice within the context of Community Arts was conducted by Mulligan and colleagues (2007). The researchers used participatory photography as one of several methods to study cultural events and their linkage to community well-being, and analyzed the impact of the photovoice-derived activity on participants. The research team distributed cameras and asked the participants to take images representing their sense of community. After producing images, participants were interviewed about their choices and outcomes of the experience, and had the opportunity to exhibit their photos. The researchers came to the conclusion that a focus on inclusion for its own sake should be rejected by community initiatives because people benefit most from opportunities that "strengthen their own self-narratives," and various artistic activities can facilitate that process (Mulligan, et al., 2007, p. 146). In regards to the impact of the photography itself, the researchers stated that it was "akin to a community arts project" (p. 13). They attributed a positive change outcome, reminiscent of empowerment, to this exhibition.

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Photovoice with youth.

A subset of the photovoice literature deals with projects serving youth in ways similar to the study organizations. This literature includes work with youth in New Zealand (Jensen, Hector, McCreanor, & Barnes, 2006), a project about immigration experiences among Latino youth (Streng et al., 2004), use of photography with teenage mothers about self-care (Stevens, 2006), project focused on academically-challenged middle school students in Ohio (Kroeger, et al., 2004), and a project about the meaning of neighborhood to youth in Michigan (Nowell, et al., 2006). Foster-Fishman and colleagues (2005) analyzed photovoice research projects conducted with adolescents, finding that photovoice could produce "increased self-competence, emergent critical awareness and the creation of resources for social action" through the "empowerment of participants as expert on their lives and community" (p. 287). Wilson and colleagues (2007), in consultation with Caroline Wang, have worked for several years with underserved youth involved in the Youth Empowerment Strategies project (YES!), an afterschool program and coordinated research project.

A study of somewhat greater relevance to the present study is an informal evaluation conducted by Strack, Magill, and McDonagh (2004). This study is of particular interest because of the similarity of the population and location targeted (underserved, urban youth in Baltimore, MD) to the present study. In addition, its authors represent both public health and Community Arts perspectives (Strack and Magill are from the Johns Hopkins School of Public Health; McDonagh was on faculty in the MICA Community Arts Graduate Program). The article details a 20-week after-school project. The project piloted and tested the effectiveness of an adaption of Wang and Burris' photovoice method, specifically targeted to youth. The project started with a focus on the photovoice process and culminated with 12 sessions in which the youth used

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cameras to document issues in their personal lives and communities and then exhibited their work. The researchers used a mixed methods design to collect process and outcome evaluation data from multiple project stakeholders. The results, although positive overall, were drawn from only a small sample of participants (n = 12). The researchers found that the photo project was empowering for participants via the following aspects: it built competencies; it offered an aesthetic means of building self-esteem and identity; it documented both positive and negative features in the community; it emphasized artist and researcher roles that inspired responsibility and garnered positive attention.

The Present Study

This study utilized a qualitative, grounded theory approach to build upon a previous study that described and explored a representative community-based arts organization's conceptualization and enactment of its "empowerment" goals (Scheibler, 2011). The previous study's findings supported findings from extant research about the positive, individual-level and, to a lesser extent, community-level change processes facilitated within arts programs. One aim of the previous study was to contribute to arts program evaluation efforts— by increasing understandings of how organizational activities actually produce outcomes— informed by the Community Arts field's need for rigorous and useful evaluation approaches. Similarly, the overarching aim of the present study was to help fill the gaps in the extant community-based arts literature by creating a base of findings, on previously unexplored phenomena, that can be built upon in future research. This study pursued this aim through the generation of new theory about how program participants' subjective experiences of the change processes created by their programs convert to external and potentially longer-lasting impacts. As described above and in

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my previous study (Scheibler, 2011), recent reviews of the community arts and evaluation literatures indicated that this issue had not been addressed elsewhere.

To fulfill its objective of generating new theory, this study addressed the following, interrelated research questions: What does it look like inside the "black box" of the change process fostered by community-based arts organizations? How does a context-specific experience turn into something more enduring? What psychological process mechanisms and forms of meaning-making comprise the link between internal program effects and external outcomes? How does internal program change become external impact in participants' lives and communities, and what is the nature of that impact? The initial analyses involved in this grounded theory study elaborated and refined these questions.

Thus this study, as a whole, generated novel theoretical insights in response to these research questions through a close, multi-phased examination of long-term and former participants of three representative community-based arts organizations.

Method

This Method section will describe the following aspects of the study: 1) the foundation for the research design; 2) the participants; 3) the components of the research design and the rationale for it; and 4) verification considerations for qualitative methods.

Foundation

In order to address the above-described research aims, I undertook a qualitative, grounded theory study that built upon the basis provided by my earlier study. That study used a modified form of grounded theory to describe and explore a representative community arts organization's conceptualization and enactment of its "empowerment" goals (i.e., the central aspect of its mission to support individual well-being and social change). It was informed by the

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Community Arts field's need for rigorous and appropriate evaluation approaches. Furthermore, a guiding intention of that research was to contribute to researcher and practitioner understandings of how these organizations "work" to produce stated effects related to their missions. Similarly, the present study was informed by the goals of interpretative and qualitative evaluation in order to fill the gaps in the extant Community Arts literature, which has been largely focused on static outcomes that have been defined apart from programmatic processes and contexts.

In my earlier research, the use of qualitative methods to collect and analyze data—collected via semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and observations— enabled the generation of a broad hypothesis, based in stakeholders' experiences, for how community-based arts organizations may produce positive impacts. Findings illustrated the importance of participants' experiences of internal program structures in the creation of mission-driven impacts. An important aspect of these structures was that they facilitated the development of multilayered relationships between youth and staff in an arts-focused context. Although these findings suggested entry points for understanding direct program effects, issues in its design limited the findings' wider applicability for community arts evaluation. Design issues included: 1) a constrained analysis due to a focus on empowerment (a problematic concept still largely thought of as an outcome); 2) a framework that was too reliant on the a priori application of extant theories, limiting the discovery of novel information about the research topic; 3) a focus on internal and concurrent feelings and outcomes, rather than the external, ongoing impacts that are of interest to organizations and their stakeholders.

In order to further the original goal of contributing to arts evaluation efforts, the present research overcame the previous study's limitations by building upon the strengths of its methods. Constructivist Grounded Theory (Charmaz, 1995; 2000; 2006; 2009; 2011) was the guiding

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approach used to look more closely at how individuals' subjective experiences of internal change processes created within arts organizations translate into external and potentially persisting, post-program impacts. The ensuing research design included the selective use of pre-collected data from my prior study to inform the collection of new data and an iterative analysis process that supported the generation of new theory. Such theory will help fill gaps in the arts evaluation literature, and may provide practitioners with useful information about how to conceptualize and adapt their programs in order to be more effective, adaptive, and sustainable.

Participants

The participant sample for this study consisted of two groups: 1) selected individuals who participated in the previous study, and 2) individuals who were newly identified and recruited. The entire sample was recruited from three community arts programs, described below, that serve youth (ages 7-21).

The first sample group consisted of seven individuals from the Access Art program. Two of the participants completed individual interviews, two participated in one focus group and three participated in a second focus group. Five individuals are young women, two are men, and all identify as African American, and at the time of their interviews they ranged in age from 16-21. (Most have now graduated from Access Art, and work or attend college locally.)

The second group was newly identified and recruited from across the three organizations, including Access Art, along criteria dictated by the present study's research questions. At the outset of the study, it was intended that all participants would be individuals who had either: a) recently (within 1-2 years) graduated or "aged out" of their programs, after attending for a minimum of two years, and/or b) attended their programs for a minimum of two years and would likely graduate or "age out" within the current year. Individuals who fit these criteria were

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believed to have accumulated sufficient experience within their organizations to address their experience of internal program structures relative to external impacts in their lives. However, individuals meeting criterion “a” were favored for inclusion because of the likelihood that their perspectives would provide more information about whether impacts are enduring post-program. (The first sample group’s participants were enrolled in Access Art at the time of their interviews, and met these inclusion criteria.) Over the course of participant recruitment, two program alums who had completed their programs earlier, but did not differ in any meaningful way from other potential participants, were identified to serve as key informants. However, it was determined that these individuals could provide unique perspectives to augment potential findings, and they were ultimately included in the final sample (IRB approval was received to alter the sampling in this manner; see rationale for inclusion, below).

Sampling: Procedures, sample size, and rationale.

In keeping with the aims of the present study, informed by a comparable pursuit of depth but with a broader scope than my previous study, the sample was open to individuals who had each participated in one of three organizations. The first organization, Access Art, was the subject of the prior study. Access Art was identified in advance of that study through a strategy of vetting community-based arts organizations against pre-determined parameters including size, organizational mission/philosophy/activities, track record of “quality” (based on community reputation and consistent funding), and location. The two new organizations selected for the present study— Wide Angle Youth Media and New Lens— had already been identified, at the time this study was proposed, through a similar process, with an emphasis on how they matched with Access Art along the aforementioned parameters and population served. In addition, an important consideration was that all three would be classified as arts “programs” because

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community-based arts programs vary widely in duration and scope. In addition to programs, which are open-ended and ongoing, usually serving a core membership, community-based arts may be delivered as projects— a series of workshops with a finished product – or workshops – one-off or repeating exploratory sessions (Knight & Schwarzman, 2006). In addition to all being classified as programs, the inclusion of all three organizations was supported by anecdotal accounts of their operations, reviews of organizational materials, and conversations with staff members.

Sampling for group 1.

The previous study was an organizational case study, involving 14 interviewees, but the "participant" in the study really was Access Art itself. As stated above, the first sample group for this study consists of individuals who were previously interviewed for that prior study. Therefore "sampling" for this group had already occurred, and was originally based on the age and organizational role of the interviewees. In all but one case, those interviewees were long-time, youth attendees of the Access Art program. One of the interviewees was a young man who had "graduated" from the program and had recently started working as an instructor with Access Art. In all cases, these individuals spoke about their program experiences, relating these experiences to changes they had observed in themselves. Therefore, their interviews were selected for reanalysis based on their relevance to the present research question.

Sampling for group 2.

The organizational vetting process, including conversations with staff members, had begun at the time this study was proposed. It involved the selection of key informants. Key informants are typically those persons who are most able to relate the prevailing sentiments and experience of their own culture, but who also can be relatively objective about it (Fetterman,

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1989). In this study, key informants were program directors and/or senior staff members that were best equipped and authorized to recommend interviewees. Thus, they held important perspectives on organizational culture. However, it must be recognized that they may have been limited in their understandings of program participants' experiences. Therefore this type of key informant was solely used in the sampling process to identify and facilitate the recruitment of appropriate, new interview participants, and so did not otherwise shape data collection and analysis. Toward the beginning of the study, two current staff members who are also program graduates were identified to serve as key informants; however, they ultimately took part in the study as participants rather than key informants primarily because of their positionality, as alums and relative to older staff members, to the study's research questions.

A purposive sampling strategy for selecting participants was employed within each of the three organizations. Key informants were first asked to identify appropriate individuals connected to their respective organization that met certain criteria (described above and expanded upon below). Key informants' knowledge and insights were then used to further pare down a larger identified group of individuals to a smaller sample that contained some variety in demographics, backgrounds, and program experiences. This was done to ensure that the sample was neither too small nor too unwieldy and supported triangulation, rather than achieving a large number of individual research participants (Baptiste, 2001; Denzin, 1978; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Sandelowski, 2000; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). As noted above, the study's sampling criteria were loosened to allow the participation of two older program graduates (one from Wide Angle and one from Access Art). It was originally intended that these individuals would serve as special key informants who could provide a unique form of member check, dually incorporating perspectives of staff and students, to substantiate my early interpretations of collected data.

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However, within early conversations with these individuals to determine how they would be involved as key informants, it became apparent that vis a vis their long-term involvement with the organizations, and other life experiences, they each held distinctive and important perspectives that could provide insight into potential pathways for enduring program impact. In this way the inclusion of these participants somewhat increased the heterogeneity of the total sample and the capacity of the study to address the totality of the guiding research questions, but without creating an unwieldy sample.

Every effort was made within the data collection to conform to the standard of "theoretical saturation," while avoiding "overextension," which impacted the ultimate sample size. Theoretical saturation in qualitative research commonly occurs via an iterative collection process wherein three criteria are met: 1) no new, relevant data appear to emerge about a category; 2) the category is well developed along its properties demonstrating the extent of its variation; 3) the relationships among categories can be established and are descriptively and interpretively validated (Baptiste, 2001; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Therefore, as data collection proceeds, the size of the sample will only be increased until collected data both ceases to reveal new data of interest and begins to reveal new data that is disconnected from emergent theory and/or lacks a meaningful relationship to the research question. These latter data trends are a sign of overextension, which is when new information is far removed from the central nature of any of thematic categories that have so far emerged in a study, without contributing to the development of any new categories that are essential for understanding a phenomenon (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

The concepts of saturation and overextension, although quite useful, are merely guidelines for practice and do not provide firm recommendations regarding sample size.

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However, a review of grounded theory studies (Thomson, 2007) found that 34 out of 50 studies had sample sizes of 10 – 30 interviewees each. Thomson speculated that saturation was actually reached at around 10 interviews in many of these studies, but in some cases researchers pursued further interviews to further validate of their findings. The three organizations in the present study—Access Art, New Lens, and Wide Angle—provided sufficient interviewees to meet the "standard" set by comparable qualitative studies. Because of the prior study's benchmark generation of four relevant interviews (two individual, two focus groups), it was estimated that up to 15, but no less than 10, new interviews would be collected in order to align with the depth and breadth of experiences represented in the pre-collected data. Ultimately, in light of the fruitful reanalysis of the previously collected interviews, 11 new interviews were collected.

Descriptions of participating organizations.

The three organizations selected for the present study are all located in Baltimore City. Each would be considered to be a small-to-moderately-sized human services NPO. More specifically, for the purposes of funders and agencies they are classified as afterschool/out-of-school time (OST) programs as well as community arts programs. They all also have comparable social justice-oriented missions and programming approaches, and were founded within a few years of each other. Each was founded by a recipient of an Open Society Institute (OSI) grant, thus the founders of each organization know one another. (These founders collaborated in the early days of their programs, but to the best of my knowledge were independently motivated to start their organizations and are only minimally in contact with one another at the time of this writing. The founders also vary in the extent of their current involvement with the organizations.) Each program employs different combinations of artistic methods, but all have "media" (i.e., videography, film, and photography) as a central activity. A review of Baltimore-DC area human

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services NPOs suggests that these organizations are similar to others in this area, as most similarly sized organizations have: 5-15 staff members, 8-12 Board members, 10+ volunteers, and 15 – 100+ participants (numbers served associated with organizations that provide workshops or other activities in outside settings in addition to their "in-house" programs).

Access Art.

Access Art was founded in 2000. Its organizational mission and program goals are:

> *Access Art is an after school arts and media center that empowers youth to use their artistic ability and their unique understanding of their environment as catalysts for social change in their communities.*
>
> *Access Art delivers a youth-centered after school program to address the artistic, emotional, and cognitive development of middle and high school participants. We achieve these goals by providing students with a safe space to create, positive adult role models, empowering activities, leadership development, and alternatives to violence and high-risk behavior.*

Access Art is based in two neighborhoods of Baltimore City—Hampden and Morrell Park— and provides programming to youth ages 9-21. Within the program, older youth advance into positions of leadership (called "mentors" or "teachers' assistants") over time. The current organization is the outcome of a merger of two pre-existing programs, Access Art, which held 501(c)3 status, and Youthlight, founded in 2001. Approximately 50 youth are enrolled in their program, with about 35 of these individuals actively attending. Staffing is in flux at the time of this writing, but there are approximately 8-10 staff members (including routine volunteers).

New Lens.

New Lens was founded in 2006, but it is essentially an outgrowth of an already existing organization, Kids on the Hill, which was founded in 2001. (The founder and director of Kids on the Hill re-conceptualized the organization to have more of a focus on media and activism, and a social justice-oriented mission.) Its organizational mission and program goals are:

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> *New Lens is a youth driven social justice organization working to assist youth in making art and media about often-underrepresented perspectives. The work is used to address systemic problems, facilitate dialogue, shift perspectives and stimulate action.*
>
> *The program has allowed youth to create commissioned videos, to learn job readiness skills, proficiency in the field of video production and instruction, to create a venue for earned income for the organization and to partner with organizations that could use video to enhance or create a social justice message.*

New Lens, like Kids on the Hill before it, is located in and primarily serves the Reservoir Hill neighborhood. Although New Lens is an entity in its own right, its 501(c)3 status is carried by a fiscal sponsor, Fusion Partnerships. Its staff includes 5-8 adults (including volunteers), and varying numbers of "Youth Leaders" who are older youth (most participated in Kids on the Hill) that are the core participants of New Lens' program. These youth serve as activity leaders in facilitating workshops with numerous younger youth at schools and community programs throughout the city, as well as produce their own creative media projects.

Wide Angle Youth Media.

Wide Angle Youth Media was founded in 2000. Like New Lens, it engages a core group of approximately 15-20 youth, who in turn help to present programming to other young people at locations throughout the city. Their mission and program goals are:

> *Wide Angle Youth Media is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization that provides Baltimore youth with media education to tell their own stories and become engaged with their communities. Through quality after-school programming, in-school opportunities, summer workshops, community events, and an annual Youth Media Festival, Wide Angle supports young people making a difference through media.*
>
> *[Goals include:] Provid[ing] high-quality media education training services; Support[ing] underserved youth in their learning and development; Connect[ing] youth to their community by exploring issues that are relevant to their lives; Develop[ing] workforce readiness skills – including teamwork, creativity, interpreting information, and technical skills – in young people from under-resourced neighborhoods; Support[ing] youth as they use media to educate, advocate, and inspire others .Our annual Wide Angle*

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> *Youth Media Festival gives youth from 10-20 an opportunity to showcase their talents in video, photography, poetry, and performance at various venues throughout the city.*

Wide Angle is headquartered in the Remington neighborhood of Baltimore, within Miller's Court, a subsidized development providing workspaces to education-related NPOs and low-cost housing for teachers. They have five main staff members, and 11 occasional support staff/volunteers.

Design

The design of the present study was qualitative in nature, and was based on Constructivist Grounded Theory (CGT) (Charmaz, 1995), a form of grounded theory. This qualitative approach allowed for delving deeply into how community-based arts program participants perceive, reflect, interpret, and interact with program structures. Moreover, it helped to uncover the individual meaning-making processes that accompany the development of external and potentially enduring program impacts. Qualitative methods are capable of describing the "why" of behavior, or "the subjective meanings people make of their experiences and that give rise to specific behaviors" (Banyard & Miller, 1998, p. 485). Their application in the study design was useful for both producing findings and modeling evaluation methods for the Community Arts field. Although funders of arts programs often demand summative outcomes, there is a lack of the process, formative, and interpretative research needed to establish what form of outcomes measurement is appropriate for arts programs. Korza and Bacon (2012) describe the conviction expressed by numerous arts practitioners, as well as researchers, that qualitative methods provide important evidence of the social impact of art. Narrative, qualitative methods, like CGT, also keep participant voices at the forefront (Rappaport, 1995), and are "more accessible to non-researchers and complementary to participatory evaluation," which is in keeping with the values that inform the work of Community Arts (Stern & Seifert, 2009).

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Grounded theory, first developed by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1992), is the systematic generation of theory, from data at hand, and involves both inductive and deductive thinking. Although grounded theory, like other qualitative research approaches, does not uniformly place existing theory at the beginning of a study as its framework, grounded theory involves at least a "modicum of deduction" in its iterations of testing emerging theory against newly collected data (Bryman, 2012). Per its original conceptualization, grounded theory does not just dictate a method for doing qualitative research but should always have the generation of new theoretical knowledge as its aim (Charmaz, 2009). A grounded theory researcher's choice of methods should flow from that principle. Stern (2009), a "second generation" student of Glaser and Strauss, provides this summary of the grounded theory process:

> In the language of grounded theory, data are manipulated by "constant comparison" to develop "hypotheses". . . The hypothesis, usually called a "core variable" or "central process", is made up of a number of "social psychological processes" (processes where in the psychological outlook of a person is affected by the response of society, seen through "symbolic act") and "social structural processes" (processes governed by the structure or rules of society). These processes occur within a given "context" or scene. (p. 68)

In contrast to a deductively framed study, as suggested in the above summary, the core variables under examination in this study were not predetermined based on literature.

In addition to grounded theory's iterations of linking data to theory, the contemporary conceptualization of grounded theory has deductive aspects in that study frameworks can be more or less defined at the outset by pre-existing theory depending on researchers' aims (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Pure, Glaserian grounded theory would advise the researcher to essentially ignore all literature at the outset of one's study (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). In addition, Glaser would also warn against researchers holding any preconceived ideas that they are looking to

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prove or disprove (Charmaz, 2009). However, per Charmaz (2000), grounded theory should be viewed as flexible set of principles and practices aimed at interpretation, rather than as a strict methodological prescription. Therefore in regards to this study, although it employed a predominantly inductive approach, the pursuit of its research question had already begun at the time it was proposed because it built upon a prior study, as well as my applied experiences in community-based arts settings. It also took into account the extant Community Arts and arts evaluation literatures because they delineated the knowledge gaps to be filled by new theory. In combination, my earlier findings, knowledge of the extant research, experiences, as well as my perspectives and interests as a researcher, partially stemming from my discipline's emphases, formed a set of "sensitizing concepts" that helped to organize and understand the research experience (Blumer, 1969; Charmaz, 2000; Charmaz, 2006). These sensitizing concepts acted both deductively and inductively to inform the analysis processes for this research.

Constructivist Grounded Theory further extended grounded theory as a complete research strategy that emphasizes examining processes, keeping action central, and creating "abstract interpretative understandings of the data" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 9). Charmaz, with the aim of making grounded theory a more dynamic, reflexive, and pragmatic approach, built upon Strauss' adoption of symbolic interactionism to develop CGT. Symbolic interactionism assumes that people do not respond mechanically to stimuli, instead they think about their actions; therefore, research data must reflect both the researcher's and participants' constructions of reality and that the researcher is affected by the participant within the research process (Charmaz, 2006). Fundamentally, symbolic interactionism holds that multiple realities exist.

The overall CGT process— incorporating data gathering, coding, analytical writing, and writing for an audience— provided guidelines for each component of this study's research

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design. (See Figure 1, from Charmaz, 2006, p. 11). As described by Charmaz, and similar to other grounded theory approaches, the research process was iterative such that the design's components were not entirely successive.

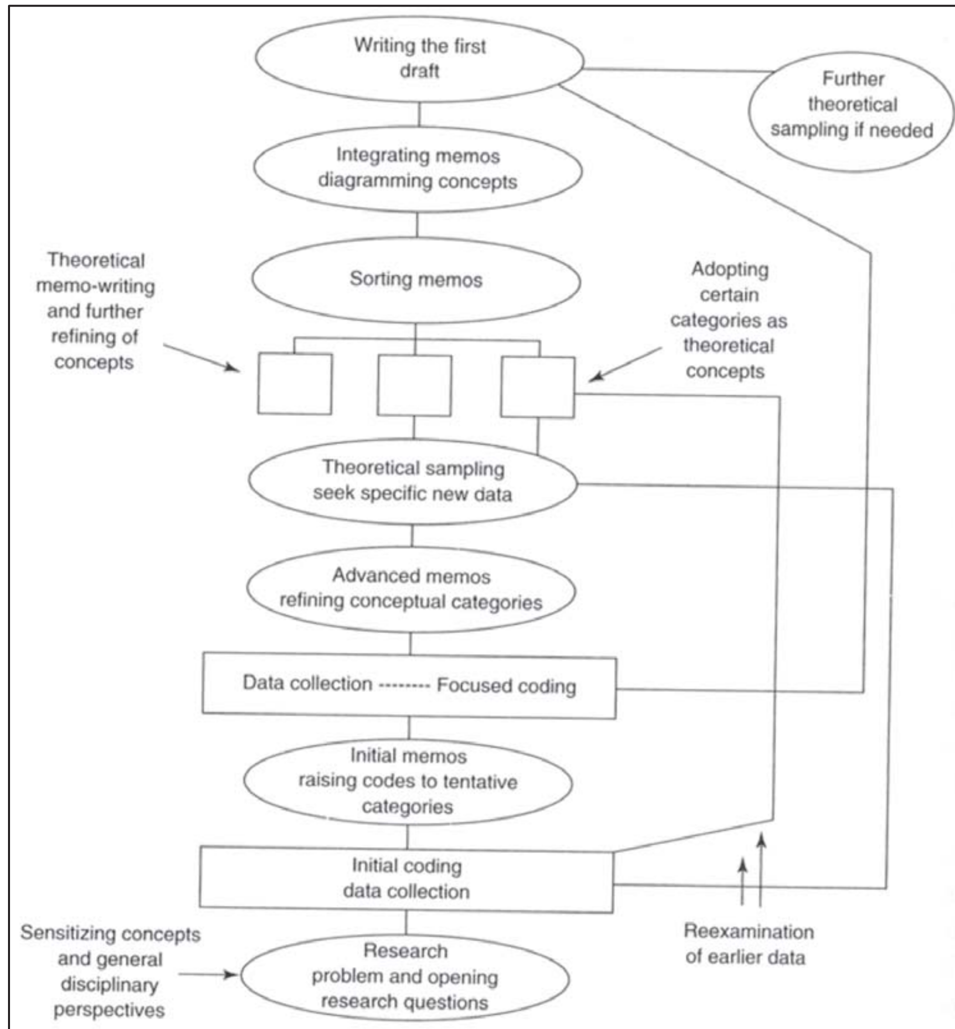

Figure 1. The grounded theory process, with steps ascending from bottom to top.

In addition, the steps within them were not always linear and varied in their application. As one example of this variation, the reanalysis of the pre-collected interview data differed from the analysis of the newly collected data in two ways: 1) the former did not allow for additional theoretical sampling and 2) the former did not include the final step of writing formally for an

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audience. Each of this study's analysis components, however, involved initial coding, focused coding, and memo-writing (described below).

Design components.

The study's research design had three major components: 1) a reanalysis of pre-collected interviews and subsequent development of a new interview guide (analytic stage 1); 2) collection of new interviews with graduates of community-based arts programs; 3) a second and final analysis incorporating new and pre-collected data sets (analytic stage 2).

Reanalysis and interview guide procedures.

Both the analytic stages proceeded through the same basic steps, but these steps varied because of the different purposes of the analytic stages. Within both stages, interview data was examined through a phased, detailed content analysis informed by sensitizing concepts and later emerging themes. To assure that the content analysis was thorough and rigorous, it was based upon Baptiste's (2001) and Charmaz's (2006) phases for qualitative data analysis. Baptiste's framework for analysis is generally applicable to qualitative research as a whole, whereas Charmaz's specifically dictates phases for grounded theory studies. Both helped to guide this study because they allowed me the flexibility to respond to emergent themes as they arose in the two analysis stages, with their varied purposes. Figure 2 summarizes the components of the research design and phases associated with each of the analytic stages.

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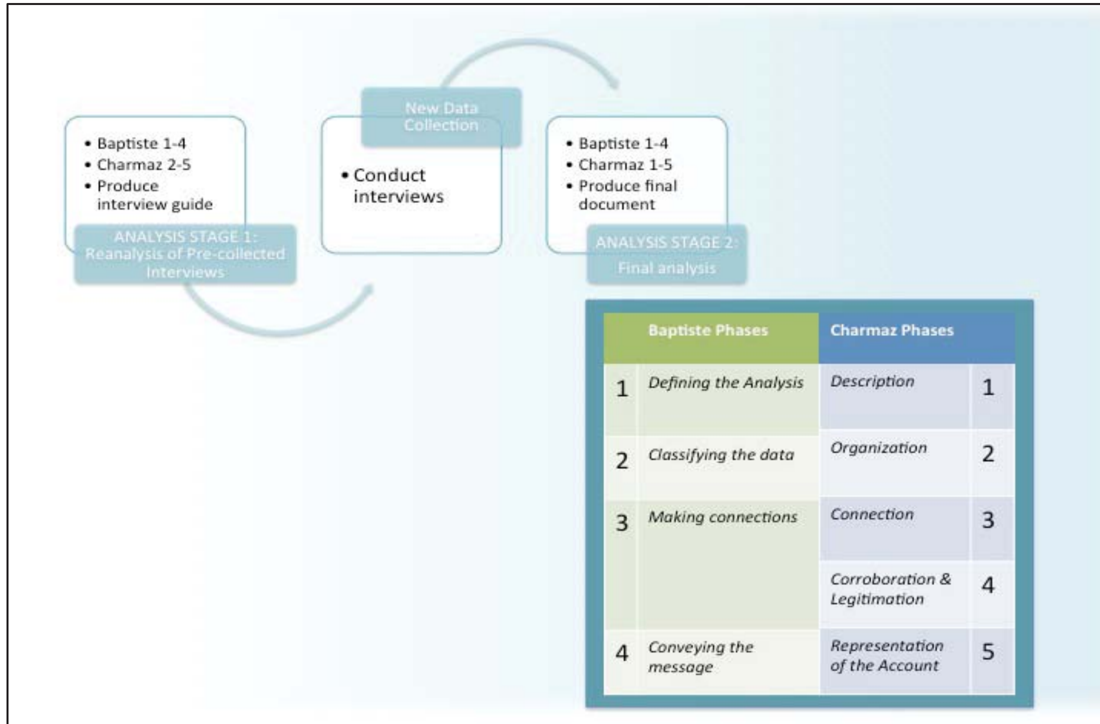

Figure 2. Research design components and phases.

According to Baptiste (2001), there are four phases of qualitative analysis: 1) *defining the analysis*; 2) *classifying the data*; 3) *making connections between and among categories of data*; 4) *conveying the message/write-up*. Charmaz's (2006) outline of CGT's five phase analytic process is more detailed and, for this study, perhaps better allowed for theory to be generated from, rather than attributed to, the data. Her process consists of: 1) *description*, 2) *organization*, 3) *connection*, 4) *corroboration and legitimation*, and 5) *representation of the account* (from Crabtree & Miller, 1999). Although both Baptiste's and Charmaz's process recommendations guided the two stages of analysis, Charmaz's full five phases were fully realized in the second stage. The major differences between the two analysis stages were that the final phase of the stage 1 resulted in a semi-structured interview guide, rather than a written draft for an audience, and later phases of stage 2 were more exhaustive because they incorporated emerging themes from both the new and pre-collected data sets.

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Stage 1 (reanalysis) phases.

In regards to the reanalysis component of the design, an important first part of Baptiste's *defining the analysis* phase was the sorting out of pre-collected interview questions and responses that were not pertinent to this study (e.g. questions explicitly informed by extant theory and selected a priori for the prior study). Charmaz's *description* phase involved pulling together observation notes, initial thoughts about sensitizing concepts related to those observations and the interviews, and interview notes, as well as transcribing the digitally recorded interviews. This phase was already complete for this data, having been completed for the purposes of my previous study. The already transcribed, pre-collected interviews were stored as Word documents.

As dictated by the aims of grounded theory, a new content analysis of these transcripts involved coding utilizing a recursive guide. Building upon an initial coding guide, based on both sensitizing concepts and emerging themes in the case of the reanalysis, the guide evolved through successive rounds of analysis. In the next step of this analysis, guided by Charmaz's *organization* and Baptiste's *classification* phases, initial codes were generated and assigned to meaningful units of data. These meaningful units range from a set of words, to complete sentences, to entire paragraphs. Content analysis in this stage only involved Word and Excel softwares because of their simplicity and ease of use, which allowed for efficient classification and sorting of codes.

Charmaz (2006; 2011) recommends that researchers begin their coding "line-by-line" to keep their analysis focused on what participants actually said, while minimizing the tendency to ascribe biases onto the data. Initial coding tends to be more descriptive than categorical, and helps to summarize and classify all of the data in advance of more in-depth analysis. However,

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"constant comparative methods" (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser & Strauss, 1967) were utilized to compare codes to one another, throughout the phases of analysis, to best assign and refine codes. In Baptiste's terms, this key part of the analytical process, which Chamaz calls "coding," is described as the "tagging" and grouping of data. Tagging "refers to the process of selecting from an amorphous body of material, bits and pieces that satisfy the researcher's curiosity, and help support the purpose of the study" (Baptiste, 2001, p. 8). Part of tagging is utilizing systematic "labels" that are meaningfully related to the data and can be words and phrases, but also images, numbers, or symbols, if relevant. This helps keep data from being too unwieldy. Tagged and labeled data are grouped into categories, as related to emergent themes but, as in Charmaz's approach to initial coding, the researcher remains open-minded about the data and does not overly force categorization. In addition, to support the aims of grounded theory, at this point in the coding process *in vivo* codes— participants' own, special terms— were sometimes be applied to "serve as symbolic markers of participants' speech and meanings" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 55).

Within Baptiste's second phase, and toward the end of Charmaz's second phase, the use of constant comparative methods helped to produce more directed and selective codes, termed "focused codes" in grounded theory, that reflected patterns and themes in the data (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). During focused coding, which is more conceptual than initial coding, constant comparison was again used to categorize the data as precisely as possible by refining and grouping initial codes (Charmaz, 2000; Charmaz, 2006). In Charmaz's *connection* phase of CGT analysis, equivalent to Baptiste's *making connections between and among categories of data* phase, focused codes were compared to one another and grouped thematically into higher order categories, which are further grouped into concepts of increasing abstraction. In

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CGT, this grouping process is termed “theoretical coding”. The ultimate goal of this phase of analysis was to begin generating new theory grounded in participants’ experiences.

The fourth phase in the CGT analytical process, *legitimation and corroboration*, does not have a direct analog in Baptiste’s approach, although he addresses similar issues in his overall discussion of qualitative methods. The purpose of this phase is to corroborate the direction of the analysis to this point, by attending to the themes that emerged in the coding process to illustrate that the researcher’s interpretations of the coded data are sound (Charmaz, 2006; Crabtree & Miller, 1999). Memo-writing, an intermediate step between coding and writing up the final analysis, is used to accomplish the goals of this phase in CGT, although memos can be written throughout the research process. Memos are used by the researcher to actively make conjectures about comparisons—between pieces of data, between codes, between categories— in order to explicate and give greater form to categories and emerging theory. During this process, if certain aspects of the data have not yet been explained by emerging grounded theory, memo-writing can help address and rework theory assumptions. For stage 1 of this study, memos were presented to my research team colleagues to legitimate findings related to the present research question, in part through engaging in discussion about my potential personal biases, in order to minimize them (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In addition, the full set of initial outcomes of the coding process were organized into a chart laying out the five overarching thematic domains, with supporting data examples, that emerged from the reanalysis. (See Appendix B.) This chart was submitted to the dissertation committee for their review and feedback, prior to completing the next phase.

In the case of analytic stage 1 (reanalysis) in the present study, Baptiste’s fourth phase, *conveying the message/write-up* and Charmaz’s fifth phase, *representation of the account*, the result was a semi-structured interview guide that was used to collect new data. The overall

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purpose of this analytic phase is to write up the analysis in order to clearly represent and share the understandings gleaned from the analysis (Crabtree & Miller, 1999). Usually, this phase would result in a written document that would be disseminated in some fashion to an interested audience, rather than a data collection instrument. However, a main purpose of grounded theory writing is to present the content of the analytic work (Charmaz, 2006) and the production of the interview guide fits that purpose. The grounded theory writing process will be described in greater detail, below, as it functioned as part of the final analysis.

Interview guide development.

The reanalysis component of this study resulted in a semi-structured interview guide that facilitated the collection of the new data that was needed to address this study's research questions. The interview guide was designed to allow participants to retrospectively reflect on their experiences and relationships within their respective programs, and to relate those experiences and relationships to their present day, post-program experiences. They were also invited to speculate about the connections between their subjective understandings of in-program effects and external outcomes (primarily personal outcomes, such as vocational skills, self efficacy, and sense of community, but also selected community-level outcomes, related to engagement in social change efforts). The still pliant, working grounded theory that emerged from stage 1 dictated exactly what and how interview questions were asked, as successive interviews were done, in order to explore these and other interest areas.

Upon completion of the above-described stage 1 phases, the interview guide from the previous study was again reviewed to determine which, if any, of its questions would be retained for the new interview guide (see Appendix C). Those questions and sensitizing concepts deemed worthy of retaining, by virtue of their relevance to the present research questions, formed the

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starting point for the new guide. The guide was then fleshed out with new interest areas and questions in the manner described above. It included the thematic domains to be covered, incorporating the five overarching themes distilled from the reanalysis, along with a list of adaptable "start" questions in each interest area that were both open- and close-ended (Weiss, 1994). These domains and their related start questions drew from the reanalysis' closer focus, relative to the prior study's, on how individuals' perceptions of internal change processes have translated into external and potentially lasting post-program impacts. Due to the iterative nature of this qualitative research, and in keeping with the aims of CGT, the interview guide was progressively modified as the study proceeded and data accumulated (Crabtree & Miller, 1999). Modifications were required especially when it seemed prudent to include additional follow-up questions that allowed participants to describe their experiences in more detail, which at times extended the number of questions and ultimately the lengths of interviews. A draft of the complete, new interview guide was shared with all members of the dissertation committee to garner their feedback on it prior to its first use. (See new interview guide in Appendix D.)

Data collection procedures.

The qualitative data collection for the study consisted entirely of individual interviews. Concurrent to and following the reanalysis and interview guide development stages, recruitment of interview participants occurred following the sampling procedures described above. (At the time of this study proposal, on February 8, 2013, contact was already established with all three study organizations; however, no interviewees were identified or contacted until after IRB approval was granted, by expedited review, on March 14, 2013). Throughout the data collection process, data was documented, transcribed, and organized as it was gathered so that the iterative coding process and analysis was ongoing.

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As discussed above, new interviews were conducted with former and/or long-time participants from the three identified organizations: Access Art, New Lens, and Wide Angle. All interviews for this study proceeded in a similar fashion, but varied slightly as the interview guide changed over time, and depending on issues of individual participants' availability and time restrictions. Interviews were held at the respective program that each participant was a part of, or at a location of the participants' choice (e.g., local coffee shop), if it was appropriate for the purposes of the interview (e.g. relatively quiet, safe, accessible, etc.). At the beginning of each interview, informed consent was obtained in writing from each participant (all were aged 18 or over) to cover the interviewing and recording that occurred. (See Appendix E.) The interview began each time with a general introduction. Each interview then roughly followed the interview guide, lasting approximately 1.5-2.5 hours. The interviews concluded with a debriefing of the participant.

Stage 2 (final analysis) procedures.

Upon completion of the first few new interviews for the study, constituting this study's second component, the second data analysis stage commenced and continued iteratively and in parallel to further data collection. This iterative analytical process allowed me to be responsive to emerging themes. Analysis of the newly collected data followed the analytic phases of Baptiste and Charmaz, and their related procedures such as coding, as described above for the reanalysis component. However, there was some variation in how the phases proceeded, based on the different purposes of the analyses. The aim of this phase of analysis was to produce a more fully formed grounded theory, ultimately based in the narratives of both sets of participants. That theory has now been represented and conveyed within this formal, written document, therefore the latter analytic phases were more intensive in the second phase of the analysis.

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There were a few notable variations in how the CGT phases were applied in the final analysis, in comparison to the reanalysis component. Charmaz's first phase, *description*, was more applicable because there were new interviews to be transcribed, and new observations and interpretations from those interviews to be recorded, compiled, and reflected upon during this stage. For this second and final analysis stage, Atlas.ti software was also used for data storage and as an analytical aid, in addition to Word and Excel. This more advanced qualitative software facilitated making the classification and sorting of potentially large volumes of data more manageable, increasing the ease of more sophisticated sorting and deeper exploration of trends. Content analysis and coding procedures for the newly collected data, addressed in Charmaz's *organization* and Baptiste's *classification* phases, was handled as they were in the reanalysis of the pre-collected data, but were more productive because in stage 2 overlapping data collection and analysis allowed emergent themes to be attended to in "real time," within both subsequent interviews facilitating more specific coding iterations. Similarly, memo-writing, which occurs in Charmaz's *legitimation and corroboration* phase, played a more substantive part in this analysis because having several more coding iterations allowed for and necessitated the generation of more memos. Also playing a part in this phase in the final analysis were member checks (described below) to corroborate early findings and the direction of the analysis.

Finally, as mentioned above, Charmaz's and Baptiste's final phases—addressing the writing up the account of what was learned in the research— occurred as described by these authors to produce a formal, written document. In Charmaz's view, the way that this document is written is extremely important, because words must be carefully chosen in order to make participants' experiences, and the theory that emerges from them, tangible to the reader (Charmaz, 2003; 2006). The written account should place theory back into the descriptive

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context of the participants' lives, such that the conceptual categories that define that theory are illustrated in a linear, understandable, and credible way. Moreover, the process of writing the account is itself an important part of grounded theory analysis because, as described by Charmaz, "the discovery process... extends into the writing and rewriting" (2006, p. 154). The writing process thus should reflect the emergent nature of grounded theory, with the process bringing out: 1) implicit arguments; 2) context; 3) links with extant literature; 4) critical examinations of categories; 5) sharpened, theoretical interpretations (Charmaz, 2006). At the close of the final phase of stage 2 analysis, this resulting formal document captures and presents both the form and content of the research, situated within the context of my participants' narratives.

Qualitative verification: Validity and reliability considerations.

Although qualitative methods must be held to quality standards that are on par with quantitative methods, they cannot be assessed by identical criteria because these two sets of approaches are based largely upon divergent theoretical paradigms. (The aims of the present study are more readily met within the qualitative paradigm.) Stenbacka (2001) contended that since reliability issues fundamentally concern measurements, they have no real relevance in qualitative research. Others, such as Lincoln and Guba (1985), have supported "parallel" criteria to meet the standard of "trustworthiness", which suggests the congruence of reliability and validity in qualitative research (Flick, Von Kardoff, & Steinke, 2004; Guba & Lincoln, 2001). However, even though Lincoln and Guba previously opined "[s]ince there can be no validity without reliability, a demonstration of the former [validity] is sufficient to establish the latter," (p. 316), they later argued that attempting to assess the rigor of qualitative research through parallels to these concepts is not ideal because qualitative research does not seek to predict or generalize findings (Guba & Lincoln, 2001). Instead, they noted that the standard of

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"authenticity" is more fitting for qualitative research because it arises directly from assumptions of the constructivist paradigm. Authenticity involves a shift away from the positivist paradigm completely and toward "concerns about what research is worthwhile" and of "benefit to society" (James, 2008). For the purposes of this study, authenticity was attended to by consideration of the wider political and social implications of the research, but the criteria for trustworthiness was also applied because: 1) Guba and Lincoln (2001) maintain that they remain useful in auditing the research process; 2) these criteria continue to be the prevailing means for assessing qualitative research (Baptiste, 2001; Flick, Von Kardoff, & Steinke, 2004); 3) authenticity criteria cannot be reasonably met outside of a participatory action research or cooperative inquiry design (James, 2008).

One reason that the "parallel" criteria of trustworthiness are commonly utilized is that, to some degree, the generalizability of one's data and inferences are relevant issues for qualitative research, even as they must be approached in a different manner than in quantitative research. Shadish, Cook, & Campbell use the term validity as it "refer(s) to the approximate truth of an inference. . . . we make a judgment about the extent to which relevant evidence supports that inference as being true or correct" (2002, p. 34). They also referenced Mishler's contention that qualitative methods are validated by a functional standard of whether or not the findings form a relied upon basis for future work (Shadish, Cook & Campbell, 2002, p. 36), suggesting that both "types" of research can be judged as externally valid to the extent that there is a utility for findings. Lincoln and Guba (1985; Guba & Lincoln, 2001) explain that the criteria of trustworthiness assure a level of quality in qualitative research that is comparable to validity constructs in quantitative research. Within this study, I pursued "credibility", roughly equivalent

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to internal validity, “confirmability”, similar to notions of objectivity, “transferability”, similar to external validity, and “dependability,” which speaks to the reliability of the data.

Credibility and confirmability.

Credibility and confirmability in this study was supported by peer debriefing, which involved consultation with peer professionals in relevant fields who are expert in my methods and theoretical basis in order to check working hypotheses (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). For this study, this included my academic peers in community psychology, to include faculty and fellow graduate students on my research team, and Community Arts professionals who I am acquainted with. Furthermore, the inclusion of two analyses, involving multiple participants across three organizations, and the consideration of sensitizing concepts were used to achieve sufficient triangulation in this research (Denzin, 1978). Triangulation of methods and/or data sources helps to corroborate the research findings and ensure that they are seen as credible and objective insofar that it is clear that the findings are shaped by the respondents and not researcher bias (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). In addition, the interview questions themselves were open and flexible, allowing for themes to emerge spontaneously from participants, which increased confirmability.

Furthermore, consistent with the aims of CGT and qualitative approaches as a whole, throughout the research process and particularly during the writing phase of analysis, credibility and confirmability were supported through attentiveness to my own positioning as the researcher by way of reflexivity. Reflexivity in qualitative research is defined as engaging in critical reflection about what the researcher brings to and how they influence the research process, essentially “an examination of the filters and lenses through which you see the world” (Mansfield, 2006). My personal and professional histories have led to my interest in the present research topic, and those histories, as well as my values, and my current professional pursuits in

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the areas of community arts, human services, and evaluation, informed my overall approach and methods. Moreover, constructivist grounded theory is a qualitative approach to research that is based in the traditions of constructivism— assumes that data and analyses are social constructions, “facts and values are linked” (Charmaz, 2006)— and pragmatism, a pluralistic philosophy that assumes that interaction is inherently dynamic and interpretive. CGT, like other qualitative approaches but to an even lesser extent than some, does not subscribe to the tenets of positivism, largely because they imply that individuals are “passive recipients of social forces” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 7). I maintain a constructivist perspective and chose my research approach in light of that perspective as well as the suitability of that approach to this study’s research questions. The relevant, constituent factors of my identity and background, and qualifications and positioning as a researcher, are conveyed through this final written account of the research.

The criterion of credibility in qualitative research also involves establishing that results are believable from the perspective of the research participants. Even as the aims of CGT encourage reflexivity and acknowledge the researchers’ influence on the construction of research findings, CGT is quite amenable to methods that keep participants’ voices central to the research. (Addressed, also, in Charmaz’s (2006) *legitimation and corroboration* phase of analysis.) To this end member check, which means checking the accuracy of categories and interpretations as they emerge with the participants themselves, was employed. This technique also promoted constituent validity, a related consideration described by Keys and Frank (1987). Constituent validity means research participants themselves “are not considered subjects to be acted upon, but rather constituents whose perspective must be taken into account in planning, conducting, and reporting research” (p. 243). Although in this study this aim was not as completely met as it would have been in a fully participatory design, the use of member check went beyond simple

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confirmation. I sought feedback from the participants throughout my iterative process, including by soliciting feedback about my interpretations of earlier interviews with successive interviewees and in brief post-interview conversations with some participants. In doing so, I approached this standard and increased participant trust.

Transferability and dependability.

Unlike quantitative studies, the standard of inter-subject verifiability— ensuring that studies can be fully replicated— cannot be applied because qualitative methods are not generally "standardizable" (Flick, Von Kardoff, & Steinke, 2004). However, a requirement for "inter-subjective comprehensibility" is transferability, which allows for evaluation of results to take place (Flick, Von Kardoff, & Steinke, 2004; Guba & Lincoln, 2005). In reference to constructivist evaluation, Guba and Lincoln (2001) maintain that transferability is "established not by the evaluator but by receivers of evaluation reports who make personal judgments of the degree to which findings are sufficiently similar to their own situations" in order to determine if findings are viable for "local application" rather than generalization (2001, p. 13). Thick description and the careful documentation of the research process are the primary means of meeting this requirement; it gives the reader the ability to follow the research step-by-step in order to evaluate both the process and the findings. As suggested in the discussion of generalizability, from a qualitative perspective, transferability has been achieved here by making evident to the reader not only what steps were taken but also what assumptions were made in this research process, and by thoroughly describing the context of the study. It is now up to the reader to make the call as to whether the research results are transferable to their setting and purposes. Dependability speaks to the ability of research findings to be replicated, and in this study has been achieved by using Lincoln and Guba's (1985) recommended method of identifying

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common themes across interview participants. In addition, negative case analysis, in which the researcher searches for cases that do not fit working hypotheses (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), supports the dependability, as well as the credibility, of the data. The overall trustworthiness of the present study has been supported by the standards—set by the criteria of credibility, confirmability, transferability, and dependability— throughout all three components of the research design.

Results

The results of the present study are primarily comprised of the findings from 11 qualitative interviews that were collected and analyzed in the manner described above. This data set consisted of approximately 450 pages of double-spaced, typed text. However, the reanalysis of seven pre-collected interviews formed an important part of this research, by establishing lines of inquiry and providing an initial direction for analysis of the new interviews. Key themes that emerged from the reanalysis of these interviews, of most relevance to answering the research questions, also informed the analysis of the new interviews. In addition, in the knowledge that each participant's history, program status, and other current activities are unique, and in light of the centrality of the participants' narratives to this research, an introduction of each participant is warranted. Therefore, preceding the findings from the 11 qualitative interviews, these results begin with brief introductions to these participants as a group and as individuals, and a summary table of their relevant biographical details and demographics.

Introduction to Participants

Due to the nature of the research questions, which assumed some level of program impact, and the sampling procedures that were used, going into this study I anticipated that newly recruited participants would hold generally favorable opinions of their programs. This

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expectation was borne out. However, participants were not wholly uncritical of their programs, and differed in a number of other ways including in their level of involvement with their programs at the time of their interviews, their perceptions of how and to what extent they were impacted by their programs, and in how they relate their program experience to their current activities. The subtle dissimilarities in individuals' ages relative to their program roles or alumni status reflects differences in programs' structures that also may have impacted participants' experiences. In these ways, the sample was a heterogeneous one in spite of some demographic similarities (i.e., age, race, SES[11]). Participants' post-program endeavors—or contemporaneous ones, for those still enrolled—also varied a great deal, but all individuals were functioning well per conventional societal standards (e.g., all had stable housing, jobs and/or post-secondary educational enrollment, and active social lives).

All participants described plans for, and expressed optimism about, the future. Each participant was asked, "How satisfied are you with your life right now?", and all indicated being moderately or highly satisfied. Notably, those that said they were moderately satisfied explained their answer by expressing a general sentiment of "not wanting to settle" in one or more areas of their life. Although the purpose of this study was not to objectively document or measure program effects— including intended outcomes, which vary by program— it is important to contextualize why the collected narratives are germane to the research question. The 11 participants all endorsed the premises that they had "changed" through their program involvement, and that changes were both positive and likely to endure. This is an important shared experience in light of the goals of the present study; participants' evaluations of change

[11] Participants were not asked explicit questions that would indicate their individual or household SES. However, spontaneous comments from some participants, in light of their programs' target populations, suggest that most participants' families would be described as lower to low-middle income.

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are a prerequisite to exploring participants' subjective experiences of change processes and the meaning-making that may propel program effects forward in their lives.

To offer further context for participants' narratives and provide an initial idea of each individual's point-of-view and voice, the brief introductions below touch on how participants entered their programs, how long they were involved, their current involvement, their overall impression of their programs, and a of their current activities at the time of their interviews. They also include a small piece of each participant's interview to illustrate one or more of these details. The introductions are organized by program, presented chronologically based upon when the first of their members/alums was interviewed and then by participants in alphabetical order of their pseudonym. After the introductions, a summary list of pseudonyms, basic demographic information, and other relevant personal information are presented in Table 1.

New Lens.

Abdi. Abdi, now aged 22, first joined New Lens in 2006, at age 15, but only participated sporadically until the following year when he decided that the program was a "good fit" for him. Abdi is African American and a long-time resident of Reservoir Hill, the neighborhood housing New Lens. He continues to attend New Lens, but is planning to transition out within the next year after spending a few more months in his current, quasi-staff role. Although New Lens, then "Kids on the Hill", offered more visual arts programming when he first started attending, his preferred medium there has always been video. Abdi recently received a national award for a documentary and related work addressing youth and police relations, which he completed at New Lens. He was one of the participants who was most critical about his program's operations, but his criticisms all seemed to be provided in a constructive spirit. He expressed a strong appreciation toward New Lens.

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> It's where I developed my vision for my life, not necessarily for my life, but I think a vision. It gave me a blueprint of what I'm capable of, what I'm successful at, or what I'm capable of doing. And also just gave me some beginning tools for crafting what I want . . . [and] allowed me to network and meet some interesting people. I think networking is half the battle . . . I can always use another, you know, Bill Gates or Warren Buffett [*laughs*].
>
> - Abdi, New Lens

At the time of his interview, in addition to spending several hours each week at New Lens, Abdi was preparing to begin his Senior year at a local university where he majors in Biology, with a minor in Film. He is involved in several music projects with friends, and also volunteers for the Black to Our Roots program, a project of H.A.B.E.S.H.A. Baltimore (http://habeshabmore.tumblr. com) that facilitates cultural awareness experiences for young African American men and women.

Matthew. Matthew is a 22-year-old African American man who resides in the Poppleton neighborhood of Baltimore City, but resided elsewhere in West Baltimore while attending New Lens as a student. At the time of his interview, he had just accepted a new job as an educator at an HIV and STD prevention program within a mid-sized human services nonprofit, after having completed an internship as a conservation intern with the Chesapeake Bay Trust. He was contemplating applying, during the next year, to local colleges to study Psychology. He joined New Lens when he was 16, after he happened to encounter program staff and students leading a workshop at his local community center, and went on to attend the program for five years. Matthew is not currently involved in New Lens in a direct way, but considers himself friends with its Executive Director and other alums.

> New Lens feels like home to me, so if [the staff] ever call me, or somebody from New Lens ever says, "[Matthew], I need help with something," or, you know, "How I can be connected to something like that?" Because of what the program has given to me, and the doors that it's opened, and the network that I've built, like, I'm more than happy to help people from New Lens. Or, if the program needed something, I'm more than happy to reach out and give it.

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- Matthew, New Lens

Matthew continues to "dabble" in photography, but his favorite medium at New Lens was video and he particularly enjoyed acting in their productions.

Stephanie. Also a resident of Reservoir Hill, Stephanie is a 21-year-old African American woman. Like Abdi she joined New Lens in 2006 but, in contrast to his experience, she was "hooked" by New Lens right away after finding new ways to explore an existing strong interest in art and a burgeoning interest in media. Also similarly to Abdi, she continues to attend New Lens, performing a quasi-staff role coordinating all the video productions, for which she receives compensation via Americorps. During her interview she stated her desire to be offered a position as a full-status New Lens staff member, with advancement potential. She stated that if this did not occur within the next several months, she would leave the program.

> I've been involved with New Lens since before the organization kind of came to be known as "New Lens." And I was here, as like one of the first-first young people who was a part of, I guess what we call our "youth-lededness" and so initially when I first—I honestly envisioned this, that would be the work that I would do for the rest of my life. To me it's not kind of like a—it's not a program, but a long term research project about life . . . . I think that [I'll leave] whenever I feel like I've gotten all that I can get from here, and I can no longer gain any knowledge or any information, or how to do what I do better . . . . [I'll stay] as long as there's still growth to be had, because I feel like if I reach the top, if I am at some point running this organization, you know, I would never want to stay too long to stifle somebody else's growth.
>
> - Stephanie, New Lens

For some time now, Stephanie has consciously rebuffed her parents' and friends' suggestions that she pursue college and instead, when not at New Lens, is pursuing a certification in natural health products manufacturing in order to start her own business. She occasionally accepts freelance videography jobs.

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Wide Angle Youth Media.

Alex. Alex, originally contacted as a key informant for the present study, is a 26-year-old European American woman who currently works for Wide Angle part-time as a media and art teacher. She also works as a retail clerk at a chain videogame store and is completing an internship at a video game development company, where she hopes to be offered a paid position within the next year. Alex attended Wide Angle from 2001-2004, during her high school years at the Baltimore School for the Arts. She resided in the Hampden neighborhood during that timeframe. After graduating from high school and leaving Wide Angle, she received her BFA from a Midwestern university. Although she valued her experiences at an arts magnet high school, she attributed her success in college and her present career trajectory to Wide Angle. While away at college and after returning to Baltimore to look for work, she maintained close contact with Wide Angle staff and was ultimately offered a teaching job that was initially funded through Americorps.

> It's just something that for the past three years has been on my mind a lot and like the memories have sort of gotten stronger because, like, they were really foggy at first and when I first started working at Wide Angle, like, the more I worked, the more I remembered and so it's nice to visit them. There's a song that I really like, that's more a piece of advice than an actual song, but it's got a really great line that's about how when older people give advice, it's a way of taking out memories and dusting them off…
>
> - Alex, Wide Angle

Halia. Halia is a 20-year-old African American woman who, at the time of her interview, split her time between Catonsville and Randallstown (both in Baltimore County) where her father and mother, respectively, reside. Halia's circumstances when she joined Wide Angle, in 2010, were somewhat different from her peers' in that she encountered Wide Angle by way of a project at her school and she consciously joined to pad her college applications. Since leaving

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Wide Angle she has returned to attend events and her feedback about the program was in part based on observations about how she observed current students to be performing there.

> [I was introduced] to some of the new students that they have now, and basically what they've been working on. Really, really nice kids, really doing some interesting work. I looked at some of their videos that they were working on, really good videos, talented kids . . . . It just makes you feel proud of like, it makes you feel like you've done something good. It makes me feel good . . . . This is, what, like two years ago, you know, now *people* are the work that you've done, and looking at these other students that are coming up through Wide Angle— hopefully they'll feel the same, like, they've done something good. They're extremely, extremely talented kids.
>
> - Halia, Wide Angle

During the academic year she is now based in Western Maryland, where she attends college. She is a Mass Communications major and is very involved in a sorority and volunteering with a human services organization.

John. An African American man, aged 23, John had accumulated the lengthiest program contact of any participant in the present study. John joined Wide Angle in 2002, as a 12-year-old, and attended the program until 2011. Although John provided largely positive feedback about his program experiences and has maintained contact with staff members and other alums, he had left Wide Angle abruptly after arguing with staff members.

> We parted ways kind of sourly actually— upon my departure . . . . I'm not necessarily sure why but I think we were all frustrated that day [that I left]. They knew that I was working on my side projects and they would allow me to use some of their equipment to do so. And while I was working on that side project I arrived late to class and [staff got on my case]. . . . I just kind of like stormed out and never went back . . . but we kept in touch throughout the years and you know . . . . It has been smoothed over between me and the founders of the organization— I'd been there for so long and they pretty much were, you know, my like my adoptive mothers . . . Throughout the years it's been, like, "Come on back, no problem…"
>
> - John, Wide Angle

John hopes to one day attend college, but since graduating high school he has put most of his energies toward researching various entrepreneurial ventures and starting his own small record label. His favorite projects and activities at Wide Angle were those that allowed him to act or

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otherwise perform, giving him an opportunity to sing and bring his love of music into what he was doing there. He currently works full-time at a local industrial bakery as a mixer-operator to "pay the bills."

Maia. Maia is a 19-year-old African American woman, a resident of Owings Mills (Baltimore County), and an alum of Wide Angle. She consistently attended the program from 2007-2011; her favorite medium there was video, and she particularly enjoyed interviewing individuals for documentary projects. Although Maia is not currently involved with the program, she has returned to visit and attended Wide Angle events several times since she completed her time as a student there. She also maintains close friendships with other alums, and spoke in overwhelmingly positive terms about these friends and how the program affected her.

> I wouldn't be as ambitious as I am now, I wouldn't be as assertive and as outgoing as I am. You know, it would be a lot of traits that's just missing that I have now . . . . It made me feel like a little superstar . . . . If I wasn't in Wide Angle, a lot of the experiences that I had when I was younger, I wouldn't have had. I know I wouldn't have had them and for that I'm eternally grateful to Wide Angle.
>
> - Maia, Wide Angle

At the time of her interview, Maia was working extended hours at a chain pharmacy, where she ordinarily works part-time, to save money for the upcoming academic year, which will be her third in Community College. She plans to transfer to a private four-year college and major in Education there.

Access Art.

David. The youngest participant in the present study is David, an 18-year-old African American man, who was about to begin his senior year of high school when he was interviewed. A former resident of Hampden and current resident of Medfield, his four years of involvement with Access Art started when he was 13 years old. In his interview, David mentioned numerous

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times that he was very "individualistic" and drew inspiration from Ralph Waldo Emerson, but at the same time let himself learn from the group projects he had at first resisted.

> I think the program itself *accidentally* [*laughs*] developed us as people, individually, but like the projects give you a broader perspective. Maybe not just broader, but more specific ideas, as well. At the end, it was more about the every day making you become a better person, because of how I interact with the people around me and how they interact with me.
>
> - David, Access Art

At Access Art he most enjoyed projects that involved photography, and he now continues to shoot photos occasionally on his own. Although David expressed that his experience in the program was very positive, and noted that he would be eager to return there at some point, he had regretfully chosen other afterschool activities over Access Art when he could not make both fit into his schedule.

Elena. A long-time resident of the Morrell Park neighborhood in Southwest Baltimore, Elena had relatively recently returned to Access Art as a member of its teaching staff after completing the program as a student in 2011. Elena, aged 20, is an African American woman who attended Access Art for six years, starting at age 13 after overcoming initial reservations about joining an afterschool program. Now an aspiring actress, but until recently a woman of few words by her own account, she had quite a lot to say about how past and recent Access Art experiences were personally meaningful.

> [Access Art projects] were actually very important to me . . . the billboards [we made], that was actually very important to me because when I first started middle school, you know, I was just a quiet child. Like, I really didn't have any friends so when we put that billboard up, about the theme, like, "don't judge people" and things like that— that was very important to me so I was very involved in that project more than any other project . . . . Now it still means a lot to me. And of course they gave me a job when I didn't have one. You know, I was looking; I didn't have a job, they gave me a job. At the same time they are still helping me grow.
>
> - Elena, Access Art

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After graduating from high school, Elena attended a public university in the western part of the state for one year before deciding to transfer to a smaller, public university in Baltimore City. At the time of her interview, she had moved back in with family in Southwest Baltimore and was waiting to find out how many of her completed credits would be accepted at her new school and was looking forward to continuing her pursuit of a Theater major.

Harold. Harold began attending Access Art programming in 2008, at age 16 and remained with the program through 2011. He is a 21-year-old African American man who resides in the Medfield neighborhood of Baltimore City and takes classes in computer-based graphic design at a local community college. Harold keeps in touch with other Access Art alums and staff members, but is not formally involved with Access Art at the present time. During his interview he discussed his desire to return to the program in a teaching staff role, for income and to brush up on his photography skills, if the opportunity would present itself. Harold's interview was the shortest of all the study participants, but he spoke with great passion about how his involvement at Access Art had been emotionally affecting for him.

> Now I'm much more honest. I can say being in the program made me more real than I was before and it made me control a lot of anger because I was a fighter, a fighter a lot when I first starting coming here. And with the program, it helped me control a lot of things, especially the anger issue. The anger issue was terrible. But, with the program it helped me be able to control it and to form it, to form it— my anger into happiness.
>
> - Harold, Access Art

Marlon. Like Alex at Wide Angle, Marlon was also originally contacted to contribute to this study as a key informant. An older alum of Access Art, Marlon is a 23-year-old African American resident of Medfield who attended the program as a student from 2006-2009. His program experience was unique amongst the Access Art participants and his program contemporaries because Marlon actively traveled across the city to attend both Access Art locations on a weekly basis. Although he was not formally involved with the program for about a

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year after completing high school, he always remained in contact with peers and program staff. He then returned in a very part-time teaching role that was expanded after he completed an abbreviated stint at a prestigious local art college, which included his involvement in this college's community arts initiative, allowing him to receive academic credit when he started working at Access Art as a staff member. At the time of his interview, he had not discounted returning to college yet seemed very uncertain about future college plans because he felt pleased with everything he was doing, had no immediate to desire to complete his degree or to pursue a full-time job elsewhere.

> I enjoy photography [*pauses*] *a lot*. It's my thing. I do a lot with that. I like making things and doing things to make people smile . . . . Have you ever heard this song by Beyonce called "I Was Here"? That makes me think about the things that I do in my life, and I'm *very* satisfied with the things I do for people and the influence I have on young people. I am completely satisfied.
>
> - Marlon, Access Art

Out of all the participants in the present study, Marlon reported the most continued use of the arts medium (photography) that he learned in his program and seemed to have the strongest desire to turn his interest in it into a career.

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Participant summary.

	NAME	DEMOS	LOCATION	YEARS ENROLLED	PROGRAM AFFILIATION	CURRENT ACTIVITIES*	PREFERRED ART MEDIA
NEW LENS	Abdi	22; M; AA	Reservoir Hill	2006; regularly 2007-present	Student in senior role (paid)	Senior at local university; volunteers at another nonprofit	Video (all aspects)
NEW LENS	Matthew	22; M; AA	Poppleton/West Baltimore	2007-2012	Alum	Educator at HIV/STD prevention program; contemplating studying Psych in college	Video (acting, interviewing)
NEW LENS	Stephanie	21; F; AA	Reservoir Hill	2006-present	Student in senior role (paid)	Completing online certification to make and sell natural health products; would like to work at New Lens	Video (all aspects); Visual Art; fashion design
WIDE ANGLE	Alex**	26; F; EA	Rodgers Forge; originally Hampden	2001-2004	Alum; Teacher	Pt-time job at chain video game shop; Internship at video game developer	Visual Art (drawing, comics)
WIDE ANGLE	Halia	20; F; AA	Randallstown & Catonsville (splits time)	2010-2012	Alum	Junior at State university, Mass Comm major; very involved in sorority; nonprofit volunteer	Video (all aspects); Visual Art (painting)
WIDE ANGLE	John	23; M; AA	Penn North/ Druid Hill	2002-2011	Alum	Works for industrial bakery; started small record label; contemplating college	Performance (acting, music)
WIDE ANGLE	Maia	19; F; AA	Owings Mills	2007-2011	Alum	Third year at community college, Education major; pt-time job at chain pharmacy	Video (interviewing)
ACCESS ART	Elena	20; F; AA	Morrell Park/SW Baltimore	2005-2011	Alum, Teacher	Freshman/Sophomore (transfer) at State university, Theatre major	Photography; Video (all acting)
ACCESS ART	David	18; M; AA	Medfield/ Hampden	2008-2012	Alum	Completing Senior year of high school; volunteers at community center	Photography; Visual Art
ACCESS ART	Harold	21; M; AA	Medfield/ Hampden	2008-2011	Alum	Taking classes at local community college in computer graphic design	Photography; Visual Art
ACCESS ART	Marlon**	23; M; AA	Medfield/ Hampden	2006-2009	Alum, Teacher	Program Coordinator at community center; contemplating return to art college he previously attended	Photography; Visual art (drawing)

* Primary, current activities not including any involvement with programs
** Older alum who completed her or his program (as a student) more than 2 years prior; now work at programs as full staff members

Table 1. Participant summary: demographics and study relevant information.

Interview Findings

The findings produced in the analysis of the 11 qualitative interviews are organized here along the study's starting research questions, rather than themes derived from extant literature. This is in keeping with the application of Constructivist Grounded Theory, as outlined in the study's Methods. The overarching question addressed in this study was: How do program participants' subjective experiences of the change processes created by their programs convert to

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external and longer-lasting impacts? This question, once again, breaks out into the sub-questions of: 1) *How do long-term participants experience CBAOs' pursuit of outcomes?*; 2) *What mechanisms underlie/emerge from CBAOs' pursuit of outcomes*? *What does it look like inside the "black box" of the change processes?*; 3) *How do in-program experiences translate into external and long-term impacts? What forms of meaning-making comprise the link between internal program effects and external outcomes-- impact in participants' lives and communities?*

For ease of navigation, interview findings will be grouped first by the three research sub-questions, then by emergent themes and sub-themes that were identified within participants' narratives. (The readers should bear in mind that some themes appear to overlap and may operate iteratively.) Together these findings paint a picture of young people's distinctive journeys through community-based arts programs and into adulthood, the abilities, values, and relationships they developed along the way, and their beliefs about how this transition occurred and the meanings it holds for them. Each of the three sub-questions will be addressed here, in turn, followed by a return to the overarching research question in the discussion.

How do long-term participants experience CBAOs' pursuit of outcomes?

This set of findings specifically attends to what program components stood out to participants as most impactful, and how the components promoted change processes by contributing, reinforcing, and/or facilitating a relationship between what happened inside the program (e.g., activities, setting aspects, and relationships) and individual-level program outcomes that were meaningful to participants. Another way of describing this set of findings is as "engagement"[12]—i.e., participants are initially engaged, and then that engagement is

[12] The term engagement, as used here, is loosely in keeping with definitions from Skinner, Kindermann & Furrer (2009) and Fredricks, Blumenfeld, and Paris (2004), who define engagement as a multidimensional construct that integrates thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, and is a quality of connection and involvement. These definitions, originating in developmental and school psychologies, were considered here because they have been utilized by community arts practitioners in developing their arts pedagogies for children.

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reinforced, by their interaction with program components. If an individual is never engaged, or disengages early in the change process, there can be no enduring change.

Across the three program groups, participants' recollections of their in-program experiences consistently included descriptions of how their programs: 1) engaged and encouraged them by building on their existing interests and strengths while also addressing needs that were not met elsewhere, and, 2) engaged and supported them by fostering a sense of community and commitment within a unique relational setting.

Engaging program offerings build on preexisting characteristics and needs.

Although their entry points into their programs varied, as a rule, participants experienced their programs' activities as engaging because, in large part, these components stemmed from a strengths-based agenda that appealed to young people "like themselves", rather than a more general population.

Strengths-based agenda invites participation and cultivates relevant characteristics.

All participants, regardless of age and length of time since beginning their programs, had clear recollections of how they first became aware of the program and what led them to join it. Similarly, each participant described his or her observations about how program offerings appealed to interest in and/or curiosity about specific arts and media modalities, and cultivated their existing talents in these areas and/or other strengths. In addition, some participants' narratives, including but not limited to the already interested, signaled that being highly motivated students contributed to their decision to join. These participants were motivated to gain extracurricular experiences to enhance college applications and/or to gain volunteer credit (e.g., one participant wanted to satisfy a requirement of his International Baccalaureate program). Additional enticements that initially engaged participants were the potential to earn a stipend, get

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free food, and/or go on field trips. However, all participants expressed that their programs kept them engaged because participation satisfied some existing level of interest in or curiosity about art. In the early part of her interview, Maia provided a clear example of how a combination of elements worked together to initially engage her:

> I was friends with a girl that I go to school with and she said there was food here, so I showed up promptly and I kept coming back and we had interesting conversations . . . . [I also just knew] that there was video involved . . . I knew that there was some art-related stuff that was happening. So, I'm sure that that's probably one of the things that encouraged me more to come. But it was definitely, like, "There's food!" and we'd be doing our stuff, too.
>
> - Maia, Wide Angle

Interestingly, participants' memories of joining their programs support the notion that community-based arts programs may strongly appeal to youth with well-defined arts interests, but perhaps are just as engaging for "arts curious" youth who also happen to be highly motivated and open-minded compared to non-participating peers.

When participants were asked if they had any expectations for their program at the time that they started, and whether these expectations factored into their decision to join, each described knowing the programs were arts-focused, but their expectations varied widely. However, all participants described how they gained more than they expected to from their programs, no matter their entry point into them. Stephanie, of New Lens, recounted how her creativity was unexpectedly channeled into a medium she had previously discounted:

> I don't think I even knew that there was video involved . . . I knew that there was some art-related stuff that was happening so, that's definitely one of the things that encouraged me . . . . my grandfather films weddings, so he always tried to rope me into that when I was little, but outside of that . . . . I never really even understood that video was an art until I got older . . . . I mean, I wanted to go to art school when I graduated from high school, I wanted to go to MICA since I was like 10. So I always knew I was going to do something creative, but I just never knew it would be film.
>
> - Stephanie, New Lens

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Other participants held more defined expectations and in finding their expectations at least somewhat met, remained engaged:

> [Before I started] I had some unrealistic [expectations]. I was expecting any video we made to look like something fresh out of Hollywood or Disney. The idea that I was new at something and wouldn't be perfect at it [took] getting used to . . . . I was already attending Baltimore School for the Arts, so just definitely having another outlet for artistic expression [encouraged me], but then, like, without a grade attached to it . . . [I liked that] it was more like a club.
>
> - Alex, Wide Angle

> I remember getting a paper, during my 11th grade year, and it was something about being a part of like a social media program. [At that point] I knew that I was going into graphic design, like, this is what I'm going to do. I was taking graphic design classes at my high school. And I was like, you know, this sounds interesting, I think I want to like try this out . . . . I think it was the whole media aspect of it and the whole marketing thing. I was already interested and then…[Once I started] I felt good, I enjoyed doing it. I think, like one thing, it was [getting] experience . . . It's your interest—you're putting it where you'll learn more about other people, as well.
>
> - Halia, Wide Angle

Perhaps unsurprisingly, participants with a strong interest in a specific arts modality were quickly drawn into a deeper engagement with their programs. For example, Marlon entered his program with an interest in photography, desired to improve in that area, and expected to receive camera instruction from the program. When asked how he felt about his program at the beginning of his time there, he described how his early positive experiences of the program meeting multiple affective needs encouraged him to remain involved even as the concurrent circumstance of serving as a caretaker for family members made it difficult to attend.

> It was an escape from reality. It was a place to go, like, when—it was a place to go to make me feel like I was special. It made me feel like I was good at something, made me feel like I could do anything, and made me feel like I could make money. And all those things were everything I wanted, so I stuck it out.
>
> - Marlon, Access Art

At the same time, participants like Harold, who described himself as "just curious about photography" when he joined, were almost as quickly engaged because the program provided

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other immediate draws (social, in Harold's case) and gave them something to do. Harold recalled that his brother and a friend were already enrolled in the program, and seeing them enjoy doing photography, and spending time with them, was what first drew him to join, but then he soon realized that the program was also doing more for him.

> I started out as a bad seed and my brother helped me out along the way a lot. Before the first time [I went to the program], he had met me out front [of our house]. He was walking with a camera around his neck and I asked him what he was doing, and he said he was coming back from photography. I think he was two years in already. And he was like, "Come down, come down.". . . . But really, I feel it's [a place] to give inner city youth, like, the youth that's going through things, a productive place to go. Because that's the first – that's the main reason for me staying at that point, to keep me off the streets because I realized that being off the streets was the much better way to go. It's just to help youth find their way through.
>
> - Harold, Access Art

As participants remained in the program for long enough to enhance existing skills or acquire new ones, their growing creative abilities combined with other program structures to secure their engagement. Elena, who progressed through her program's mentorship trajectory— first as an informal helper, next as a paid teaching assistant, and now employed as a teacher— observed the emerging artistry of her peers, herself, and more lately her students. When asked to describe her peers in the program, she replied:

> [In the program] there are very, very, very, very artistic kids, they are [laughs] . . . . I think they actually grew over time that way . . . It impacted me in a good way because I can actually see everybody's growing into their potential . . . I can actually see what the kids were capable of before they even did.
>
> - Elena, Access Art

Elena elsewhere noted that she now especially enjoys helping youth with little-to-no-prior art experience to grow in this way, suggesting her current role in her program's engagement process.

In addition to endorsing program activities as an important enticement for joining, as well as a means of increasing engagement, participants described how they had observed that

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youth who gravitated to and stayed with their programs possessed certain qualities. One participant, Abdi, described a characteristic that he had observed in himself and in his peers who had come through his program:

> [People who stayed in the program] had a passion for encouraging leadership in [other] young people, you know, I think a real interest. I think a lot of young people, they're not interested in this type of work. I mean, they don't necessarily have a passion for development or raising awareness . . . . I think another thing is [that] here a lot of people have the critical thinking skills and that might be insulting to other people. But, I think some people here are just really critical about what's going on. And I don't see that all the time when I go out and about.
>
> - Abdi, New Lens

Matthew put a finer point on Abdi's observation that individuals' comfort level with being involved in critical thinking development separated those who made it in their program from those who did not.

> If you don't have an open mind about the consciousness work that we're doing, then New Lens is not for you. You have to come in with the ability to be able to adapt and be flexible, and ready to look at what you're doing in the world. And if you don't have that, then it won't work for you.
>
> - Matthew, New Lens

Thus, both young men begin to draw a contrast between individuals who "make it" in the program and those who do not, although elsewhere Abdi, who was particularly cognizant of his peers' shared concerns with social issues and others also described how their programs could help individuals stimulate critical thinking skills and awareness.

Another example of a characteristic that was important and fostered engagement was having a willingness to work. A representative example of the typical work ethic shared by program participants was provided by Halia:

> [W]hen I went through Wide Angle, a characteristic that they would have is everyone, they were hardworking, they were goal driven. Some of these people, like, would come in multiple days to work on their video . . .They have a passion for this, they're hard workers. And it shows through their actions. They don't have to say, like, "I'm a hard worker." You don't need to say it because your actions speak for

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> you, like, you come early, you stay late. You're here more than just a typical [program] day, you come on other days, as well.
>
> - Halia, Wide Angle

As with Abdi's example about "having a passion for" certain social issues, it is difficult to parse what level of this characteristic was held by participants prior to engagement, and to what degree it may have increased through their involvement. What is notable for the purposes of this study is that participants held consistent views about the importance of certain characteristics for the functioning of their programs.

Several participants spontaneously drew attention to certain characteristics that they believed had already been fixed at a younger age for them, but still contributed to their engagement with the program because of what the program offered. These characteristics included those referenced above, as well as ambition, sense of purpose and/or seriousness, creativity, and being interested in helping others.

> I think I've kind of been the same person since I was like four years old . . . I've always been a creative person, I've always been a really inquisitive person and yeah, I think it's just reinforced like letting me know "Oh yeah, you really are good at this." . . . I was always interested in helping people, I've always been like a really generous person, like a person that's just giving a person the shirt off my back, and I think this has just helped me with what role I play within that because I can't just give a person a shirt off my back because that's just not realistic . . . And so New Lens helped me figure out how to strategically help people.
>
> - Stephanie, New Lens

> I've just been, like, no nonsense most of my life. And it's not even like nothing that I learned, it was just me. Like a lot of the jokes that people cracked in school that was supposed to be funny, I would be the only kid sitting there like, "I don't get it" . . . And I also had to be, like— my mother had to work a lot of times during the day, so I would have to come in and be in the house by myself. Come home, make food and stuff . . . And I think I could definitely look back at [going to] New Lens [at that same time] and say that I had a learning experience . . . it gave me what I needed at that time. I don't think I would have had it just at a regular afterschool program . . . . [Being a media program] made it more appealing, it definitely appealed more to me than [another program I tried] because New Lens was . . . only ones, that I knew about, making videos.
>
> - John, New Lens

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The above examples from John and Stephanie illustrate a potential reinforcing process through which individuals' characteristics, including values and interests, are a jumping off point for existing strengths, not limited to artistic ones, to be fostered. Several participants' narratives included examples of how their programs worked to strategically pinpoint youths' individual strengths in order to nurture them, often in ways that were enjoyable and/or meaningful to the individual.

One participant, Maia, reflected on how her program's Executive Director identified and encouraged her talents and those of one of her friends.

> Everyone, like— [Executive Director]— they would always have his beat[13], because he was just good at [MC'ing events]. Yeah, and like I remember, I'd kind of be like a— NOT a key note speaker— but I'd just give a little comment on the side and everybody would be like, "Oooooh." [*laughs*] It was things like that. They picked up on what we were good at and they made us do it so we would get better at it.
>
> - Maia, Wide Angle

Matthew recalled how he was first drawn to the program when he encountered it while accompanying his sister to a local youth center activity. Almost immediately, the Executive Director first began to cultivate his potential creative talents and, soon after, his leadership ability.

> My little sister was at another Youth Development Center, and . . . and [Executive Director and two others] were in another room . . . So I was waiting for [my sister], but I was looking through the window— "What are they doing?" So for a couple of days, like, I guess [Executive Director] had been watching, so this one time, she was like "Oh no, you have to come in here." . . . they were acting. And I was, like, "You know what? I can do that. Because it can't be that hard,". . . And [later] [Executive Director] offered me a position. She was, like, "Yeah, this afterschool program, you'd be really, really amazing in it,". . . . Then, I also got put in a leadership position, so it was, like, "We noticed you can do this." . . . I think my natural tendency is to be a leader, but I think they made me realize, like, you— in order to lead-- you got to know the basics and what makes you be the person that you are . . . . you have to be

[13] Maia here is referring to multiple occasions when her friend was encouraged to MC their Youth Media Festival and other events for the organization, after the staff observed his comfort with public speaking. She discussed these details elsewhere in her interview.

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> able to accept who you are and be comfortable with that, I feel like once you know, like, who you are, or who you're shaping to be, I think New Lens just accommodates you after that . . . . You have to have some type of passion. I feel like so long as you have a passion about helping people or something in social justice or the environment.
>
> - Matthew, New Lens

As previously noted, it can be difficult to determine the relative contributions of characteristics pre-dating program involvement, versus behaviors specifically cultivated by the program components, to engagement and eventual program outcomes. Alex, currently in a position where she can both reminisce about her experiences and speculate about those of current students, had a particularly arts-focused perspective on how programs can engage young people:

> I can't imagine what I would've done if I had gone to a high school that, like, didn't have art half the day, and then didn't have Wide Angle. Because I know there's high schools that have sports but no arts, and I can't imagine that. For me, having [art] was extremely necessary. I think, also to validate those kinds of interests . . . . that's something that creative programs offer that, I don't know [that] other programs offer that.
>
> - Alex, Wide Angle

The niche filled by community-based arts programs could be an extremely important one for arts-oriented youth or other young people whose interests do not clearly fit within school or traditional afterschool program offerings.

What is evident from participants' descriptions of their experiences, and responses to being singled out for positive attention and opportunities, is that the dovetailing of characteristics including their interests, personal qualities, and potential can create a uniquely compelling form of engagement. However, in order to benefit from engagement with these programs, the findings also indicate that another preexisting characteristic, or certain composite of qualities, is necessary for a young person to be open to engagement.

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Participation requires openness to engagement.

In addition to participants' recollections about how their preexisting characteristics drew them and led them to being engaged by their programs, they also described what type of young person would *not* be a good fit for their programs. In response to being asked if they would recommend the program to a family member or friend, two participants agreed that they would, but with strong caveats:

> [I would recommend the program but] I think it does take a special kind of person, though. I think this is like real in-depth, like, not only personal work, but community work. It's like I think you got to have tough skin and I think you have to be willing to change some stuff about yourself and be willing to have conversations, and really hard conversations with people. And you have to be willing to learn to be open…
> - Stephanie, New Lens

> So if you come into New Lens, just for [taking] pictures [to make money], no. It's not going to work, because you don't get paid that much . . . . I feel like if you're just coming there, and you're like, "Hey, I need a job," you're likely not going to have fun, or if you're not ready to be, not even in charge, but if you're not ready to have responsibilities that you are accountable for, then I don't think you're in the right place . . . Like, I have a little cousin now, who kind of needs a job, and I want to send him to New Lens, but just, I know he's not ready, it's not going to work out right.
> - Matthew, New Lens

Participants' descriptions of "normative" behavior for young people in their programs consistently highlighted individuals' willingness to work, and having both reasonable expectations of the programs and high expectations for themselves. Alex voiced a similar opinion to the above participants, but added the element of interest, based also on her experiences as a teacher in the program:

> I would [recommend my program] but I would definitely want to be sure it was something that they were, like, interested in, because the amount of times that I've gotten a child in my program and they don't care about what we're doing— It's a fairly small amount of times, but every time it happens— then it's no good.
> - Alex, Wide Angle

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Other participants, when speaking about what "observable" qualities a participant in their programs might have, discussed individuals who had only briefly participated. They indicated that these individuals left because of a combination of their characteristics and their expectations for what they could get out of the program:

> [With people who I knew who left] a lot of it was work ethic and just what— I guess they weren't expecting it to be what it was. They thought it was going to be something different and then they just didn't get what they wanted out of it.
>
> - Maia, Wide Angle

> [When people left the program] I think it was work ethic and personality because I would say like a constant— a constant trait amongst those amongst us few who did stay, time and time again, semester, year after year, was that we were all mature, so to speak. And we all knew that Wide Angle had something to offer us and we had something to offer Wide Angle. So you know, we would stay, you know, just year and year and give it our all.
>
> - John, Wide Angle

Maia and John echoed Matthew in underscoring that a combination of a preexisting work ethic and an expectation of having a give-and-take with the program was necessary for someone to be engaged.

David and Harold from Access Art indicated that open-mindedness, especially toward one's peers, was also necessary:

> I feel like you could always tell when someone didn't want to be [at the program]. It's definitely an attractive place to be because you go there to express yourself. But not everyone fits there because they can't stop judging. I feel like, maybe, they can't stop looking at other people like, 'Oh, they're different"— that's just how their mind works. But, they do like expressing themselves, everybody—I feel like there's no one who doesn't want to express themselves . . . And Access Art— it picks out people, it brings them together, and lets you interact with each other. [But] if you were mean to someone, you're going to end up getting kicked out.
>
> - David, Access Art

> Some of the people I went to photography class with, you could tell that they acted completely different in photography class than they did in school. And you could tell that the outside part was the front, because the inside part was when you were in photography class, because you could be yourself. You could be that person that nobody's going to judge, because when you take a picture no one judges you because

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> the picture is taken through your eyes, through that lens, they're nobody else's. If [individuals] didn't fit in [with this], they just didn't stay.
>
> - Harold, Access Art

David's and Harold's statements hint at their perception of an almost self-regulating function to program engagement, in that individuals' capacity to benefit from freely expressing themselves in these creative places relied on the ability to be non-judgmental and kind setting members. They also suggest there is some level of vulnerability that an individual risks by expressing him or herself in group setting so, on top of other preexisting characteristics, a young person might have to be willing to take that risk. However, other findings illustrate that setting features may engage youth to the extent that such a risk, and cultivating a greater openness to experience (discussed further below), seems tolerable or even rewarding.

"Not school": participation fulfills select relational needs and skills gaps.

All participants mentioned at least one component or quality of their program that fulfilled needs that they had that could not be met in other settings that were available to young people like themselves. For example, Elena discussed that she did not feel like she was provided with afterschool alternatives and noted that Access Art filled this gap:

> For me, I understood that the purpose [of my program] was to give kids a new experience and to give them a place to go after school. Because mostly, after school I just went home and I did nothing. But when I was at Access Art, you know, I still-- we went there and we still did our homework, the usual stuff, but we did so much more, too.
>
> - Elena, Access Art

As they discussed the gaps that their programs filled, and how these related to their engagement with their programs' engagement, many participants drew contrasts between their programs, in the manner of alternative settings, and schools (including "typical" afterschool programs that they compared to school). Two participants specifically focused on the help their programs

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offered to develop their artistic skills, which was something they were seeking and was important to them.

> [Before New Lens I had worked with film before] through this afterschool program I was in through my school, but it was like we didn't learn "skill-skills"— We kind of just got, like— well, we did learn skills, it was like story-boarding description, but, yeah, it was with no depth.
>
> - Abdi, New Lens

> Back at school, I was the Junior Tech Team Manager and we would put on a little broadcast each Friday at my school, and they would leave me in charge of the camera. But, you know, they— I was never taught. We never really had, like, a videography program at my school so I never really knew anything else outside of just pressing the record button. I didn't know about white balancing, I didn't know about changing certain settings, I didn't know about, you know, setting up shots. I didn't learn all of that until I joined Wide Angle.
>
> - John, Wide Angle

Participants also reported that in addition to providing arts-specific learning, their programs provided them with training in useful, translatable skills in ways that their schools did not. Matthew felt particularly strongly about the importance of having received translatable skills and experience via his program's activities:

> New Lens has also taught me a lot of "soft skills" like emailing and responding to email. [laughs] Because for the longest time, I didn't respond. Like, I saw and I got it, but they were like, "No one would ever know if you never respond." . . . And, like, just punctuation and grammar, like how to write emails. Resume writing, like, they have really helped me a lot through different things. A whole lot. A lot better than school has, and that's probably been bad, like teachers are paid to do that, like [at New Lens] they are doing it because they wanted to.
>
> -Matthew, New Lens

Of all the participants interviewed, Matthew was perhaps most sensitized to young people's needs not being met in schools because of the concurrent experiences at New Lens and at his school. Matthew described that at his program he was assigned a specific mentoring role, in the capacity of organizer, which he said was inspired by the "Peer-to-Peer movement"[14]. He

[14] In light of New Lens' mission, he may have been conflating two concepts when using this terminology. One is the growing *P2P movement*, its name coming from computer-sharing architecture, which has inspired critical perspectives on

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recalled that learning about this movement and working with other youth while having discordant experiences at school was enlightening:

> My job was to organize, what was like ten students. And I had to help them figure out a topic or curriculum that they wanted to teach during regular school hours that wasn't already being taught . . .[An 11th grade student I worked with at one school] was, like, "You know, this college thing is hard." She was like, "I don't want to run around, and I don't want people in my class running around." So she organized to have, like "College Prep" to get everyone ready for, like, getting their test scores [and everything]. And for me, to just sit back and watch it, like, "Wow!" Like, people really do want more . . . it's not been offered . . . . In school, I can remember, I had one English teacher, who I can honestly say *maybe* cared. And that's— I feel like she only cared about me because my mother was out there all the time . . . And I have a friend whose mom is kind of on drugs and like she cares, but she don't really care. So they treated him completely different . . . .Well that's dumb. Right, like, if this is school, if everyone is equal, everybody should have fair treatment and get the same thing, but clearly that's all a lie, like y'all don't really care. So New Lens was really important to me.
>
> - Matthew, New Lens

Matthew's perception that his and other students' functional and support needs were not met at school heightened the impact of feeling cared about and learning to give others that same feeling at New Lens.

Similarly to Matthew, Stephanie recounted how taking part in program activities—specifically, a self-designed video piece about education— provided her with new understandings of herself and of how her academic needs had not been met in her high school, leaving her very discouraged. To her, these understandings and a related, general awareness of systems gained through program activities constituted necessary and important learning that she would not have otherwise received.

> I had a horrible experience in high school. I went to private school before I went to public school, and so when I went to public school— it's basically like four years of review of what I had already learned . . . And I think coupled with the fact that, like,

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social structures. P2P specifies a relational dynamic based on assumed equivalency of contributors who cooperate on a task for the common good (Bauwens, 2005). The other concept is *peer learning*, based in part on notions of critical pedagogy stemming from Dewey's (1916) *Democracy and Education* and Freire's (1968) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (King, 2002).

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> the support in my household was lacking and stuff, like, my high school years were just the worst as far as being challenged. So when I graduated, I barely passed . . . I was just like completely done with the whole thing, I just wanted to like make money so I could eat and you know, take care of my life . . . I started working here, and I learned so much about the educational system and systems in general in this country. And like how I fit into it, and how society kind of used me . . . and people who look like me, and people who act like me, or come from where I come from . . . . I feel like I really developed a sense of understanding why that wasn't working for me . . . . I always felt really bad because when I was in high school, I had such a bad time . . . so, I always thought there was something wrong with me, and in some ways, there is some stuff wrong with me, but like understanding that . . . doing that project for New Lens really enlightened me, like, "Ok, so it's not me, it's a larger something that is happening that I'm just reacting to," so I think that really was like a definitive moment in my life.
>
> - Stephanie, New Lens

Like Stephanie and Matthew, other participants who mentioned school experiences in relation to their program experiences indicated that the two settings differed, even if they did not offer such a strong critique. Without additional information about interviewed participants' schools and their circumstances, and given the small size of this sample, no firm conclusions can be drawn about the overall quality of participants' schools or the ability of the school system, as a whole, to serve young people like them. Critiquing local schools or the U.S. educational system was not the purpose of this research, but it should be noted that community-based arts and other non-traditional programs are often promoted for their ability to fill job-readiness and enrichment gaps. Their ability to serve as alternative settings that fill these types of gaps may make them especially salient to young people who have had negative experiences at school. This heightened salience could impact how participants derive meaning from program experiences.

Engaging program settings foster sense of community and commitment.

Perhaps the most interesting findings from the prior study, which this one builds upon, were those that show how psychological sense of community (PSOC) (McMillan & Chavis, 1986) played a large role in forming participants' internal program experiences that were

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connected to positive outcomes. Therefore a program's capacity—including its explicit efforts—to foster a sense of community appeared to be key to its production of outcomes, even if this was not articulated in its mission. Findings from this study support the conclusions drawn from those earlier findings and, further, provide more information about how participants actually experience their program settings as engaging and impactful relational settings.

Overall setting is welcoming and supportive, engages via fostering mutually influential, familial relationships.

In one of the most extensive set of findings to emerge from the present analysis, participants provided varied accounts of how they experienced their programs as relational settings, but all described their programs as "communities" that compared favorably to other communities that they were either a part of or had otherwise observed. Within their narratives, there were also striking commonalities, most notably that participants experienced their programs as welcoming and inclusive, identified the co-existing qualities of "diversity" (e.g., of personalities, ideas, opinions) and "shared values" as the basis for their program communities. They also found these settings to be very supportive, including through the cultivation of close, family-like relationships that granted emotional safety and were reinforced by a mutual give-and-take between setting and participant.

Despite most participants having made comments about the importance of individual-program fit, based on personal characteristics, many of the same participants also described their programs as welcoming and non-exclusive settings. Marlon recalled multiple instances where, as a student TA and a teacher, he had felt that he had struck a balance between securing the setting as a physically safe space and maintaining an "open door" policy:

> Even if kids aren't from Hampden— I've seen this first-hand— or aren't from Southwest Baltimore, they're still welcome. You welcome everyone, you welcome—

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> even people off the streets. I've had people come in off the streets, and just talk about art. I've had, like, after class time, people come in. [You are] mindful when kids are around— to keep safety *[sic]* but you are open to everyone.
>
> - Marlon, Access Art

Marlon was the only participant to describe his setting as physically "open", likely because his primary program location is located in a neighborhood community center that offers other activities. However, several participants described a setting norm of enthusiastically greeting visitors and new students, and inviting them to participate in activities right away to communicate that they were welcome.

> We were all friendly to each other, like, no matter who came in. When a [new] high school group came . . . . everybody got along. It wasn't like, "Oh, I don't know her, let's not be friends with her." Like, you know, it was just, "Oh, you're new. Great! We need somebody new!" So we just, like, were, "Let's make new friends."
>
> -Elena, Access Art

Alex, from the dual perspective of an alum and a current staff member, also conveyed that her program similarly gave an initial, warm welcome to "outsiders".

> I think you could pick out if someone was just, like, a daily visitor because I bet that [Executive Director] would be really trying to include them in a lot of stuff. But, like, if it was the difference between someone who had been there a month or a year, I think it would be hard to pick them out. I think people would get enfolded—They really could get brought in and feel like they're part of it.
>
> - Alex, Wide Angle

Based on Alex's experience, the treatment of visitors at Wide Angle, in comparison to new members, suggests how membership status could be visibly apparent in programs. Matthew, who had been intimidated about joining a program with other youth "who can be mean," recalled a personal example of how his program was welcoming to potential and new members.

> It turned out to be nothing like [I expected] when I first got there . . . It was just a very loving environment. Like, I didn't know anybody in the room . . . . Because they were already walking in and they're like shaking hands, and I was like, "Oh, see, they already know each other, this might not work like, I'm the outsider coming in, what if

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> they don't like me?" . . . . And I [ended up] enjoy[ing] it when it first started. So one of my teachers . . . . she took the time out to let people talk about their day, where they are and how they were feeling, and that . . . made a difference . . . [It was refreshing] because everybody already had built these connections and I had none—but when we went around the room, like, nobody made me feel like I didn't belong there, or nobody made me feel like, like, I just wasn't good enough, or I had dumb answers, like people were very supportive.
>
> - Matthew, New Lens

However, as a whole, participants' statements about the welcoming nature of their settings did not reveal how readily *full* membership in the program community was offered.

Some participants' comments indicated that participants who had achieved membership were involved in connecting outside community happenings with in-program ones. For example, Elena described how Access Art participants had formal opportunities to bring outside concerns to the group and plan to address them together, allowing them to form closer connections with their peers that transcended the setting.

> [We always tried to be] in touch with the community . . . in the daily check-ins where we shared "community news" [from] throughout the community. And anything we heard like through a child or, like, through somebody we didn't know— we would always try to fix it, even if it wasn't our [own] problem, we'd try to fix it.
>
> - Elena, Access Art

Another way that the participant experienced an inclusive, community-building function of their programs, often bridging the in-program community with external ones, was that the settings were welcoming to young people from different neighborhood cliques. When asked if cliques carried over into the setting and/or if subgroups ever formed there, participants replied that this did not occur aside from when specific friends pairs formed, or in instances of "the girls and the guys" preferring to hang out separately. Working and socializing outside of one's usual social circle appeared to create more inclusive attitudes that extended past the program setting.

> [After being at Access Art] I had respect for a lot of people that I don't know that I would have had respect for if I didn't go there, because a lot of neighborhood people attended [and I had a different] relationship with them after.

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- Harold, Access Art

> People that went to the program, we always were in the same school but, like, only certain people knew each other [before] . . . So, you know, in a way it was good *and* it was weird because it was a whole new experience. It was awkward because I would, like, see them in school and didn't know really know them, but then I was like, "Heyyy what's up?" like," We go to the same program."
>
> - Elena, Access Art

In addition to describing how new peer relationships conveyed outside of the program setting, Alex noted how she overcame logistical obstacles to maintain and further build her new relationships.

> We were from different schools, we met through Wide Angle, you know, we did stuff through Wide Angle, but we also lived in different parts of the city. And so some of those things [getting together outside of the program] can seem, like, really hard to overcome obstacles when you don't have a car. I didn't have a car or a cell phone . . . At the same time, it was also very cool to— like, this is a hindsight thing talking— to be around students I never would've met otherwise, like, I wouldn't have associated with those students from different parts of the city, or different schools.
>
> - Alex, Wide Angle

When asked to define what the word "community" meant to them, several participants also expanded on their descriptions of how their programs functioned as inclusive relational settings. John provided one such definition:

> [A community should have] diverse offerings. A good example of that would be Wide Angle. You had a diversity, a mixed group. You had people who were black, people who were white, Asian, Filipinos, some people from out-of-state, some people from this part of the town, just some people from the county. You know it's just like togetherness . . . . Everyone was working toward this one thing whether it was, like I said, everybody might have been doing a different task [with their] strength but it all was for, like, this one goal.
>
> - John, Wide Angle

Collectively, participants' responses indicated that their programs, by bringing together and facilitating relationship-building amongst youth who otherwise may not have interacted, offered opportunities to learn from diverse experiences and points-of-view. Moreover, the following quotes from Maia and John illustrate that at the same time that these settings encouraged open-

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mindedness, as noted above, that included an appreciation for different forms of diversity, they provided a place for participants to connect around and work toward shared goals.

> [E]verybody at New Lens is working toward the same goal, so they're doing it together but separately . . . They're working on different stuff but all going to the same place . . . . New Lens has to be like the most open [community I know], like, there is a no judgment passed at New Lens. Although some of the stuff that I say in my other communities, they look at me sideways like, "Really?" But I think at New Lens you just have that pass to figure out who you are and what you want to be, and in other communities I don't think it's that easy to talk about.
>
> - Matthew, New Lens

> [A community is] a place where you feel there's a connection between what you're doing, and who you are, and the people around— you're kind of the same way or they have kind of the same goal in mind. It's not that everybody's doing their own thing and they're just working for them, it's a community effort and everybody has to work toward the same goal. Even if each goal is a little bit different, it's variably different, but everyone's working toward kind of, like, a common goal.
>
> - Maia, Wide Angle

Elsewhere in her interview, Maia also described that in the "Wide Angle community" everyone was treated as someone with "something to contribute" and everyone's work was treated as valuable.

Participants discussed that in addition to benefiting from the openness and shared goals found in their program settings, they similarly appreciated the motivation they drew from being able to work in a highly collaborative way. The extent of teamwork that occurred in their settings was made possible by the afore-mentioned setting qualities. Some participants explained how teamwork factored into their program experiences, using the example of how they had compared their work with their peers' work. For example, although Stephanie of Wide Angle frankly stated, "I think I'm the best at what I do here," she went on to say that others in her program "are better" at other things and together their talents combine in a "team effort." David had a particular take on this type of sentiment:

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> [My program is] definitely an artistic community because everyone thought differently and all those ideas were in one place at one time, but they worked in harmony and not like at war or something. It wasn't one idea dominated everyone else's, it was everyone's ideas in a mass . . . . I learned a lot, but I also made a lot of friends here . . . . They changed the way I think about things and . . . people that I could rely on, were people that I could express myself around and be comfortable with myself because it was *my* photography and it was different for everyone, and everyone understood that.
>
> - David, Access Art

Across the board, participants endorsed that they found collaboration more motivating for them than competition. At the same time, having a tolerance for others' differences, even valuing them, were qualities that were encouraged in all of the program settings, building off of the prerequisite, baseline open-mindedness earlier noted by participants. Together these experiences may have helped to keep them engaged with each other and with the setting.

Each program's fostering of the above-described setting qualities appears related to participants' common experiences of their programs as extremely supportive places. All participants noted that interactions—peer-to-peer and adult-to-youth— in their programs were consistently positive. This aspect of the relational setting appeared to be especially influential for participants who had challenging home lives. Harold, who elsewhere in his interview discussed the tough times he had with his parents, contrasted young people's treatment in other settings with their treatment at Access Art.

> For me, it was a good environment, a healthy environment to be around, like mentally. There was always a good comment thrown to you for doing something good. It wasn't people screaming at you for messing up; they were actually trying to help. I mean, when I was a student I might get into problems in the classroom 'cause there was some students that thought that they were better than everybody and I'm the type of person who'll take you down from that high stool that you're on. But the teachers [at Access Art]— it was just like the perfect environment for a young person whose parents weren't giving them compliments at home or congratulating them on the good things they were doing. If you came to the photography class you'd hear those good compliments and think that you were somebody special.
>
> - Harold, Access Art

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Halia, who had previously described her parents as very supportive, still felt that being emotionally supported at Wide Angle helped her remain positive when she later faced challenges in college.

> Memories of [being in the program], like, knowing that you had that support system back then, it just, I think, it gives you the stability, you can give your own self encouragement, knowing that you can do it and stuff like that. I think that people there are really patient with you and sometimes like you need really positive people around you and I think that the people there, at Wide Angle, they're positive, they're not— you don't get that negative energy. Like, when you feel like giving up, you know you have people there to fall back on, and they encourage you to push hard and stuff like that, so I think that it still does have an impact on me.
>
> - Halia, Wide Angle

An observable sign that participants experienced their programs as positive settings—fun to be at but often providing them with something more—was noted by John and Matthew. The former described that after a typical program day, fun but challenging with project work, "We'd be sad when we'd have to go home. We were like, 'Oh, *mannnn*.'" Matthew of New Lens, charged with locking up his program at the end of the night, jokingly complained about why he didn't like having that responsibility:

> Leaving out at night is funny, because people don't want to leave . . . There are people that say they *hate* New Lens, but when you walk in, they've been sitting there for half-an-hour having conversations, like it's definitely one of those places, like, you just don't want to leave. I know I've built friendships, like long friendships with people, I feel like they're my people, like they're my friends, like if they need something, if they reached out, I would do it . . . . Like, [the Executive Director] is "mom" . . . . There's usually a lot of laughter, a lot of deep conversation, and then at the end, you're guaranteed to laugh and feel loved.
>
> - Matthew, New Lens

Matthew's comments illustrate how program engagement also stemmed from members' enjoyment of simply being together having interactions that stimulated emotional connection and commitment. Participants described their relationships with one another, between and across young people and staff, as being marked by a mutual give and take – ranging from the type of

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personal interactions described by Marlon, immediately below, to a more straight-forward exchange of skill sets that contributed to trust building, as described by Halia.

> I think that if a child tells you that they love you, or you are very important to them, that means a lot, it feels good. And when that child tells you that you're their favorite person, it feels amazing – And when a child feels comfortable telling you things about them they've never told people —even telling things they've never told their friends? In this day and age . . . I just went in there to be a mentor to another child and they told me things that I didn't even know about. For them to trust you like that? . . . I've had kids who've spit on another person here, and it wasn't right. But I know that he would never in his life spit on me because of the respect, the rapport that I've built . . . . So I think a lot of people's experiences would have been different if I wasn't there. And I know my life would've been . . . . You learn from them as they learn from you.
>
> - Marlon, Access Art

> You would come there to work on your project . . . Talk to whoever you need to talk to about getting it done, doing it, putting the pieces together . . . . A typical day is just like going there and getting your work done, but also having fun being able to talk to people and see how their day was . . . it's something that you enjoy. It was something different. It's wasn't like something that was forced . . . . Even if we're just doing a voice over for someone, where they just record your voice and use it for something. You somehow participated in other people's videos. Like I said, we were like a family, everyone worked together, assisted one another. You needed me to help you with something, I would do it.
>
> - Halia, Wide Angle

Halia's recounting of a "typical" program day is consistent with other participants' accounts, indicating that program activities facilitated personal, even familial, relationships, which were based in and contributed back to a sense of community and ongoing engagement.

Consistent with findings from the previous study, most participants here called their programs "families" or applied familial terms (e.g., mother, brother, sister) because of the support they provided and the closeness setting members shared. Their use of such terminology was not in response to any particular interview question about the concept of family, but instead came about spontaneously. David, when asked what Access Art meant to him as a community, responded:

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> They're not *your* parents, they're not going to raise you, but they will help you, they give you room to grow. They give you an opportunity to grow in . . . understanding the world.
>
> - David, Access Art

When Maia was asked how she felt about her program toward the end of her time with them, described it as a family.

> For me it was just this big ol' happy family, really [laughs]. Like, I had everybody there that I was really close with, everyone, and I just felt like it was where I belonged at that moment because I didn't have anywhere else to go. I mean, I was homeschooled and my family was going through a whole bunch of different things so when I was there I was really comfortable. It felt like a second home to me . . . . we're still friends and everyone pretty much is still friends from the program, It was just, like I said, a family and we really adored each other.
>
> - Maia, Wide Angle

Similarly, Abdi, after naming his program "a community" because it is "like an extended family", explained:

> Coming here every day and seeing, after a while, just seeing that it really do mean a lot to the young people who are here. Some people who met built some relationships through here, you know, long-lasting relationships and that means something, as well. So that helped me get a vision for the organization . . . . [I feel like I belong] because I have my fingerprint all over it a little bit. Yeah, just once you start doing work with people, in time you feel like you can belong. And knowing you have a role that people find necessary . . . . [It affects the way I interact with others] I look for similarities, I guess, even unconsciously with people here. Like, oh, I guess when I'm at school or a person's not like somebody here, they're not as cool . . . You do get attached to people here . . . You begin to rely on people for stuff. And a lot of times here we hang out with each other outside of work, you know.
>
> - Abdi, New Lens

Stephanie also framed her experience of her program as a family when describing how she knew that she "belonged" there.

> I guess if you get talked about to your face by people, if it's that tough love, then you know that people care about you. [My New Lens] community-- it means family! That's all I mean, you might not like everybody in your family, and you might not necessarily agree with everything that everybody in your family does but you're still there and you still realize that no matter what, you got to see that person's face and you have to be cordial. . . . You got to try to be a community, it's not just like overnight thing . . . I think definitely there are moments when we have hated each

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> other, like deep in the pits of our soul, but I think we try the hardest to make sure that the community that we have flourishes . . . I think we work with one another on a lot of different levels to try to make sure of, because with, like, most jobs . . . people don't really care . . . But here I really think that we think about the process of how to develop a person into what they want to be and what they're good at . . . we just want them to be the best people that they can be, and whatever they want to be good at. And so, that's what I think a healthy family, a healthy community really looks like, is that you help people be the best them that they could possibly be.
>
> - Stephanie, Wide Angle

Like Abdi and Stephanie, other participants discussed feeling accepted by and committed to their program "families" through signs like getting "talked about to your face" and coming back anyway. Such an affiliation is consistent with sense of belonging as a part of membership in PSOC. Within the context of feeling that they belonged in the setting, participants' engagement was encouraged as their feelings of membership were validated by everyone working together to improve one another's lives.

The important role of sense of community in engaging participants in their programs is evident in their experiences of their programs as overwhelmingly welcoming, positive, and supportive settings. Moreover, participants discussed instances when they realized just how supportive their settings were, and when their own behaviors and other setting members' responses to emotionally challenging situations demonstrated the extent to which they felt emotionally safe in the programs. Matthew noted that he felt like he could "share things at New Lens that I can't talk about anywhere" and then recalled how other students and staff at his program interacted with him immediately after learning of the death of a family member:

> My sister had passed, and I got the phone call once I got to New Lens, so nobody knew except me at this point. And people could just tell that something was wrong, and they didn't dwell on it, they were, like, "If you want to talk about it, you can talk about it." I remember [my friend] shook my hand and he looked at me, he was like "Yo, whatever it is, whenever you're ready, I'm ready," and I know that don't say much, but it just meant a lot to me right then. I was like "Ok, like, people— like he cares, he just wants to make sure that I'm alright." . . . . I've known people who've died, I just never talked about it, like, I left it alone. But by me being there . . . by [a

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> staff member] letting me share how I felt about that, in front of people and people were like kind of just— like they didn't butter me up, like "Ooh, hugs," but they knew how I was feeling. They kind of just took it in, but they still pushed forward to get the project done, which made me be like, I can't sit here, for myself and this is my team. I can't let people down . . . [that] is what I needed.
>
> - Matthew, New Lens

Alex had an experience at Wide Angle that similarly made evident how emotionally safe she had felt in her program. She reminisced about how this gave her a feeling of freedom in which being herself was normalized, allowing her to make very personal artwork.

> [For me] it was really a very personal organization, like, the relationship you had with other people— it didn't always feel like a business or a teacher thing . . . . I definitely felt that I belonged, you know, that I could make such a personal work, sort of exploring sexuality pretty much. Even when I was in college and actually made a comic that had very similar characters . . . . I actually felt a little more free about the issue when I was in Wide Angle. And, like, even at art college, everyone and their mom is queer in some kind of way, I was still feeling weird about making this comic exploring the issue. Whereas in Wide Angle I could just like make my animation . . . I also have to think about whether or not, like when I was in Wide Angle, was I in denial . . . [And they were like] "Let her come to that conclusion [*laughs*] at her own pace."
>
> - Alex, Wide Angle

Both Matthew and Alex felt that they received the level of support that they needed; other setting members demonstrated that they cared about them, but largely helped by being consistent in their support and nonjudgmental, and were not intrusive in offering help. Further illustrating participants' level of emotional safety and the nature of settings, in total, three participants described receiving support in dealing with deaths in their families, and two were supported in opening up about their sexuality over the course of their time with their programs.

All participants provided anecdotes that illustrated how the overall nature of the setting— welcoming, enjoyable, supportive, and safe—and the nature of the relationships fostered by it—respectful, mutual, and familial— kept them engaged with the program and

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were central to their program experiences. Together, findings indicate that sense of community built by participants' programs strengthened their engagement to ultimately promote change processes.

> To me relationships is what really changes people like, you know, even people who do work about like how they change people's minds about stuff, nothing changes a person's mind more than an experience or a person so, those have been the most impactful people to me.
>
> - Stephanie, Wide Angle

Findings also demonstrated that two types of relationships— those shared with peers and those shared with adults— were similar but distinct mechanisms through which important social learning, and meaning-making about the change and growth connected to program activities, occurred.

Engagement via peer-to-peer social support and mentorship.

A common feature of the three program settings, and an important one that stood out in participants' experiences, was that they provided, and operated through, strong peer relationships. Each participant shared stories illustrating how the social and functional support of peers—provided informally and/or in defined mentoring roles— was a central and distinctive element of the relational settings. By providing opportunities to form new friendships and to receive instruction and mentorship from other youth, the settings engaged participants by being both enjoyable and uniquely educational places to be.

The importance of peer interactions to participants' engagement and learning was first brought up by several participants in the straightforward sense of having the opportunity to spend time with other youth. This included five participants who reported that they had very few opportunities to be socialize positively with other young people outside of their programs. In each case, access to social experiences with other young people were limited by personal

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characteristics and/or family situations. One of these participants was Maia, who was primarily home-schooled. She commented that simply getting to interact with peers was important for her:

> It gave me socialization. I was at home full-time [*laughs*] and it was just me and my two younger sisters, and it was just, like, "I need to talk to other people my age!" and even though most of the kids [at the program] were older than me— everyone kind of welcomed me to the group and I was really comfortable with everybody there . . . I think I needed that because I was really shy.
>
> - Maia, Wide Angle

In light of Maia's comments elsewhere in her interview, it seemed that although a few other social opportunities may have been available to her, she was readily engaged by Wide Angle because of how welcoming her peers there were toward her. This quality made her interactions with brand new peers feel safer. In a similar vein, Matthew reported feeling apprehensive about starting there because of negative peer behaviors he encountered at other programs. These had left him feeling like "kids are meaner than adults, who kind of *have* to be nice to you." However, at New Lens, he found that everyone welcomed him. He made two new friends right away, was encouraged by them to keep coming to the program, and he was inspired to follow in their footsteps there.

> [T]hey were younger than me, but, like, *they were teaching*. [When I first encountered New Lens at the youth center] I had just seen two young people teaching young people and I was like, "That's pretty cool." They got the class settled, like, they're doing what they need to do, and they had this— this respect about them . . . They had fun doing it, like it wasn't like sitting in school . . . They were relaxed, there was like a normal conversation between people and I think that's what really made me be like, "I love this." . . . . Now I've taught workshops on bullying and HIV, STD prevention. I've also taught peer education.
>
> - Matthew, New Lens

Stephanie, like Matthew, also observed and took part in peer-based teaching over the course of her time with New Lens, doing so inside of the program and for program-sponsored workshops in schools.

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> My 11th grade year I started teaching [for New Lens] at a couple of different high schools in the city, and middle schools, and, like, for the next two years I was intensively teaching groups of my peers. And so I feel like that's when I really understood how impactful this work was, and, like, watching other people change at the same time that I was changing . . . that to me was like the richest period in my life . . . because I was 16, just understanding how this work impacts young people and things that people learn from us and things that we learn from them . . . . Teaching young people who we were instructing how to use the camera to say whatever is it they wanted to say . . . . . The fact that it is peer-led . . . I think sometimes young people can feel intimidated by adults and so, I think that it's more easy for me to go into a room because I'm the same age as a lot of young people, or not too far [off]. And I can relate to [their] experiences…
>
> - Stephanie, New Lens

Teaching roles of this type, in which students were often recipients and providers of learning defied the more familiar, hierarchical teacher-student dynamic, are an integral part of all the programs.

Although supportive peer interactions were often described, within the context of teaching, as an aspect of the relational setting, all participants indicated that informal, everyday exchanges between peers were also very influential on their experiences. Each participant recalled ways that she or he modified social and work behaviors based on observing and/or talking with peers. When participants were asked about individuals in their program who had the most impact on them, several noted that they purposely emulated particularly admired friends. Stephanie and David discussed how important, in-program friendships had evolved for them.

> Josh[15] has been really influential, I think our personalities are extremely different—[as to] what emotions look like . . . I think a lot, but I'm not so much a feeler, so I think he's definitely been a good person to watch and even just observe. . . . And my best friend [here now] is one of the girls who, coincidentally, I didn't like when I first started coming here. Yeah, we've been friends since I was 16, so she's definitely been influential and been part of my life.
>
> - Stephanie, New Lens

[15] All names have been changed to protect individuals' privacy.

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> Mark, the way he expressed himself, [had the most impact on me of anyone in the program]. Just as *him* not worrying about things. Just making people laugh without even trying . . . He was just a person who expressed himself so much. As I got to know him more, he made me think, like, "I don't have to worry about what other people think when I express myself." Like, this is just *me* and whatever you say isn't going to change that at all. Or, if I don't let it. And I think that's changed who I am today, because in school people try to bully me and I think bullying is a two-way street . . . you have to let them and I don't let them.
>
> - David, Access Art

When posed the same question as David and Stephanie above, Abdi named two friends who had influenced him in different ways and said he thought he "wouldn't have made friends like these anywhere else."

> I got to mention William. Just hanging out with him for a little bit, I just got to see different perspectives . . . . I mean he's a really sociable person, like naturally. That's just what he does, and I think watching him I got to pick up some of his skills as far as talking to people because I always felt socially awkward, especially when I first came here. It's kind of strange to be Advocacy/Promotional Leader and you feel socially awkward. [*laughs*] I don't feel as awkward sometimes thinking about what he's— learning from some of the things that he'd done . . . . I would also say there's a lot of things Stephanie did for me. She's [shown] me to really work hard at it, stick with what you're doing, and to really get the reward out of it . . . And also because just talking to her, I really get to see what it's like for a young person my age, that is— especially as a black woman, I think that's important. A lot of times I think black men don't have honest reflections with black women. Or, at least, that aren't necessarily controversial or antagonistic. And, I mean, she's a good friend, as well.
>
> -Abdi, New Lens

Stephanie's, David's, and Abdi's remarks are illustrative of different facets of the informal peer-based learning processes promoted in their programs. Within welcoming program settings that engaged them and promoted their ongoing involvement, participants formed lasting and influential friendships. Through those friendships, they received support but also were able to observe, think differently about, appreciate, and practice new ways of being. This social learning process could result in profound changes in behavior and outlook.

Notably, as suggested above, participants recalled only friendly instances of competitiveness with their peers. For example, Harold and Marlon both recalled wanting to

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out-do certain peers, who were seen as particularly skilled, with their projects. Their goal was to impress those peers, as well as other peers or staff members.

> I wanted to be better than Mark. There were just a few people I was competitive with like that. Like, Joseph was really, really good. It motivated me, impressing them with what I could do.
>
> - Harold, Access Art

> April— that girl, me and her, her and I. We were *always* trying to impress each other and [Executive Director], and it was fun. And it was a good way to be competitive without hurting each other's feelings.
>
> - Marlon, Access Art

Three other participants said that they sometimes felt competitive with other young people attending comparable arts programs, because they were aware their programs were in competition for some of the same funding. However, when asked directly, most participants said they did not recall wanting to compete with their program peers, and instead remembered that they preferred to help each other complete projects. It is possible that participants under-reported instances of competition due to social desirability concerns, but participants' apparent disinterest in competition simply for the sake of making someone else feel diminished was backed up by descriptions of how they actually assisted one another on individual, not just group, projects. Halia provided such an example, below:

> Putting a video together . . . [for me] would get frustrating at times . . . That's a lot to piece together, and to make sure it's all together . . . I actually had a guy named Greg who helped me, we worked on that aspect of it. I did the interviews, stuff like that. I produced it, but he actually worked, like, behind the scenes. He deserves *a lo—ot*, you know, a lot of recognition for that. Because that is really hideous to sit there and [do all that] work . . . [Y]outh peers help you a lot, and they encourage you, as well, you know they're, like, essential to your video.
>
> - Halia, Wide Angle

In highlighting the sometimes tediousness of various project tasks, and contrasting her peer's different response to those tasks, Halia's example shows how teamwork promoted the types of

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relationships that were necessary to promote peer-based social learning. Based on participants' accounts, some level of teamwork was seen as a given to them because projects could be tough.

In describing their memories of particular projects, or routine program workdays, participants spoke about enjoying being with their peers regardless of whether they were "goofing off" (Halia) or working. They described challenges, learning curves, boring and crunch times, that occurred when learning their main medium and/or in executing a more complicated project or putting on an event. Yet every participant noted that they generally had fun throughout, no matter what they were doing.

> I don't know— [*laughs*] it's like a gang, you know, the good kind. [*laughs*] Like it was just, like, being there, you know, just no matter what it was. We were just having a good time doing it, you know.
>
> - John, Wide Angle

All participants endorsed that they simply enjoyed being at their programs, with most accounts illustrating that it was a combination of the fun they had with friends, and their interest in the activities, and being productive in activities with others, that engaged them even when things were challenging. For example, two Wide Angle participants addressed having fun while being productive:

> [On a typical] workday, going there was fun, like, it's something that you enjoy. It was something different. It's wasn't, like, something that was forced. It was just, you enjoy doing what you were doing, so— I mean . . . sometimes we would get unproductive and we were talking, and [a staff member] had to get us back on-task. [We would] sit there, talk and laugh . . . But also, listen and see what other people are doing like, "Can you show me your video? I want see it, like, how is your video coming along? Can I help?"
>
> - Halia, Wide Angle

> It was different from the responsibilities I was used to having at home. It was, I would always take care of my sisters. I would cook, I would clean, chores, and things like that, but it wasn't— it didn't feel like a chore when I was at Wide Angle . . . I was doing it because I enjoyed it so [with everyone] . . . . [E]veryone pretty much is still friends from the program, It was just, like I said, a family and we really adored each other and even though we were having a good time we always got our work done.

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- Maia, Wide Angle

Undertaking often-times challenging projects with peers that they affiliated with and felt close to was both conducive to being productive and prevented work from becoming a deterrent to involvement. Over time, working together in this way appears to have strengthened sense of community between program peers. Moreover, as members of typically underserved groups, their collaboration on projects that often manifested shared goals of overturning the status quo for their external communities may have laid the groundwork for future social action.

Participants from New Lens and Access Art also provided similar accounts of how they and their peers balanced productive work and social time with peers, resulting in their overall experience of their programs as places they wanted to keep coming to. Abdi, after identifying himself as chief "comedian" in his program, put forward New Lens' summer session as an example of a typical program experience. His remark illustrates how informal learning often occurred even when youth were doing "unproductive" things:

> So we did a few projects that just had, like, a humorous take on it, and that's sometimes that's how we learned . . . . I guess the summer is usually a typical experience because that's when people spend the most time here, and spend it here even though they don't have to . . . A lot of it is just joking around, even though that sounds like it's totally unproductive. A lot of time it can be productive when we use it, just conversing amongst each other, learning about each other.
>
> - Abdi, New Lens

Other participants described similar experiences of learning from being with peers, working together on projects that were "just for fun" (Harold) and/or spending time socializing. However, the intended purpose for them coming together in their programs was to produce creative projects, and it appears that the nature of the arts and media projects were conducive to social-emotional learning, as well as skills-building in the context of these relational

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settings. This type of impact, achieved through enjoyable project work with peers, was often not apparent to participants until after some time had passed.

> I just thought [projects and being at Access Art] was fun at the time. But now I realize that DID teach me things. But as a young person you don't even notice that you're learning.
>
> - Marlon, Access Art

> Being with these people in this place gave me a better way to express yourself. 'Cause sometimes I'd come to class angry, and I would take angry pictures but where I used to [blow] up outside I was talking about [it] to people and using it into the picture. Doing the projects with my friends basically helped me control anger. Anger, and if I were sad, depressed, just basically it was to relieve my emotions at the moment. But some of them I thought were just for fun. And I had a lot of fun with the fun ones.
>
> - Harold, Access Art

> I remember having a lot of fun and just really learning a lot about life . . . . Just coming over here— the bus ride to get here was like an hour long, but, you know, I did it because I enjoyed the work we were doing and it really felt like it was relevant to my life at the time. It still does . . . . When everybody's here, it's just full of life and a lot of things [*laughs*]. There's a lot of laughing and joking and a lot of playing, but also a lot of learning and love! . . . . And [it was hard at first] I remember having a serious learning curve . . . like when I started using [chalk pastels] for the first time. It's like that *all* over here—when you get past the "learning how to actually use the medium" . . . Then it really becomes fun, it starts to be really interesting.
>
> - Stephanie, New Lens

The three quotes above show some of the ways that the "learning" involved in program activities was not always overt, especially when it happened alongside socializing with friends. Engagement was encouraged by enjoyable aspects even when activities involved challenge, including in learning to deal with ones' emotions or in the sometimes frustrating process of increasing skills, both interpersonal and artistic.

It was apparent from participants' accounts that each of the three programs relies on young people to teach one another and other youth in the community, as well as providing a setting that facilitates youth in forming lasting and productive relationships. The present study's findings show some of the ways that peer-based learning transpires, including

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through designated roles, casual interactions, and ongoing friendships. Program settings foster opportunities for youth to build community and learn from one another in a mutually influential process, to receive valuable peer-based social support at a time in life when that is particularly impactful, to see others like themselves succeed, and to enjoy themselves throughout the process. As a result, participants' engagement in their programs was maintained and strengthened, laying the groundwork for the more explicit acquisition of professional, artistic, and leadership skills.

Engagement via reliable, respected, and respectful adult mentorship.

Another group of findings that shed light on how participants perceived their programs as engaging, relational settings deals with the impact of interactions with adult staff mentors. Participants discussed their early program memories and/or more recent encounters with staff members that demonstrate their perceptions of these adults as reliable, caring, and committed mentors, with whom they formed mutually respectful relationships. Halia's and John's descriptions of adult program mentors are consistent with other participants' reflections about adults in their programs:

> My most meaningful relationship [at Wide Angle] would have to be the relationship I had with my first instructor. She also worked at Baltimore School for the Arts. She was pretty much the instructor that helped me put together my documentary to go to Connecticut and ever since then I've been closely involved with her. I've met her husband, we've been to UMBC [to visit]. They've talked to me about going to UMBC. I've been around through the birth of her baby…
>
> \- John, Wide Angle

> I think that [one teacher] Brian is probably the closest person to me there . . . . he was just really involved . . . He's really supporting, he's encouraging . . . he would remind me so much of my brother, like, it just makes me think how my brother worked with other youths in these types of programs. . . . I'm pretty sure even if I went back and talked to Brian, he would be more than willing . . . . He even wrote, like, some of my college recommendations for me and stuff like that.
>
> \- Halia, Wide Angle

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Participants described relationships with staff that transcended their programs and were ongoing. Although participants' comments about peers, reported above, show that peer-based relationships with adults were endorsed as being just as impactful by every participant.

When asked who had the most impact on his program experiences, one New Lens participant named his program's Executive Director/founder and two other staff members, and summarized their impact:

> [Executive Director] brought me here, well— not brought me here, but she [*laughs*]— she bestowed upon me *freedom* . . . . There was also a teacher named Sandy and she was, like, she was just really great. I had a difficult time when I was graduating high school because I was trying to figure out what I want to do with my life, and having been poor, and having to move in a whole lot of people's houses, and figuring out basically how I was going to live after high school . . . And both of them actually were really like helpful, like helping me work through that stuff. And probably another teacher named Emily, she was really helpful, she's just been there [for me].
>
> - Abdi, New Lens

It is interesting that Abdi named three staff members in his response to this question, in light of statements he made elsewhere in his interview about the strong influence of specific program peers. This suggests that even as important as peer-based social support and learning was for him, adults also played a substantial role in helping him meet his needs over his time in the program. Like Abdi, Elena and Harold from Access Art discussed the support they received from adults in their program. Both named their Executive Director as most influential, and gave examples of why this was the case:

> After awhile [as an older student] it started to get more that I was needed to help people [start their projects]. But more it [started to] feel like a brush-off, like no one wanted to accept my help. So I just wanted to print my own stuff. So it got to a point where I had a conversation with [Executive Director] one-on-one, and he advised me that it was okay if they didn't want help all the time, but that the point was always for me to keep pursuing helping. So toward the end it turned into me taking it into more a growing, learning experience because then I became a TA.
>
> - Harold, Access Art

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> Going there and [having been] homeschooled, like, by the time high school came . . . I just knew something had to change about me . . . If somebody said something [to me] I would just be, like, *so* ready to fight. But [Executive Director] would always tell us, like, "You know that's not what you need to do. Now you're giving somebody else power over you . . . And that doesn't have to be the case, you can just let it go, be the bigger person." [He] really helped because at the time I didn't know that . . . . [After I was a student] I had some complications with college that I didn't understand and [Executive Director] would take up his time to drive all the way up to [the school] . . . . It was just like so much— he helped me through financial aid . . . till this day he would ask me about my loans and how they going and things like that.
>
> - Elena, Access Art

Both participants received advice from this adult that enabled them to interact more productively with other youth in their programs. Their application of his advice may have improved their interactions with peers, laying the groundwork for them to form and benefit from closer peer relationships.

Matthew characterized his adult mentors as "caring individuals" who took time out of their schedules to help him develop skills that would translate to workplaces, such as communications skills and planning:

> [One staff member] would email me stuff and when I would respond, she would be like, "No, you can't write it like this or—" So she really helped me to see the importance of this email thing . . . . [She also helped me in teaching] like, I definitely had ideas for our class on, like, a Sunday. I'd definitely call her in the middle of the day, like, "Hey, I have this idea and I really think this would work." . . . And we tried my idea, and she never made me feel stupid about it or anything. She just was, like, "You know what, I never thought about it like that, let's try that. How would it go?" And I had to come up with everything . . . It made me feel good.
>
> - Matthew, New Lens

He noted elsewhere in his interview that he learned basic professional skills, such as email etiquette, at his program because staff members there "cared" enough to provide that instruction, in contrast to most of the teachers he had at school. The staff member identified in the above quote also appears to have applied a respectful and supportive approach that still gave him space to learn and increased his feelings of efficacy. Matthew similarly received

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encouragement and an important vote of confidence, relative to his own perception of his weaknesses, from his Executive Director:

> Once I had to teach, I was all against it, at first . . . . [I told Executive Director] "I just don't think that that's a good idea," and she was, like, "Well, the worst that can happen is that we take you there and they don't like you," [I was like] "That's true but, doesn't that mean that they're not listening to me at that point?" and She was like, "That's why you go in groups, so y'all can kind of feed off each other," and I was, "OK." So I had to teach . . . . [It was easier for me to meet older people for the program] I would usually bring up something that I knew about, like, "Hey have you heard about the youth trying to build—?"Just to connect with people. Usually by the end of the conversation, either I'm giving [them] my card or they're giving me theirs so we can stay connected . . . [Executive Director] definitely came to me, she was like, "You're really good at building connections, and you're really good at making relationships with people, so how can we use what you're good at, to not only promote us, but to promote yourself?" And that's how I got to be a peer-to-peer organizer, it was great! It took what I never noticed . . . what I already had.
>
> - Matthew, New Lens

In addition to adult mentors helping him to concretely develop competencies through trying out new skills, Matthew's comments show how adults conveyed high, but realistic, expectations for him. They encouraged him to take controlled risks— small ones (e.g., trying an activity he came up with) and larger ones (e.g., beginning to teach in the first place)—based on their assessment of his potential to succeed, in spite of his doubts. And in keeping with the strengths-based approach of the program, discussed earlier, his Executive Director also tapped into one of his strengths that he was not fully aware of yet. As a result, he saw himself as someone who could make a more meaningful contribution to his program—applying his talents to outreach as an organizer— and this was an important motivator for him to stay involved.

Like Matthew, other participants recalled how they felt when adult staff members invited them, or even "threw" them, into situations of greater challenge and/or responsibility. David, of Access Art, and Maia and John provided such examples:

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> …the year before [I would start as a TA] [Executive Director] told me that I was going to be a TA. When he told me, we were walking down [the street]— 'You're going to be a teacher's assistant" and "You're doing really good, keep up the good work," and it made me feel great! It made me feel like I could do anything.
>
> - David, Access Art

> [There was one time the staff] had just found out about an opportunity with, like, a youth network that originates out of New York called *Listen Up*. And they told me . . . if I was to produce, I think it was a 60 seconds PSA, I would have the opportunity to travel to Connecticut and be able to showcase my work to many different youths from across the country. And it was just pretty much crunch time, like, I didn't think I had enough time to do it, so I think [the staff] do a good job of putting us on the spot, like, at the same time, making sure that we have everything that we need to get everything done . . . . It pushed me a lot more you know it made me grow a lot.
>
> - John, Wide Angle

> One time the [current] Executive Director told me that I was going to do an interview at 5 o'clock in the morning for Fox 45 News and I had no idea what to say. It was exciting and terrifying at the same time because she just kind of threw me out there . . . I didn't really have a choice but to perform . . . . They have more confidence in us than we have in ourselves . . . . And it made me feel like I had power . . . . [Both] directors, they were always open to hear ideas and they just talked to us. It was like a formal relationship in the fact that we respected them, but it was always very informal in the way that we interacted . . . . The fact that they expected so much from us and they entrusted us . . . . It wasn't too much but it was always there. You always knew . . . they wanted you to strive for perfection— not perfection, but as best as you could do it.
>
> - Maia, Wide Angle

The situations described above range from a more commonplace show of confidence from adults— a younger student's invitation to take on a role of increased responsibility— to less routine, higher-profile opportunities for more senior students. As an engaging setting aspect, staff members' pairing of high expectations for youth with reliable support for them helped them to utilize and further develop their strengths.

Another notable facet of youth-adult relationships was evident in participants' descriptions of adults "going out of their way" to encourage youth through challenge. Participants connected the close and lasting nature of these relationships to their adoption of some of these adults' traits.

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> [Executive Director] was like a father figure . . . . He gave me a lot of special attention. And he didn't have to, and he was amazing . . . He did things that he did *not* have to do . . . . I'm grateful for him because if he didn't, I would be—I don't know where I would be, actually. He was just awesome, he gave me so much to look forward to. And he showed me his style of doing things. And I took his style and, it was a great style, and I took it and made it my own. And that's the reason I got as far as I did because I was able to learn from him. By style, I mean, including photography, teaching, um, listening, talking, everything. Everything—except for like my funniness, he is not as funny as I am. But, but, he tries *[laughs]*.
>
> - Marlon, Access Art

> So I would always have support from [the original Executive Director] . . . . [she] ran Wide Angle out of her home for awhile so we were really close . . . . [After college] I got my job at Wide Angle as an Americorps position at first . . . [I knew it was available because] I'd actually been meeting with [Executive Director] a couple of times a month. It was sort of a way to hold each other accountable to still pursuing our various interests like book writing or comic creating, and so we would meet, like do reports back to each other . . . . [Having had that relationship] I want to support [youth] because . . . parents have more than one child, and very demanding work obligations. And, you know, at that age you can't have too many support systems . . . Without [what] I had, I would not be able to support myself now. Like having other people to either kick my butt in here, or provide me with encouragement . . . then you could repay the favor somehow. But it doesn't matter, they don't expect you to.
>
> - Alex, Wide Angle

Of this study's participants, Marlon and Alex, as older alums and current staff members, could possibly reflect back most meaningfully on the impact of their adult mentors in order to connect this impact onto their own present work. At the same time, in light of changes that have occurred in their programs, they do have far less contact with these individuals than in the past, yet the influence is retained and they continue to be impacted by ongoing, dually professional and personal, relationships with them.

In total, participants' narratives provided examples of adult mentorship that was perceived by them as reliable, supportive, and based in mutual respect that conveyed high expectations. Adults were observed to go out of their way to help participants learn inside their programs and to succeed outside of them. These findings, in combination with those regarding peer relationships, help to delineate learning outcomes and distinct but cumulative avenues for

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growing engagement and sense of community within programs' relational settings. These important forms of learning, referenced above and promoted by ongoing engagement in these settings, were further delineated in study findings about change mechanisms based in program activities.

What mechanisms underlie/emerge from CBAOs' pursuit of outcomes? What does it look like inside the "black box" of the change processes?

This second main group of findings attends to participants' experiences of instrumental program components— structures/schedules, routine activities and special events, arts and media projects— designed to generate positive outcomes and the processes they produce (i.e., what actually happens in programs). Specifically, these findings address the preeminent change mechanisms, which emerge from programs' pursuit of outcomes that shape and grow participants' understandings, perspectives, abilities, and regard for themselves.

Analysis of participants' descriptions of their programs experiences revealed four, sometimes overlapping, change mechanisms; the mechanisms impacted participants by: 1) fostering healthy maturation, 2) developing professional competencies, 3) building a creative foundation, and, 4) promoting change agent characteristics.

Healthy maturation process is collaboratively fostered.

The first set of study findings delineating "black box" change mechanisms attends to participants' recollections of how their programs fostered a healthy maturation process for them. Within these results, "healthy maturation" is defined in participants' own terms, which are based on the "adult" qualities they identified as meaningful to them in relation to being young adults who essentially grew up while in their programs. In response to being asked to provide definitions of the words "mature" and "adult", as well as in replies to other questions,

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participants drew from memories of program experiences and more recent situations, and also looked toward the future, to talk about how their programs encouraged them to mature in a positive way.

When asked to share their thoughts on "becoming an adult", two participants replied by describing their changed view of themselves in relation to children. They provided examples of how after some time in their programs, they began to differentiate themselves from children through their behavior (Elena) and thoughts (Abdi) about younger children.

> [Being in the program] actually makes me look at children different, and I know how to deal with kids differently . . . I [feel like] I have to do my job outside of work . . . When I see kids., you know, say bad words— [I say] "Don't say that!" Before I wouldn't say it . . . [Now I say] "You could just do so much better," and I guess it's weird coming from someone so young [as me].
>
> - Elena, Access Art

> … now I am somebody who's progressed into manhood. When I see younger people, you know, I think I have something that I can *teach* them and not just, "Hey, I know shit." But something I really feel concrete about, I can kind of guide them and facilitate learning.
>
> - Abdi, New Lens

Immediately after making these statements, within the same portion of their interviews, Elena and Abdi provided their definitions of the word "adult" and their definitions suggested how they tracked their progress toward that state, starting when they began attending their programs.

> But in order to be an adult you just have to do what you have to do. So, you grow up, get a job, go to school, things like that, take care what you need to take care of. And mature is just like letting the little things go. Yes, um, life is challenging [*laughs*] very challenging . . . And you just have to know how to deal with it . . . . "Elena now" [after being in Access Art and college] is totally different than [old Elena]. Like I have a job, I have to spend my own money to get what I want, and I just have to take care of myself.
>
> - Elena, Access Art

> I think I would say I've been in the process of becoming a man, when I came here I was definitely a child . . . . In order to navigate successfully as an adult you have to be confident and doing things that have a purpose helps you become confident . . . . Mature means, you know, handling your responsibilities, not neglecting people in

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> your life that matter. Telling the truth even . . . when it's not easy. Being a person of integrity . . . [And] can I say like having a job is a way of impacting people in my life? Because I can say, "Why don't I treat you to dinner, Mom? Why don't I help out with the rent?"
>
> - Abdi, New Lens

In the above statements, these participants connected their developmental distance from childhood, to specific actions and suggested that how they have measured their progress toward being "adults" mirrors the purposeful staging of program roles for youth. As previously noted participants described being engaged by staff members' incrementally increasing expectations of them, including when they were placed in positions of greater responsibility relative to younger children. Each participant recalled her or his progression from new student to mentor or project leader to teachers' assistant or quasi-staff member. Moving through these roles allowed them to learn skills but also to adopt and grow into adult identities that are differentiated from children's, even though they might still feel "so young" (Elena) at first.

Several participants' narratives contained evidence that progressing through program roles were learning experiences that helped them to mature:

> As a teaching assistant and as a student you learn. But as a teaching assistant you also really learn to grow, to grow as a person. To grow as a man.
>
> - Harold, Access Art

Even though participants would have moved toward or grown into adulthood during the timeframe of their program involvement, whether or not they were involved, their perceptions of "growing up" indicate that the co-occurring trajectories of adolescent/young adult development and of program responsibilities may have operated synergistically. The following examples illustrate, in more detail, how participants felt more mature after rising to new levels of responsibility in the supportive settings of their programs, and therefore felt capable of navigating roles in their programs in the future, and perhaps in other settings.

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> [Dealing with college now] you have to be, you have to be responsible. [At Wide Angle] they teach you how to— you know, don't commit to someone's project and say you're going to be there, when you're not responsible enough to be there, to show up . . . first it's showing up, being responsible, being on time. Stuff like that is what you would take on in the future, like that can be applied to anything in life.
>
> - Halia, Wide Angle

> I realized that I had become more mature when I had to take on the task of the "60 Second PA"[16] to go to Connecticut. Like I had to meet this deadline, I had to edit this in this certain amount of time, I had to make sure that I would be at Poly [High School] because I was working with a few students from Poly. I had to make sure that I was at that school on time and ready to shoot. I had to come up with my own script, my own storyboard and shoot, film, edit, and, you know, post-production. So I realized, you know, I pretty much did all that myself. And you know every other thing in life— you know, like, responsibility is going to be weighed heavily from now on.
>
> - John, Wide Angle

> It was stressful for me . . . becoming a teacher. 'Cause I felt like there was a lot of, like, pressure because I was transitioning and that sucked. [Executive Director] put a lot on me. And I'm mostly grateful for it—mostly—but it was a lot. There was a lot of things that I couldn't do that everyone else could do, and . . . I was like, '"I want to make stuff, too!". . . . [Executive Director] was like, "You need to go back and start trying to help more," and I was like, "NO. I want to print, like now and every day." And I'd go help to print a test strip or something, and then would go right back to printing my own thing. So it was really hard for me. But I got it, eventually, and I've mastered the teacher/student/friend thing. [*laughs*] That itself has helped, because now I'm a better leader because of it . . . I've become a person who can be a kid's friend and also his or her teacher and still have a lot of respect.
>
> - Marlon, Access Art

Marlon', Halia's, and John's comments cover a range of responsibilities, and corresponding learning that came with progression of program roles. In each case, the participant's choice to rise to new responsibilities had the potential to impact others in their programs. The nature of that impact sometimes became clearer to them in retrospect, as in Marlon' example, and each participant was aware of how they benefited from these experiences. Therefore making meaning of these experiences in which they navigated the challenges of increased responsibility appear to be an important maturation-promoting mechanism.

[16] Here James is describing how he produced a video piece under a strict deadline in order to participate in his first higher-profile media competition.

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In the same vein, Alex recalled how as a Wide Angle student, she navigated from self-centered teen to more maturity through taking on a personally challenging, student-teaching role as workshop leader.

> I noticed becoming more aware of people around me and, like, what those people might be going through, and might need . . . I think that that's a thing a lot of students develop. We start out very self-centered and then discover that there's other people with varying needs around us . . . It's just figuring out that my emotions are not the only emotions [in the room]. I remember there was a workshop that we were doing . . . And [I showed] the animation that I'd made . . . about this young woman who's sort of experiencing a crush on another young woman at her school, what happens when she sort of like confesses her crush . . . one of the girls was supposed to be drawn to look like me, and I voiced her, everything, and so one of the students . . . was really vocal about disapproving of that and I remember realizing that not everyone would be sympathetic to the points of the video, or not everyone would be sympathetic to me in person. So that was an eye-opener . . . . I mean [*pauses*] the high school and college years are going to be really packed with changes regardless of where you are, but having a supportive community or space like Wide Angle, I think, does shape those changes to be better ones.
>
> - Alex, Wide Angle

Having received personally-tinged negative feedback within the supportive context of Wide Angle helped soften the impact of having had her "eyes opened" so abruptly, supporting a more mature emotional response. In a more basic sense, David also described how his program helped him to become more mature by building his interpersonal skills to better deal with people who were different from him.

> I think maturity is different for everyone, but I think maturity is simply being able to work with other people, pretty much. And that's exactly what Access Art has done. My life is definitely my life, but— and his life is his life and his life is life [*gesturing abstractly*], and our lives will interact, but, why make my life more difficult by not interacting with them? 'Cause it's definitely a two-way thing, you may say, 'Oh, they're making my life more difficult', but you're letting them. And, I can interact with them in a different way to make my life easier and their life easier also.
>
> - David, Access Art

As explained above, a feature of programs' relational settings was their fostering of inclusive relationships, based in openness to others' points-of-view, amongst diverse youth that

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promoted peer-based social learning. David's experience demonstrates how this type of learning also supported healthy maturation as a change process.

Another factor of maturation that emerged from some participants' narratives were instances, which occurred in-program or were informed by program experiences, when they realized what being a healthy, functional adult personally meant to them. These participants included Stephanie, who discussed situations that led her to be more independent and to form opinions about adulthood.

> I think my life was kind of coming to a really transformational point. When I was 15 to 16, a lot of stuff happened in my family . . . like that's when I really came of age, when I started coming here . . . that is the first time I had ever been by myself in West Baltimore and catching the bus back-and-forth, and really rushing out and just making [friends] from different places . . . . Remembering that [time], knowing what [I knew] later, an adult is somebody who can think critically. Like, if you can think about why you do what you do, and understand how you fit into the world and . . . and you have goals, and you know how to set those goals and meet your goals . . . . Like, what I hope I keep with me until the day I die, because . . . sometimes you just kind of got to see the information, and then react after you receive information. And so the one thing that I definitely hope that I don't stop doing is listening to people.
>
> \- Stephanie, New Lens

The trajectory of Stephanie's adolescence was already beginning to shift at the time she entered New Lens, including a growing openness that enabled her to travel there, alone, over what was a sizeable distance for her at the time, as well as making new friends. Her insight about what an "adult is" lays out her intention to be an adult who demonstrates qualities built from her own initial openness, and mirrors her program's reinforcement of both goal-directed and inclusive behaviors. Matthew also recalled an instance of insight about his growing maturity during what turned out to be his final year at New Lens. A key signifier that he "felt like an adult" was when he realized it was time for him to move on from New Lens, but also could identify how he and others could see he had changed from being a part of it.

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> I think I knew I was too old to be there, but I just hadn't found, like, what was next. I definitely knew in my heart, "Alright, I think I'm too big to be here." [I went to Executive Director] and I think she understood . . . . . It was definitely a natural thing [to leave], like, "If you need help, if you need anything, you're always welcome to come by" . . . . My family—they tell me how I've grown up, like I was laughing at my sister yesterday because [she said] "We never thought in a million years you would want to be teaching". . . . [To get there] I feel like I was forced to, because when I first started [New Lens], I had maturity, but I was pushed even more to become more mature before I got to leadership positions . . . Like I have to do what I have to do to make this work . . . . Adult [trait I've learned] I think is being humble. I feel like people forget that everybody has a story, like everybody started somewhere. And because of where you are now, doesn't guarantee that that's where you'll be [later].
>
> - Matthew, New Lens

Matthew's awareness that it was time for him to move on stemmed from indicators that were observable to himself and to others that he had grown. A notable indicator was his own, humbling, realization of how his early maturity was not enough to be a leader right away; rather, it had been tapped and taken to the higher level that was needed to fulfill roles of greater responsibility at New Lens. Stephanie's and Matthew's largely self-defined, but program-influenced, notions of "adult" traits and "maturity" were consistent with other participants' formation of ideas about what type of adults they wanted to be, and their progress toward being them, based on having been "pushed" in the right direction by their programs.

In sum, maturation-related change mechanisms for participants included receiving practice in behaving "like adults" via staged roles of increased responsibility, relatedly gaining new insights from being in the position to impact younger children and others in their programs, being supported in balancing these relationships and benefiting from inputs from adult mentors "at the right time" to develop interpersonal skills and emotional maturity. In light of the entirety of participants' narratives, their conceptions of adulthood, not surprisingly, stem in large part from late adolescent experiences, not all of which happened in their community-based arts programs. However, because all participants designated their programs as being one of, if not the

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single, most influential parts of their adolescences, it follows that in-program learning and experiences probably helped them to mature and form their ideas of and aspirations for demonstrating healthy maturity in later life.

Professional competencies are developed and interests honed.

Another set of study findings about program change mechanisms addresses participants' experiences of developing work-related competencies and honing in on professional paths. Competencies, detailed in participants' narratives, included translatable job skills that could be applied to many jobs and, due to the nature of the programs, basic technical skills specific to art and/or media jobs. Participants also described their increased entrée into higher education and job opportunities. As a whole, participants emphasized that they had begun to benefit from the skills they acquired while they were still enrolled in their programs, had continued to see benefits manifested in the present, and expected to carry them into the future having formed initial plans for doing so.

Although improving students' academics was not an explicit goal of any of the programs, five participants recalled that their programs structured sessions in such a way that they were helped with their grades and, later, in their pursuit of higher education.[17] For example, Elena addressed both forms of academic help when she was asked what a typical day in her program was like:

> The typical day would be . . . always homework first. There was no computers, no cameras, it would just be always homework first. Then, [Executive Directory] actually checked our homework for us if we needed help . . . And *then* it would be basically the low down on what's going to happen today in the [session] . . . . So, over time in Access Art, before I even had been long in high school, I was already thinking about college. I was thinking, like, if I really got the hang of [photography], like, I could do

[17] Based on an anecdotal understanding of the three organizations' operations, it is apparent that they received some level of pressure from their funders to demonstrate a connection between their programming and students' grades. However, participants' narratives did not suggest that they perceived this to be the sole motivator for programs providing academic supports.

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> this in college . . . . [If I had not been at Access Art] I actually don't think I would be in college right now.
>
> - Elena, Access Art

The program element of homework support appears to have helped Elena to build and/or maintain academic skills, in a fundamental way that other afterschool programs could have, but she concurrently received training in unique skills, suited to her interests, that could make her college aspirations more achievable for her.

Perhaps more germane to programs' own activities, when participants were asked to characterize their overall program experiences, they unfailingly mentioned purposeful projects— reflecting programs' modeling of staged tasks and the workflows often involved in creative jobs— that had impacted them. Two participants described how the structure of their arts projects was reminiscent of professional-level creative work, and that by doing projects "the right way" (Maia), the process of turning a creative outlet into a money-making opportunity came "to life" (Stephanie).

> [Our projects were] very goal-oriented and very focused. When we were working on one thing we were not working on anything else. There were no side projects, it was working on that one thing until it was finished and until it was finished the right way . . . [Program staff] were like real sticklers about [quality] they wanted us to make sure we were doing it the proper way, so that if we did decide to pursue this in the future, it wouldn't be like, these kids are from an inner city program they don't know what they're doing. We *knew* what we were doing.
>
> - Maia, Wide Angle

> I think that this is a huge creative outlet for me because I think in most people's lives, they aren't as creative as we are here, and so it gives me the ability to be able to just make money, doing something that I love to do . . . . [It helps that projects involve] mapping out the steps that are necessary to make sure that that process can come to life, whether it's scheduling interviews, figuring out a production design, watching tons and tons of tons of film examples . . . or developing whatever we want the message to be for the piece. And then once you get into the actual, doing the work . . . you could have come up with all these grand schemes that you want to do, and then getting to the work . . . [we] learn in the process of doing that stuff that the plan we had, wasn't the plan that we really need to implement, so it really keeps you on your toes and keeps you thinking.

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- Stephanie, New Lens

Reflected in both examples is that the process of carrying projects through from start to finish with a genuine, but controlled, chance of failure, enabled them to feel more confident about their prospects of doing similar work as paid professionals. In combination with statements such as Elena's, above, Maia's and Stephanie's remarks suggest that program activities, in their structuring and ascription of high standards, helped participants to bridge academic, creative, and professional spheres. Project completion encouraged the development of complementary sets of skills, critical thinking, and increased work ethic. Programs' application of project-based learning was a dually influential mechanism conducive to fostering both professional capabilities and creativity development (purposeful projects' role in the latter will be described in more detail in the following section).

Relatedly, participants described taking part in activities such as special public events, media appearances, and field trips that provided direct exposure and practice in working in professionally-relevant situations and environments. Due to the arts and media focus of the programs, and the expertise of program staff, these were mainly relevant to creative fields. For example, at different points in her interview, Halia talked about opportunities that led her away from a preexisting interest in graphic design and guided her toward her college major, Mass Communications:

> I think that it helped me define where I wanted to go in life . . . . steered me in the direction that I wanted to go. Because before this, I was interested in graphic design, but then I started to realize [it wasn't for me] . . . . [With Wide Angle] we went to Towson University, to tour their green room . . . and we recorded each other . . . . and [students there] used it for the introduction to [their video] . . . That was really a cool experience that I had . . . . And showing our rough-cut videos [at an arts venue, the Creative Alliance], that was interesting. I'd never even heard of Creative Alliance before . . . never knew what it was until we actually went there. Also the end of the year shows we used to have . . . seeing your work being displayed in front of everyone who

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> came to see it and then having to answer questions about it . . . . Eventually, I got used to it and the answers became repetitive . . . . [but at first] I was nervous…
>
> - Halia, Wide Angle

Through these experiences, in combination with hands-on learning in project work that showed Halia that she did not like the slower and more technical aspects of graphic design (as noted in previous section), she learned she wanted something else for herself after finding the work of other creative fields to be more appealing. Such opportunities enabled participants to conceptualize what working in different jobs might be like for them, helping to define job interests and opening up new options. This ultimately helped them hone in on future career paths and contributed to them leaving their programs more ready for the world of work.

> I think instead of like *a job* ready, I feel like New Lens kind of gets *you* job ready. . . . They teach you these more serious skills that you need, but they never advertise them . . . . [The things I've learned] I believe [will affect me in the future] because now I only apply for jobs that I feel like are either going to put me closer to my career goals or something that I've done in New Lens that I've liked.
>
> - Matthew, New Lens

Matthew, in combination with his previously remarks about both basic (e.g., email etiquette) and more complex (e.g., planning for teaching) skills he had learned at New Lens, appeared confident in his readiness to identify and apply to jobs that would be gainful and interesting for him.

Although all participants discussed receiving exposure to and practice in technical skills related to arts and media jobs, most participants also described how their different program roles helped them to develop a broader set of professional competencies. These comments underscored that their practice in skills related specifically to creative jobs fit within an overall mechanism for increasing workforce readiness that incorporated learning they could have received in non-arts programs. Stephanie discussed that she was increasingly

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involved in all levels of New Lens' work, putting her in a position to see across the levels, which provided practice in organizational, structural thinking:

> I do everything— help teach, help mentor a lot of people who come here. I feel like I help think, like, structurally about how we all manage our time here. I feel like I'm trying to help more and more with like how we market ourselves, how we promote ourselves as an organization, and kind of like, as far as our money, money stuff goes, like, funding.
>
> - Stephanie, New Lens

Other participants felt that being in their programs helped them to develop interpersonal skills and the ability to make social-relational judgments that were necessary for obtaining jobs, and being effective and appropriate in performing them.

> I think [my program] gave me the ability to point out people, like to interact with them for just a few minutes and be able to tell that they're the type of person who you could get along with or— just being a better judge of character . . . . [And] if I'm going to a job interview I can impress them really well, too. [At Access Art] you learn what to put in a job application, you learn what to put in there and what to leave out. You learn what to say to make people, like, really look at you . . . And I've always been a bit independent, so working in groups was not my favorite thing, but working there definitely taught me how to work in groups better . . . . I definitely know now how to put my ideas out there without being obtrusive.
>
> - David, Access Art

> You're able to switch roles. Like, depending on the situation, where you are— if I'm going to an art show, I know how to charm people. If I'm going to a meeting, I know how to be comfortable there . . . and it helps with—you can definitely change "personas". [*laughs*] You can tell [employers] everything that you want them to hear. You learn that at Access Art . . . . You know you can't come to work and be like, "Guess what, children—HEYYAAAEEE." [*laughs*] That is not the appropriate thing to do. You know that because of your learning experiences with people [here]. And, you're put in different situations . . . You learn from making mistakes and you keep truckin'.
>
> - Marlon, Access Art

Together, participants' recollections of how they became "job ready" at their programs illustrate a role-based, learning process in which they acquired practical experience, both general and trade-specific, and the opportunity to think organizationally in tandem with exposure to professional environments, situations, and work challenges.

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Abdi summarized how, in his current role as a student leader, he continues to receive experience through teaching "tangible skills" he previously learned at New Lens, and observes this process playing out for younger students there:

> [I'm] Advocacy Promotions Leader, and that basically entails . . . managing other youth here who do networking related work. Really staying in contact with other grassroots organizations who do similar work. Also, me promoting our assets, which is video and art related projects . . . from time to time we work on grants . . . Also, for young people . . . I'm teaching those tangible skills, as far as film, so how to shoot, how to edit, how to set up equipment, how to delegate tasks . . . . There have been people who come here with relatively few skills and come away able to go to another job and put this on their resume . . . . Also, we've helped raise people's interpersonal skills. I mean, any time you're in a work situation— if you're not going to get fired tomorrow then you're going to have to raise your social skills . . . . I want theoretically for a young person to come in here who we think has potential, teach them some skills, and they walk out being a leader in their community, a leader bound for who knows what.
>
> - Abdi, New Lens

As a long-time member of New Lens, Abdi appears to have mastered the range of competencies that can be developed there, and is now in a position to encourage and assess their growth in others. With this package of skills and insight, he is perhaps on track to become the community leader that he believes is produced by his program.

In addition, as alluded to in Abdi's and Elena's statements above, when describing their formation of professional skills and career goals, participants noted clear-cut ways that programs increased their entrée into higher education and/or job opportunities. These included opportunities for resume and portfolio building, in concert with substantive applied experience, helping to propel their goals forward.

> Being involved in Wide Angle, I would have to say, like, it gave me years of doing something, so on a resume it's not just, "Oh, I went to school, you know." Like, not only did I "volunteer" here— I did it for a continuous amount of time, for a vast amount of time, and I gained these skills . . . . I can say I've made plenty of PSAs, did episodes for Public Access, made advertisements and slogans, I even did grant writing sometimes.
>
> - John, Wide Angle

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> I didn't even realize until much later, but the resume building that I got . . . [Now] I teach at Anne Arundel Community College in the summer, doing the "kids in college" summer programs. I taught a workshop at William Park Public School in comics . . . [It was] having that teaching experience, because I never had a college course in teaching . . . . One of the first workshops I was teaching [here]— I did it really poorly because I showed the other students what to do, and then I sat there and drew and didn't like go around and help them. And so after that, I remember [Executive Director] telling me what I'd done, why it was not a good teacher thing to do . . . . [Experiences like that] prepared me to take teaching jobs, which is a position that I think almost every working artist I know finds themselves in . . . . Stuff that I produced at Wide Angle was a cornerstone in my college portfolio . . . it helped me get accepted and get scholarships.
>
> \- Alex, Wide Angle

In sum, participants' depictions of acquired professional competencies as distinct learning outcomes signaled that program mechanisms worked differently, but at times synchronously or additively, to those that enabled participants to form foundations for creative thinking and action. In many of their descriptions of impactful program experiences, participants emphasized that they had acquired both translatable skills applicable to many jobs and technical skills specific to art and/or media jobs and accumulated documentable experience that increased their entrée into higher education and jobs. Additionally, and perhaps most importantly, they were presented with opportunities that exposed them to professional settings and offered practice in work processes that were in-line with jobs that were a good fit with their strengths and interests.

Creative foundation for future activity is built.

Another set of findings overlapping with but distinct from those presented above, addresses the impact of change mechanisms, stemming from programs' pursuit of outcomes, which established creative foundations for participants. This large portion of the study results illustrates participants' development of artist identities and foundational habits for thinking and acting creatively in the future, including but going beyond the ways that program aspects that helped them to learn job skills. As a whole, the emergent themes presented here encapsulate

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unique learning that is not exclusive to being part of an arts and media producing community, but that such involvement is conducive to generating. Participants' strong recollections of related program experiences pointed to their valuation of them and the importance of not simply gaining technical skills, but also becoming more enlightened and imaginative problem solvers who think both critically and integratively.

All participants clearly recalled how they learned the primary media in their programs (photography and/or video), on the path to producing creative and purposeful projects they were proud of and were not intended simply to teach concrete skills. Falling under this theme were their memories that centered on what motivated them to improve their technical skills, their feelings about this learning process, to what ends they applied what they had learned, and how this began to change how they viewed themselves. A fundamental feature of this type of learning, which was also related to programs differing from school-like settings, was that it was interactive and usually hands-on:

> Learning at Wide Angle was a lot of fun. They always made it really interactive and lot of cool acronyms to learn . . . we always had workshops. It was always an interactive experience learning how to do what we needed to do.
>
> - Maia, Wide Angle

The large number of anecdotes falling under this theme of foundational creative learning suggests that hands-on project work was at the core of participants' program experiences. Although this finding is not surprising given the mission of the organizations, in light of the results presented above, showing the important contributions of the settings themselves and other mechanisms as change processes, it is notable that processes associated with the projects were impactful in distinctive ways. Elena's quote, below, touches on multiple avenues through which art project-based learning was experientially different from and additive to other program mechanisms:

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> In the photography class, [Executive Director] would teach us, and sometimes he would show us [how to do something]. . . . And in the video class it would be the same thing, or we'd be involved with like shooting or taking turns practicing . . . [I felt like I improved] because we would have like the little cameras and then [Executive Director] would bring like the high tech cameras . . . . [Once we had stuff down we felt very free because] you could just photograph anything. You never had to specifically— "You have to photograph this, you have to photograph that," but over the course of time I realized that when you photograph things and you look back at your photographs you actually see like your main focus. Because I used to always photograph my family . . . A lot of times people would do like nature and things like that, so everybody has a specific focus that they never knew they had when they photographed.
>
> - Elena, Access Art

Elena provides a glimpse of the progression of project work, from the beginning point of learning the basics, to mastering tools and then learning what can be done with more sophisticated tools, to experiencing creative freedom based on that foundation in order to uncover and form her own creative direction over time. An essential part of this process that distinguishes it from the overlapping one of developing job-ready, technical skills is that through it Elena was also enabled to exercise retrospective self-discovery about her character. Similarly, when David was asked about what is was like to work on projects, he retrospectively assessed how a time-consuming stop-motion project had motivated him in a broader sense, thereby encouraging his ongoing creative development.

> [This project was] important, like, because it took long to do and challenged me. And it was about a girl—this African character, it was really interesting to me, and I just really wanted to make it in spite of people at school— a thousand times a day I get asked, "Are you gay?" and I'm like, "No." . . . It's not I'm offended but it's hard . . . I don't like the way people pre-judge you. I think at school that's just to do with the way I am, the way I act . . . . Doing things step-by-step [to make something], I feel like it makes it seem like success is something much more reachable, something not so far away. Like, because we do it, we do a good job without even knowing, "Oh, I've succeeded, OK." So maybe I can succeed at anything without trying *super*-duper hard. [*laughs*]
>
> - David, Access Art

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It appears that by approaching the tasks of a technically complex and personally meaningful project incrementally, David achieved a creative product that was doubly motivating through its content and its successful execution.

Participants' descriptions of their arts-specific learning experiences overlapped with and were at times outwardly similar to their accounts of professional skills-building, in that hands-on learning experiences provided them with technical skills and immersion into start-to-finish production procedures. However, they also communicated an important distinction between these change mechanisms, in that creativity development also required them to practice channeling their personally significant inspirations all the way through to end products that successfully shared their points-of-view with others. Abdi and Halia gave detailed descriptions of projects that they were individually-motivated to create, a motivation that had to be carried through from basic technical skills mastery, to project planning, to working thoughtfully with a team and project subjects.

> I think the hardest part is just getting started and then once you really start getting at it, like, "Man, I want to get better, to master that!" . . . You want to have it as a real achievement . . . . [I really felt this finally] last summer when [I] worked on a video on youth employment, how do young people really stay employed. We went to Martin Luther King Boulevard and Pennsylvania Avenue, to interview some kids who we'd seen selling water, because that's perspective of young people being –self-employed . . . . It was unusual in the fact that we just did street interviews and it turned out great. Street interviews, you know, there's a huge continuum of what could happen and it went perfect to plan. It was exactly what we were looking for. But, I remember, we were all on point as far as filming it, it just went all together.
>
> - Abdi, New Lens

> [I did a teen pregnancy project inspired by my close friend.] So for it I did the interview questions and I interviewed four women, and I also interviewed a dad . . . . I already had [in mind] what I wanted to get out of the video, like, these are questions, this is the outline, [but] I needed more technical support, like the book, working the video and things like that . . . [But] I remember the challenge of making my points was clear after talking with [staff member], [who was] asking, "What are you going to do to get people to be comfortable, what are you going to do to get people to open up on camera? That's really important . . . because you're going into people's personal life." . . . [So I tried to]

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> to get people warmed up. Ask them like simple questions at first. . . . I didn't really have a problem [but] had to think about the whole thing. I was really proud of that.
> - Halia, Wide Angle

The statements above encapsulate the process through which participants developed and/or strengthened their abilities to effectively communicate their own particular points-of-view. Thus mastery of skills within projects is here shown to be a necessary prerequisite to creativity development and a starting point for increasing one's voice, as well as a mechanism of developing professional competencies (as discussed above). This process was additionally motivating for participants because it offered a higher-level of emotional rewards than just completing exercises to gain technical skills would have.

As also noted above, all participants spoke about how their programs intentionally designed art and media projects to each have a purpose. In addition to mimicking the work flow involved in many jobs, the purposeful structuring of projects contributed to participants' overall creativity development by providing practice in media-specific technical skills and a fundamental set of skills for visual thinking/graphic communication (i.e., use of visual elements to convey ideas) and aesthetic problem-solving (i.e., sensory consideration of an object). These skills embody a core capability for visual art and media production and critical media consumption, enabling participants to evaluate both what they make and see.[18] Two participants specifically recalled experiencing that aspect of creativity development very soon after joining their programs:

> The [first project I was involved with] had a good purpose behind it, it was trying to encourage people to come to school. We did posters basically as a marketing tool

[18] Due to the application of constructivist grounded theory and the starting premises of this study, inspired by community psychology approaches and extant community arts literature, terminology used here and interpretations made about creativity development have been drawn mainly from participants' own words and existing knowledge of the researcher. Participants were not asked questions that were specific to the intricacies of arts learning, and findings have not yet been vetted against other relevant, and potentially useful, literatures of fields such as arts education and psychology of creativity.

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> within the project. We made all the decisions, even down to the colors— What's going to stand out, what's not going to stand out, is this font good, is this font bad . . . . I think that the students that were in the program came up with really good messages for it and that came through in the look.
>
> - Halia, Wide Angle

> I remember I actually thought about, before I even joined [the program], actually thought about, like, doing murals because I would see them and be like, "Oh, I wonder how you do that?". . . . So, actually, when I joined Access Art it was like people *do* do stuff like that, it's what they actually do . . . [When we made them] sometimes it was stressful but when we did it they always turned out awesome, we always worked hard on it . . . . [Executive Director] he was always [critical], he would just look at the idea [for it] and, be like, [*deepens voice*] "Well, if I was driving past the billboard I wouldn't get the clear image of what you're trying to portray to me."
>
> - Elena, Access Art

These and similar remarks elsewhere in their interviews suggested that such lessons in visual communication, planning, and critique carried through their program experiences, and enabled them to execute larger and more complex projects over time.

Developing foundational creative skills through purposeful projects often led participants to make broader connections between their actions and social processes, connections that could inspire enduring changes in the way youth think, learn, create, and communicate. Stephanie provided an example of how she and her peers made such connections:

> When I saw other people resonating with [something I made], then I'm like "Oh, we were right [with what we're trying to communicate]." It's kind of like a science experiment. [*laughs*] We have this hypotheses of what we think would be a cool thing to do, or some things that we think about or issues that we see connected, and then we come up with a way to present that to the world so that we can get feedback from other people . . . Or, the best moment is . . . we create a piece, and then people are like "Oh, I never thought about that." . . . They see something that they never would've seen before . . . . After I put together my first video piece, that summer I literally busted out three or four videos. It was really a huge learning curve, but it was also like *big* . . . understanding how wide media is. Like I can do whatever I want to do with media. And also learning that— knowing that we are immersed, our society is immersed in media, everywhere; pictures, everything, TV, internet, everywhere, and so realizing that, how impactful that was...
>
> - Stephanie, New Lens

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Her quote illustrates how the goals and intended message of a project shaped the approach taken, and impacted the pay-off for learning creative communications strategies. The essence of the message, in its level of importance to the creator, contributed to the relative pay-off for mastering all parts of crafting and sharing the message. For Stephanie, part of that pay-off was a deeper awareness of the context and functioning of visual media, highlighting that her ability to make strong media could grant her greater power in society. As noted in the previous section, participants faced challenges in learning skills that could be applied to arts and media jobs, but it appears that they reaped equal or greater benefit from concurrently navigating the challenges of creative problem-solving, which prompted critical insights.

Participants' descriptions of working on their projects indicated that once they had the basics down, their creative freedom within the programs was primarily bounded only by necessary considerations for any artist. These included technical feasibility, costs, and appropriateness of content and approach in light of one's message and audience. Learning to negotiate and grow from striking a balance between freedom of expression and such boundaries, particularly the last one, was another influential part of participants' experiences. As touched on above, within their programs' supportive relational settings, participants were frequently allowed to make work about topics of their choice, and felt that staff took an interest in what they wanted to make but were not preoccupied in dominating the process. A common sentiment of participants was voiced by Halia:

> They give you the ultimate freedom, and you do what you want to do, the way you want to do it . . . They're more interested in what you want to *do*, than what they think it should go *like*.
>
> - Halia, Wide Angle

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However, together participants' remarks indicated that freedom in their programs, rather than equating to an aimless free-for-all, most often involved participants being encouraged to make content and process choices— from a varying level of options but seemingly wider than what is allowed in most school settings. The presentation of choices occurred within projects designed to facilitate different learning objectives. For example, Alex discussed that she had choices in how to undertake her projects, but there was strong pressure at Wide Angle to finish projects and set timelines accordingly, and she learned valuable lessons from that imposition on her process.

> Finishing a piece is a really important stepping stone to the development basically of having an artistic mindset, having that point when you realize you can finish a piece that's *this* long, so your next project is to finish a piece that's, like, 2 pages longer or whatever . . . . That was something that I saw my classmates in college have difficulty with, is that they would have a really beautiful sketch and then it came time to turn in your inks and it was only half-way done.
>
> - Alex, Wide Angle

Having the overall perception of freedom in what they were creating, which often had to do with not having to worry about peer or adult disapproval of personal subject matter, provided a motivation to create, to improve skills, and to have an effective art product.

> I've always been a bit independent and I look at each project like a challenge, and I say to myself, like, "Alright, challenge accepted, and I'm going to do this, and I'm going to get it done." . . . I learned I really, really want to do good at this . . . [I felt great about my] stop motion project. Not the project itself, really, but that it was about an African princess character with a dance [friends and I] came up with. And it was important because I remember we could do anything in photography club without worrying about someone saying, "Well, that's gay, that's stupid." Photography club was a place that I could escape things like that. That's when the stop motion video thing, that was the first thing that I really did there that I knew if I did it anywhere else, they probably would have been [dismissive] and that would have pissed me off.
>
> - David, Access Art

> In general it felt good, working on a project, because I knew people would see this, like my family, so we could try to talk about it . . . It's really exciting, too, because now you get to take what you think is good, but still put it in front of people and see if they feel the same. So it's also reality— stuff that we thought might work, maybe we need to

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> rethink . . . We had all creative freedom, the only thing we didn't have a say on is whether [Executive Director] was going to buy into it or not. But for the most part, it was just stuff that we came up with, or stuff that we felt strongly about, like bullying. Like that's a big thing, like people are dying, like why not just, "Let's do that!" And when we brought it to her, she was like, "That's fine!" So usually you're fairly confident that you get her buy-in if it was a well-formed idea.
>
> - Matthew, New Lens

It was evident from remarks like those of David and Matthew that they were quite aware that, even as they felt safe to express whatever they wished in their programs, their self-expression did not occur in a vacuum. They were additionally cognizant of the need to take audience considerations into account, and by having choices about what to make and how to work is not the same as working without any constraints or limitations. Working within reasonable boundaries appeared to engender intellectual and interpersonal challenges that encouraged creative development for participants. Further, given the socially-minded missions of the three organizations to mission of organizations, it would follow that they would assist their students in learning to engage with audiences through purposeful projects with clear intent.

Participants were not always as conscious at the time as Matthew was, in the quote above, of program staff members' intentions in their occasional guiding of project themes to help nurture discernment. For example, Marlon and Alex, older alums now fully employed as teachers in their programs, described how they later made connections between what had earlier seemed like arbitrary limitations that were imposed on their creative choices.

> [The purpose of assigned projects was] not always understood. But sometimes I'd be like, "I'm not feeling this, but I'm going to make it my own." I mean, but then, being a teacher now I understand why some of those projects came around. I understand why [Executive Director] gave use those projects and I'm going to give it on to [current students] . . . [Because] a lot of times we didn't know what the purpose was. And then we got to the end of it, he'd be like, "Did you know what you just did with that, and did you know you learned this, this, this, and this" and we'd be like, "Oh, wow, I didn't even know that," just by taking this picture. And taking something fun, that you just were having fun with, and doing nothing with, and then, like, figuring out I did so much to lead up to this and this worked *out*.

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- Marlon, Access Art

> I was always more interested in telling fictional stories about fake people than in doing documentaries. But I remember when I first joined here, thinking I could just, like, make fictional stories about fake people, and it was like "No, it needs to be about a particular issue, like it can be a fictional story about fake people as long as there's an issue or something that's important to you. No, Alex, you can't just draw something about dragons, you have to make it relatable." . . . I remember being sort of grumbly about that sort of restriction, but now I see it as having a restriction as a way to make it better, because it has something real at the core of it.
>
> - Alex, Wide Angle

Marlon and Alex had a particular vantage point on staff structuring of, or impositions on, students' choices, after having themselves purposefully introduced limits for current students. However, all participants affirmed that they figured out the rationale behind such actions, if not immediately then at some point in the future. The ability to deduce staff intentions of this kind appeared to signal participants having learned from being challenged to hone their creative choices. It also appears that their retrospective insights about the function of their projects itself demonstrates this work's effectiveness in imparting evaluative perspectives that participants continued to apply.

Some participants provided examples of firmer boundaries for project content that they perceived as somewhat more limiting, and although most of these may have been staff-informed they were not always staff-imposed. For example, Abdi and John discussed limits on cursing and violence in their video productions. However, they indicated that such limits stemmed from making a necessary creative choice that took the primary audiences for their products into account.

> There are boundaries. Have yet to smack a person on film before . . . Actually, I think we might have— we kind of simulated fighting, [but] we've never really smacked the fool [*laughs*]. Also, probably no sexually explicit stuff, but I don't think we actually wanted to do that . . . . Most of the time I can't complain [about the level of freedom], because I understand most of our target audience and sometimes that's just counter to reaching [them], [you] being explicit, vulgar . . . . You know, as a 17, 18, 19-year-old

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> person, adults necessarily don't want to see a young person be a bastard . . . [We want to convey a certain image] to be taken seriously . . . . [A bigger challenge] is getting your work out there. That's [a big] one because this is America, and people want to be entertained firstly, and informed second, so how do you make your information feel entertaining? That's the boundary.
>
> \- Abdi, New Lens

> There would be times where creatively we would have our differences between the group, and within the actual group and with [staff]. So like when we're shooting out ideas for certain things that we would want to do for certain episodes that we might want to do or for certain topics that we might want to produce an episode for, certain topics that we want to produce PSAs for, they wouldn't be shut down aggressively. But, like, you know there would be certain things that that you know the [staff] would want to stray away. Things that were [a little too taboo], keeping things PG for the younger generation.
>
> \- John, Wide Angle

Both John's and Abdi's recollections about limitations on subject matter were stated without any note of disappointment, suggesting their understanding that they were responsible for how their creations impacted younger children and youth like themselves. They also were cognizant that to not be sensitive to audience considerations could undermine their goal of getting their work in front of as many eyes as possible.

Other participants described examples differently representing how learning to attend and respond to audience factors was a part of how their programs helped them to develop creatively. Considerations about the intersections of purpose, message, medium, and tools, in relation to audience, emerged when they spoke about the role of the arts and media in expanding youth voice. Alex, once again integrating memories of her experiences as a student with more recent teaching experiences, and Stephanie, speaking from the perspective of a long-time student, both explained how their programs connect youth with the audiences they need to effectively share their stories.

> I mean, I know the mission statement [of my organization] is to help young people and their communities, like, tell their own stories, sort of engage with their communities that way. But, it's incredibly important that it gives people not only a voice but an

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> audience for that voice, as well. So it's like we're giving them the tools to speak *and* be heard. [Because] a lot of, you know, a lot of the students are taking photos regularly and putting them on facebook, or whatever, because everyone's phone's got a camera in it now. Not quite the same as when I was a student . . . [But] you know, when they get started, when they use the tools [here] they definitely realize the difference between holding your phone at someone and having the control of a more sophisticated camera.
>
> - Alex, Wide Angle

> I feel like because we are young people who are from the community, we really understand a lot of the situations that a lot of young people are in now. I think that we really provide— we speak to what truth already is, so we validate their truths . . . And I also think that we provide a perspective about that truth that is very different from what is the norm in society and from most media that you see . . . We also provide context for conversation, because even like people who create the most amazing documentary about something, or about issues that affect people on the ground, there's rarely like dialogue with those people about what they think about those representations of themselves and, you know, that kind of like back-and-forth.
>
> - Stephanie, New Lens

Alex gave a nod to the rise of technology that has made instantaneous media almost ubiquitous for young people, but makes it clear that just shooting a video is not the same as thoughtfully crafting a piece of media, with the best tools, to most effectively get one's voice out. She was given access to the necessary tools and learned, hands-on, from her program how to amplify her voice in this way and now guides younger people, who may take media for granted, to do the same. Stephanie takes audience considerations a step further, reflecting on the wider context for dialogue that is created by her program's efforts to create a platform for young people's truths and to put them into contact with "people on the ground." Together, their statements also suggest that programs work to engage audiences as well as their own members, and this is important to the functioning of change mechanisms. Programs' engagement of an audience to receive their organizational messages may often serve their own ends of securing funding to be sustainable. Yet because each organization's mission is aimed at challenging the marginalization of young people, the effective engagement of the public allows them to serve more youth, over time, and to both give these

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youth more immediate access to eyes for their work and widen their footprint so that they can more effectively exercise their voices in the future.

A related component of programs' development of creative foundations for their participants was practice in critical evaluation of their own and others' work. In concert with participant learning in the areas of graphic communication, critical media literacy, and audience considerations, practices that could be categorized as critique in a traditional academic art sense were also used as a part of programs' arts and media instruction. This topic was not directly raised by many participants, probably because such practices are interwoven and not conducted formally as they would be in art school. Alex's and Harold's comments highlighted that when critique was used, it was deliberate, even if informal, and was handled carefully:

> Compared to Baltimore School for the Arts, [our critiques weren't formal] but there definitely would be feedback, "Is this why you want to make this decision with so and so?" or, "Why do you want to include this scene?" . . . And I think that's one of the ways that Wide Angle treats its students— not all the students are going to come from a critique-loving environment, and also you don't want to scare them off of their project . . . you want to get them to where their skills are really good . . . so you start by asking them to reconsider the biggest issues, sort of guiding them to see the things themselves, and also to see that they don't have to accept something as "good enough" but they can keep pushing . . . to not, like, accept, "Oh, I'm a kid and this is as good as it gets."
>
> \- Alex, Wide Angle

> It showed me how to, again, accept people for who they are and to accept people's ideas and opinions. And to accept criticism. It taught me to take criticism because as a student when I first started photography, I could not, I could not take it. I hated it when someone told me it was wrong. But being in the program showed me that criticism is not to make you mad it's to make you better.
>
> \- Harold, Access Art

Alex's and Harold's remarks about critique in their program illustrate critique's function from both a teacher' and a student's perspective, with Alex integrating lessons learned from her current work with memories of her time as a student. Although not referenced in the

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quotes above, it is probable in light of other findings, that programs' supportive relational settings aided participants in being productively challenged by critique practices rather than being overwhelmed by them.

Participants' experiences of change mechanisms related to creativity also included "eye-opening" instances, or exposure to new things they had never expected to encounter, a mechanism which worked in concert with program settings' fostering of increased openness to other people and ideas. In addition to the forms of art media often being brand new to them, some participants also cited the impact of being exposed to new music or avant-garde films, and/or attending galleries, museums, and art-specific events for the first time. Participants' memories of being introduced to novel experiences and perspectives through program activities were also more general. For example, because of her program Maia came into contact with unfamiliar parts of Baltimore and ultimately traveled much further.

> [One of the biggest impacts on me was] just experiencing the world outside of my house. Like the world— my world was Baltimore County or the Northwood side of Baltimore County, and when I came to Wide Angle it just opened my eyes to this amazing city . . . . And I got to travel and I got to meet these amazing people and have these wonderful experiences and it's just, without Wide Angle, I know I wouldn't have gotten those things . . . . [There was one time when] I remember that we had to take a test, and the two people who got the highest scores would actually get to go to Seattle and participate in this thing called Superfly Filmmaking. And it was 36 hours and you would get into groups with all these people from across the country and even some from different countries…
>
> - Maia, Wide Angle

Opportunities to experience new places, people, and ideas, both large and small, fostered an openness to experience that is an important component of thinking creatively. Further, such experiences may have stood out in participants' minds not only because they were novel, but because they directly impacted their creative process—by serving as points of inspiration,

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shaking assumptions, leading to a new favorite medium, or providing entrée into the art scene beyond the program level.

> I didn't have any idea how much I'd be doing with photography before Access Art . . . . I didn't think I had much going for me before I started . . . . [My favorite thing we did when I was a student] was the project that we did when [Executive Director] got a bunch of different photographers from different schools, and photo teachers coming in, and they all loved everything I did. [*laughs*] . . .. . . they were like, 'You've gotta do this and this, you've got potential, you've got potential!" . . . . And then we were like sitting there and printing our photos, and [this fashion photographer] was like, "These are really good," and I felt really good about myself. That's one project that I can say—when [college-level] teachers come in . . . and they tell you are doing work that is better than half of their [students], and you're 17, you're like, "Oh snizz-att!" . . . . I don't know if I'm going back, um, but I made it to college with, like, my photographs.
> - Marlon, Access Art

By showing and speaking with professional photographers and college art professors about his work, in the context of an exhibition at an art museum, Marlon cemented a view of himself as "photographer". As much as his supportive program setting, particularly interactions with adults there, had encouraged him, feedback from outside arts professionals gave a substantial boost to his confidence. Programs' ongoing incorporation of such opportunities, that encourage young people to see themselves *as artists*, may magnify the impact of their activities that provide participants with exposure to professional settings.

Another key part of the creative learning process— related to self-concept, critical thinking development, and serving as "eye opener" – was exposure to others' youth-produced media. This appeared to be an integral mechanism through which participants made intuitive and analytical connections to form new understandings of themselves and the world around them. Following her earlier presented comments about how she gained insights about he context and functioning of visual media, Stephanie went on to identify early, influential emotional responses she had to youth-produced videos she viewed at New Lens:

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> People watch TV or listen to music, or something like that, because they want to feel like they're not the only people who thinks a kind of way, or feels a certain kind of way, about something . . . so I remember the first time I ever watched a piece that had been produced here, it was just about some kids in the city just living their daily lives. And there have been very few times, like, just as a black girl living in Baltimore, when I feel like I have been able to see myself reflected in some kind of film or a show . . . [Making things like that] it's like a drug, like endorphins or something released in your brain. It makes you feel alive or something, or just validated . . . . Because there're no limits, like there's not an idea . . . of what we want to create, that would be [too] out of the box . . . So to me, that's what art is. Art is like you can't say no . . . you can't say that my art is wrong.
>
> - Stephanie, New Lens

As a young woman whose voice has often been marginalized, the act of seeing her experience finally validated constituted a power exchange between Stephanie and the creator of the video. After her initial exposure to an art form that reinforced her identity in a fresh way, over time in her program she participated in an iterative, reinforcing process of discovery and drew energy from that. In its entirety, such a process can form an ongoing, creative act that encompasses bearing witness – responding to – transfiguring – and carrying forward the voices of young people who have been told by society-at-large, through its representations and structures, that their voices don't matter. The power of art and media is personalized but not confined to the individual, and the creative process and its products provide confirmation that one matters.

Having the freedom to tell and partake in personally meaningful stories, and the skillsets to purposefully communicate and critically receive them, was integral to creative development for participants in their programs. Altogether, program activities— particularly arts and media projects and related tasks, but also special opportunities—were meaningful to participants as more than just skills-building exercises. The activities stimulated and shaped participants' perspectives, habits, media literacy, and openness to experience, among other

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outputs, which together could support a durable foundation for creative thinking, production, and learning.

Change agent capabilities are fostered.

The final change mechanism that emerged from analysis of participants' narratives was the fostering of their capabilities to make changes in their communities. The three studied programs actively work to develop critical consciousness about social justice issues for their participants and for the wider public through outreach and the radiating effects of participants' outcomes. However, findings from my previous study were inconclusive, relative to other processes, about how community-based arts organization members perceive and are impacted by program components designed to develop conscientization. Therefore at the outset of this study it was not clear how or to what extent participants would discuss their experiences of this type. Interestingly, in the present study every participant did address how, to different degrees, they were motivated by and received sets of "tools" from their programs in order to act as change agents in their communities. They provided a range of examples about the actions they now take inside and outside of their programs, often connecting them to something they observed or did in their programs and/or their program's ethos as it was conveyed via their setting culture.

Participants discussed that working with other youth in their programs increased their understanding of and interest in intervening with "the next generation coming up" (Halia), in addition to granting them social support (as detailed in above sections). This ranged from one participant noting that he had gained "a new heart for children" (Matthew), which motivated him to pursue future jobs that could impact children. In response to being asked how they thought being in their programs changed their desire and ability to make a difference in their

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communities, some participants described ways that they intentionally utilized program-inspired knowledge and skills to engage with children and youth in their other communities:

> [Because of the program] I'm much more honest, I can say being in the program made me more real than I was before and it made me control a lot of anger because I was a fighter, a fighter a lot when I first starting coming here . . . .
> I take outside what I learned in the photography community and take it into [my neighborhood community in] how I treat other people . . . . [Access Art] may help kids on a daily basis inside of this building, but I'm down there every day at the [rec center] with all the little kids that aren't in this program. I'm interacting with them, using what I learned, just as they are interacting with the ones that are in here now.
>
> - Harold, Access Art

> Things I did at Wide Angle— because of that [my] ability's gotten better, knowing when to step in . . . like knowing that even if it's not an interaction that's going to end well, it's still an interaction that might need to happen for someone else's growth . . . . With communities of people that I find myself involved in, I'll try to do facilitation and, like, peacekeeping . . . . I get a table and I sell my artwork [at anime conventions], but also I'll go to meet up with people and frequently I find myself the oldest one there . . . So it's sometimes they get rowdy or they get out of control, and I will actually [use] sort of the same things that I do in class with [students] to just try to get in order or some kind of structure . . . . I'll do the "Clap once if you can hear me" facilitation technique [so they get more out of the event]. . . . And I'm definitely way more likely to encourage other younger people to actually do stuff [with their art] now, than like before. I would've been like, "Ah that's a cool idea," but now I'm like, "You should do that! I'm going to help you find the pathway to do that."
>
> - Alex, Wide Angle

Both Harold and Alex had elsewhere in their interviews indicated that they were "not always great with people" (Harold) and "shy and not a self-starter" (Alex), underscoring that their current, independent efforts to reach out to youth were influenced by their program experiences. Comments from Elena and Marlon similarly demonstrated that they were compelled by their programs to think about children in their local communities differently:

> [I wasn't interested before, but now] I want them to do better—all of them, every last child. I want them to be excellent, and I want them to strive for [that]. . . [With other people] I used to be like, the "I'm better than you" thing, but now I don't see it like that. I see it more as like everyone has an opportunity to do really well and I can help them all do well. And I never look at anyone anymore like I'm better than them. Ever. Now, every child matters—to me—mostly. [*laughs*] But everyone has a story, everyone can teach you something that you don't already know.

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- Marlon, Access Art

> A lot of kids, you know, come in from first and second grade [now]. We try to get them to see doing projects in the community is actually good for the community . . . We're trying to teach them when they are actually younger than we were, because I feel like [our minds] would [be set] because . . . we were already teenagers . . . . [And I'm more sensitive to kids now] I see a lot of people with their kids, like, how they talk to them, and from my experience at Access Art, I want to tell them it's not right . . . . [So to make a difference] I would like to let people know that it doesn't have to be like always an "on the corner" type thing. Just having a little kid out late at night, or not doing anything for them after school. Like, [the impact] could be so much more . . . But they just don't even know.
>
> - Elena, Access Art

In light of comments made by Marlon and Elena elsewhere in their interviews, their status as staff members who had participated in their program seemed to have been influential on their thinking about how their positioning toward youth and their awareness of their potential impact on children. Additionally, at the time of their interviews, Access Art had relatively recently opened up to serving younger children than ever before. In the above example from Elena, it appears that for that reason her program is now different from when she started going as a teen, but reflecting back on her learning then she has formed the opinion that working with younger children can move forward the conscientization-focused aspects of her program's mission.

Other participants described ways that they felt they were making an impact on the various communities they are a part of by variously sharing what they learned in their programs. Matthew provided two different examples: he spends time with his young nephew, teaching him camera skills and, on the other, and he tries to share a particular outlook on life with his friends to motivate them.

> Now I see the positives and the negatives and I try to find middle ground. But I think, at first, I wasn't really convinced, like, I thought everything was just all bad, the government hates everybody, if you're not [worthy] enough, they don't want anything to do with you. And I think now I try to find like middle ground in both. Like my friend

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> had a job interview today, and he was nervous about it, and I'm, like, "Think about it, don't look at it like it's either going to make you or break you, it's nothing but a lesson . . . . So all it is, is you brush it off and you keep moving. . ."
>
> - Matthew, New Lens

Matthew attributed his desire to "share what I've learned with people, everywhere I go" to New Lens. Abdi, when asked how New Lens has affected his ability to make changes in his communities, brought up the work he has done with Black to Our Roots, another community organization he volunteers with and is "passionate" about. He noted that joining Black to our Roots was largely inspired by participating in New Lens, and explained how "what I do with Black to Our Roots and New Lens has both changed my thoughts on young people."

> [At New Lens we] raise awareness in the community on social issues . . . anything from education to homophobia, environment, cultural, social identity. You know, *who are you*, especially in the context of being African American in Baltimore. We deal with issues such as knowing your rights, so basically justice issues, and we do a lot of work around raising awareness and helping young people get more mobilized and organized as far as how they think about justice . . . . I've learned my fair share, on a grander scale, about some societal issues.
>
> - Abdi, New Lens

Increased awareness of issues and targeted knowledge about the world around them— ranging from micro- to macro-level— inspired participants to be change agents and gave them tools to act on that inspiration.

When asked how they felt they affected the communities they were a part of, several other participants described that they simply became more interested in other people by participating in their programs. They believed they were now capable of creating changes in their communities, in the first instance, because the way that they viewed others allowed them to have greater awareness of their concerns and ways that they could help. Marlon and David provided such examples:

> [Going through the program changed the way I am] I'm always, always trying to embody other peoples' emotions and feelings and understand. Always trying to look for

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> a way out for them instead of myself. I think I put a lot of other people first and that's because of that. I do, I put a lot of other people first now.
>
> - Marlon, Access Art

> I look at the people around me more. I observe them— their, my community more. I see people and I'll be, like, "They shouldn't be doing this." Like, drug dealers selling to addicts, I'm like, "Wow. This is what makes the world a little worse." And I didn't used to look at things like that, but now I look at my community and am, like, I wish things were better . . . I want to help people now in anything that I do. If I'm in a class in school, I'm always looking—I finish my work early, I get things done really quickly so I'm always looking to help the next person who needs it . . . [And my program] creates people like us [me and my peers] and then we branch out and interact with a bunch of different people.
>
> - David, Access Art

Membership in their program settings and practice in adopting other people's points of view had impacted how they viewed others' needs, and the give-and-take of being community members at Access Art had increased their understandings of the impact of outside community conditions.

Participants described different pathways for gaining self and community awareness in their programs. Maia's remarks, below, summarize her experience of the impact of these overlapping avenues for achieving critical consciousness:

> [The main purpose of Wide Angle] is teaching kids about media advocacy and how to be an advocate for themselves in their communities without being brainwashed by the media they see outside . . . For me [this was clear] with the fact that we had the freedom to control what we wanted to show everyone else, like with the Youth Media Festival . . . just to be able to have someone— an adult, tell me it was "ok" for me to say what I wanted to say, to give me the control to tell a story, wanted me to feel like I had that power anywhere else . . . . I think it was highly effective because it gave me, it really like boosted my confidence when it came to speaking out for what I wanted or what I thought was right. Otherwise if I wasn't in that program I don't I honestly don't believe I would be as outspoken as I am right now.
>
> - Maia, Wide Angle

Similarly, several participants noted targeted activities and ongoing, routine exchanges between setting members that promoted conscientization. These ranged from sharing factual information about social issues, to discussions that occurred while creating art with a social

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message and/or responding to a community concern, as well as leading younger students through those processes. Alex, in providing an example of targeted, consciousness raising activities at Wide Angle, discussed the successes of the program's current initiatives to help youth engage with community:

> The part of the mission about becoming engaged with the community is something that we're constantly seeking to improve upon . . . I think we're better at it now than when I was a student . . . . [Right now] our students are traveling [around town] and sort of discovering services that are available in Baltimore that they never even knew about . . . one of my students was like, "Ohh, let's talk about homelessness," not knowing any concrete facts about it. As a result, we brought in speakers from a drop-in center for homeless youth and people from the Faces of Homelessness Speakers Bureau and we took a tour of some parts of downtown Baltimore to se homeless service providers. So they're really starting to go out there and see that it is bigger than, like, you pass someone on the way to school and that someone is asking for money.
>
> - Alex, Wide Angle

Alex's students were provided with first-hand, multimodal learning opportunities about the issue of homelessness, bringing this issue to life for them. Also multidimensional in nature was the critical learning that participants experienced when creating their art and media projects and in mentoring others in creating projects. Both the review of existing media and production, in preparing for projects, and completion of projects for themselves and with others, stood out in participants' memories. Stephanie, Halia, and Abdi recalled different manifestations of media-based learning.

> First and foremost, at least for me . . . [New Lens] tries to foster leadership among young people, and, in general, trying to get people to think critically about whatever it is that they're doing with their lives. And I think that video is a really good tool for helping people to think critically . . . I'm helping one of the young ladies who's involved with [New Lens] to edit a video. And this was one of the first videos that she filmed . . . it's really been an interesting process, kind of watching her . . . like number one, how to digest but also to regurgitate it, so that other people can understand it . . . that really requires a lot of listening and a lot of understanding . . . I think that's the goal with all media, it's to humanize people's experience, make it something everyone can relate to . . . And to be human and show our voices...
>
> -Stephanie, New Lens

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> A video [I did] was called "Teen Parenting" . . . I had a really good friend who was pregnant with a child. It was our senior year of high school, and it was just, I think, seeing what she was put through, and seeing how people judged her . . . . I thought of [the MTV show] "Teen Mom" or "Sixteen and Pregnant". . . And I felt like when people see TV shows, they see all the bad things, they see the negative things . . . . I wanted to show people that teen parenting isn't necessarily a bad thing. I'm not saying to encourage students to do that, but to show them there are people out here who have these kind of changes in their life, it cause them to grow, it causes them to be more responsible.
>
> \- Halia, Wide Angle

> [The project we] most recently did was on youth employment called "The Night Shift" . . . That was pretty personal because we're dealing with employment of young people like me and how do we— is there a strategy for it? Like, are we really building skills for these people who are barely graduating high school, you know, are they willing to be part of the information age? That's important . . . . To the wider community I think we showed that young black kids are capable of fostering vision and being intelligent. [*laughs*] It doesn't mean it's not like something you see on BET everyday!
>
> \- Abdi, New Lens

Participants achieved new insights into their potential to be change agents by actively demonstrating cumulative critical thinking skills— cultivated throughout program components— through helping others to question the function of media and prevailing mass media representations that can mischaracterize and marginalize youth like themselves.

According to most participants' accounts, another key way that program activities encouraged their development as change agents was that activities offered them opportunities to be directly engaged in political and policy relevant experiences. Their involvement in these types of activities was strongly encouraged, and was sometimes even mandatory in one program (New Lens). John and Matthew provided examples of activities representing top-down and bottom-up change, and the impacts that they had on them:

> I've had that recognition amongst the organization [having a student award named for me], and it's just, you know, I like how that feels . . . So now I really want to do a lot of great things for the city . . . . And I know the city can be a lot more than what it is, but it just hasn't gotten there yet. So until I can find a way to make that happen, I'm just taking everything in and just noting the problems . . . [My program gave me tools for this] because we used to work for a politician— and, if I hadn't met him I don't think I

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> would have done a lot of research into the city government as much as I have, and sometimes I go to city council meetings. [Now] if I can't go, I'll tune in on TV and, thinking of ways of how I can become involved in city government or in my future I may even run for office.
>
> - John, Wide Angle

> To me, New Lens is a nonprofit that uses art and media to make people think. Like to really, to get you to understand and realize what's going on around you. And I can say that since I've been there, we have actually stood up to that . . . . We used to just have open and frank conversations, or even during the rallies and doing stuff for the school and standing up for what you believe in. I feel like I kind of knew [about issues], but it never sank in till I got [to the actions with the program] . . . It's a whole different experience to actually be there, and be the people standing there, fighting for something. I feel like it humbled me and it made me like really think about stuff that I wanted in life, or just social norms that were going on. I had to challenge that, like, "Why is it that it's acceptable for men to sleep around with a bunch of women, but it's not ok for women to do the exact same thing?" Like that makes no sense. So it completely opened my eyes…
>
> - Matthew, New Lens

In the first quote, John reflected on how the combination of getting recognition from his program made him feel like he *could* be recognized, and his exposure to city-level politics together with confidence in his ability to be involved and have a say encourages him to become even more involved, at a higher level, in the future. Matthew, as noted earlier, now works at an HIV prevention program and credits New Lens for helping him to find and obtain this job. His attendance at rallies on a variety of social issues, which he was prepared for in advance through frank group discussions, stimulated a critical awareness and helped form a skill set he carries with him in his current work.

Participants' assessments of their capability to create change in their communities were also evident in their descriptions of overall personal changes they observed in themselves. Such changes could be particularly impactful because they are generalizable. Three participants described ways that their long-term engagement with their programs had given them the ability and motivation to speak out about issues in whatever context, and to whatever end, they choose. In response to being asked if and how they think they create

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change and/or impact or how have a say their communities, Stephanie, Maia, and Halia gave the following responses:

> [Now] I rustle people's feathers a little bit. I kind of, like, ask a lot of tough questions . . . and I don't settle for like one-word answers. I'm constantly asking the question of, "Why does this [issue] exist?" and also I challenge people to be active in whatever—like, if they're discontented with something, then it's like, "Ok, what are you doing to change that?" . . . It's just now naturally a part of who I am, and I'm just not going to settle for something . . . . I can hold a mirror to a person and be like, "This is what I see, you know, if you want to do something about it, these are the things that I got in my bag, the tricks that you might be able to take at them…"
>
> - Stephanie, New Lens

> I never keep my mouth shut. When I see something that bothers me or I see something that I know can be changed . . . I am very vocal about it and I'm not afraid to voice my opinion even if I know someone else is not going to like it. And Wide Angle kind of gave that to me . . .[I'm also more interested in issues] especially when it comes to youth . . . especially in Baltimore City, kids don't get [what they need] because of funding cuts . . . it's something that I want to see changed, no matter if I'm a teacher or I'm a janitor who sings in the hallway . . . . The most meaningful experience for me was probably when . . . we were trying reach out to kids who were real inner city kids who didn't have any kind of afterschool programs. Yeah, and they were just amazed at the things we could do— they wanted to learn more . . . it was a great experience because that's always something I've always wanted to do, inspire people.
>
> - Maia, Wide Angle

> I think that I do have a strong say, I think that's because I really say how I feel and I really have a quality for standing up, speaking up. So I think that, hopefully it encourages other people to want to do the same, don't be afraid to speak up and voice your opinion . . . [Wide Angle] teaches you how to communicate, it keeps you open, it will make you not as shy, actually, when you have to show your video to somebody. You have to ask so many questions, so I think that it helps you to like be able to communicate better.
>
> - Halia, Wide Angle

All participants, including the young women quoted above, endorsed that their programs had helped them to be confident in their ability to "have a say" in their communities. Increasingly, as they undertook roles of increasing responsibility, "having a say" about how their programs could improve their community engagement efforts, appeared to be another mechanism that developed participants as change agents John's and Abdi's sentiments,

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below, are representative of several participants' comments about how they assessed and critiqued the work of their programs and, in particular, were concerned about outreach, functioning like program emissaries to try to grow the organizations.

> At Wide Angle the overall goal in that community [compared to others] would be like, you know, make sure the overall theme lived [through the work] was youth voice, youth outreach . . . . I would say the overall purpose [to the work] was pretty much continuity of the organization and continuity of, you know, making sure the next generation of youth that would come through the organization maybe had the opportunity of working with better equipment, or being able to look back and see what we did, and seeing how they can improve upon it going forward.
>
> \- John, Wide Angle

> [As an organization we succeed because] we've managed to keep a collective vision. The vision has to sail the ship dynamically or then it's unsustainable. I think if there is one issue with this organization it is sustainability . . . . [It's a challenge,] the fact that people don't find the work that we do integral to society. I think they do, but they don't want to use their dollars to indicate that it is. And also probably because of the population that we represent, which is youth and African Americans . . . . [Related to that] we've had some frustrations with the immediate community . . . This neighborhood has changed its class. So, for example, maybe ten years ago this was a very generally, say, lower-class community that is now becoming more gentrified . . . . it's hard to organize lower-class people because of the stress of having to work having to pay the bills. We've had difficulty connecting with that population, besides bringing the young people [here] . . . but not so much as far as initiating and mobilizing the adults of that community.
>
> \- Abdi, New Lens

Over time, growing responsibilities for participants within their programs granted them insights into the inner-workings of their programs. In concert with developing critical consciousness about social and community issues, participants perceived how the work of their organization connected with the wider community, and challenges for the organization in doing its work.

The second group of study findings attended to instrumental program components and the processes they produce. Together, these findings elaborated the preeminent change mechanisms, salient to participants, which emerged from programs' pursuit of outcomes.

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Evident in participants' narratives were how four change mechanisms— healthy maturation promotion, professional competencies development, creative construction, and change agent cultivation— shaped and grew their skills, abilities, and perspectives, as well as their understandings of and regard for themselves. The presence and operation of these mechanisms hint at, but do not in themselves answer, the third and final guiding research question for this research: how do program experiences translate into long-term change with external impact?

How do in-program experiences translate into external and long-term impacts: meaning-making that links internal program effects and external outcomes?

The third and final group of study results addresses the means through which participants' in-program experiences may translate into enduing, external impacts. Specifically, these findings address how cumulative in-program learning appears to be secured and to move from situated knowledge to actionable understandings that can be taken outside to be applied and shared. As the above presented findings show, participants endorsed the premise that they had changed in positive ways through program involvement. Further, they tied demonstrable behavioral changes to specific program setting features— experienced as engaging and promotive of influential relationships— and instrumental program components (i.e., activities and structures) that gave them skills, capabilities, and opportunities. Participants' in-program experiences clearly involved meaning-making, enabling them to change behaviors and form new understandings of themselves, others, and society, together constructing models for future thought and action.

Although these set of findings do not definitively show how in-program effects translate into external and long-term outcomes, and could not be expected to, given this study's design,

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they do provide clues about enduring changes for participants and potential pathways for their in-program learning to create radiating impacts. Due to the guiding study objectives of speaking with individuals who had accumulated lots of experiences within their programs, and whose memories of their experiences would be most likely to be clear and detailed, the sampling criteria was disposed toward participants who would not yet be able to gauge long-term outcomes. Moreover, each participant had remained in contact, either formally or informally, with their programs or program associates. Pertinent to this research question, many participants endorsed that they actively stay connected due to their ongoing interest in their programs' missions, suggesting that sustained contact and/or involvement could be an indicator of enduring engagement and program impact. For all participants, a foundation for meaning-making developed in their programs, which may enable participants to remain open to experience in order to be critical, productive, and life-long learners who can enact change in their communities.

Different program features held varying levels of salience for participants. Yet all participants described how, overall, the programs helped them to produce new and/or expanded understandings of themselves. Resulting increases in positive self-regard appear likely to shape participants' future thoughts and behavior outside of the program. For example, John explained the end result of Wide Angle's earlier presence in his life, using action-oriented terms.

> I am tight now, like, definitely. [Without Wide Angle] my life wouldn't be bad but it wouldn't be good either. I'd probably still be just in the house, you know, unbeknownst to the world . . . 'Cause I wouldn't have grown the confidence that I have now. I wouldn't be as ambitious as I am now, I wouldn't be as assertive, as outgoing as I am. It would be a lot of traits that would just missing, that I have now.
>
> - John, Wide Angle

It is conceivable that, even without Wide Angle, John could have developed all of the above-cited traits as he progressed through adolescence, assuming neutral or different, positive

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experiences. However, in his program he experienced change mechanisms, which reinforced one another within his supportive program setting, to create a tangible effect and a heightened perception of change. In a similar vein, Harold provided an example of a meaningful turning point in which the extent of his personal change became clear to him. Particularly proud of what he had accomplished at Access Art in light of his troubled home life, Harold felt the program had helped him to control his anger and reformed his self-concept in that process. These changes were made more meaningful when he contemplated the potential impact of sharing them with other youth like himself.

> I was one of those kids who was told outside [of Access Art] that basically, like, "You're not going to amount to anything." And, what made me proud and know differently was when my first piece of art actually [was] in the Walter's Art Museum, and a later one was at the Baltimore Museum of Art [as part of events]. I'd take kids I knew with me to the museum to see my work, and say, "This is me, ya'll, this is a kid off the streets and I made this and it's in the museum." So, to show them that, you can do something with yourself, too, and for me to think about that . . . . [Access Art projects] were important because they allowed me to impress [others], to prove that I wasn't just a clown . . . It proved to *me* that I can do something with myself.
>
> - Harold, Access Art

Seeing his artwork hanging in prestigious art museums challenged Harold's internalized view of himself as someone without potential. Sharing his work and, later, reflecting on having done so, provided him with a long-term lesson through his contemplation of the changes in himself.

Several participants' remarks portrayed meaning-making in the form of identifying and consolidating role model inputs. Role models, staff or peers mentioned in other parts of their interviews, were individuals who in participants' eyes had demonstrated expertise in those areas highlighted in program change mechanisms (i.e., individuals embodying qualities of maturity, professionalism, creativity, and leadership). Evident in earlier presented quotes, many participants described the supportive and productive learning relationships they had with such individuals, and connected changes in themselves to their efforts to emulate role models. Some

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participants went a step further to cite moments of insight about these interactions. Matthew provided such an example when speaking about the young woman who helped him in his workshop teaching.

> [The older student who mentored me] I thought I knew what she meant when she talked about, like, community-based creation, and for that you need young people in charge. I got all that, it made sense. But it never really— I don't feel like it sunk in until I actually like sat back and I watched what I helped her to do [when we worked with young kids together] through those kids. And I think that's what really, really made me be, like— I need to do something to help people like this, like her, and it made me a shape of what I wanted to do with *my* life. Because before that I had no idea.
>
> - Matthew, New Lens

Matthew had, to that point, ascertained the guiding ethos of New Lens and begun to pick up youth-led teaching tactics from his fellow student. However, observing and contemplating the early results of having put her example into action enabled Matthew to set a guiding intention for his future. John also recalled a moment of realization, and the meaning-making related to program role models, that gave him a new "drive" based on changed expectations for himself.

> It was just like year after year [Executive Director and my favorite instructor] would look for more out of me— more and more and more, and it pushed me a lot more, you know, it made me grow a lot . . . . [It changed the way I interact with people because] I would say now I just look at Baltimore as like a lot smaller than what it really is. It's almost as if like… everyone I come into contact with it's almost like I live right next door to them, even though I don't . . . we share a lot and I feel connected . . . . [I knew Wide Angle had given me that] when I was invited to this open house . . . they had me mingle amongst the guests and . . . there were many new faces . . . and it was a lot more comfortable for me, as opposed to something I wouldn't even do prior to being a part of the organization. Once they finally put me amongst all of these big wigs I knew [I was more confident] . . . . It was a good kind of pressure . . . . Now I just fully have a drive to just like be a big figure in the city, because, you know, being at Wide Angle, I've been looked up to from my peers and shined down upon by administration.
>
> - John, Wide Angle

The two staff cited by John had conveyed to him, by entrusting him to represent the program, their high expectations for him. Meeting those expectations reformed his expectations for himself. John felt more efficacious, but also began to extrapolate meaning from his position

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within Wide Angle in such a way that he could perceive the potential of sharing a mutually influential relationship with his wider community. Underscoring the influence of these particular staff members, prior to making the above statement, John had spoken about how he reestablished contact with them after having left the program on negative terms. This suggests his continued process of retrospectively making meaning out of being “shined down upon” by, yet remaining autonomous from, these role models. Although he valued their influence, he was not so closely tied to their opinions that he couldn’t productively move past one instance of disapproval from them.

Elena also provided an example of consolidating a role model’s influence. As both a student and, more recently, a staff member, she described having gained insight about her aspirations through her Executive Director.

> Access Art means a lot to me. … [recently] they gave me a job when I didn’t have one . . . At the same time, you know, they helped me grow all along. Like, working with kids, I’ve learned a lot about really young kids that I didn’t know before . . . [And] I was seeing [Executive Director], like, write so many grants and things like that. And actually, like when we feed them dinner he had to actually go out and get a food license. So, I just learned it’s just *a lot* to run a program. Like, to keep it up you have to have the energy and you have to have the focus and the determination and everything to do all of that . . . I think it’s actually going to mean a lot to me in the future, because I’ve actually thought about, like, kind of doing a program [like this]. But, now I don’t know if I would want to be as involved as much [as Executive Director] with it. But at the same time, I have [become] more determined in myself. And I don’t want to *not* be involved and not know what’s going on with my program.
>
> - Elena, Access Art

For Elena, seeing first-hand how her admired role model undertook the many facets of his job shaped her thinking about doing similar community-engaged work. Elena also appeared to demonstrate healthy individuation by acknowledging his influence on her, but then made a balanced assessment of whether or not following in his footsteps would be a good fit for her.

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Matthew and Stephanie provided clearer examples of meaning-making in relation to their Executive Director as a role model.

> I think it makes young people just see—like it's not only a organization that helps people, but it's training you to be the person in charge. Like I don't feel like New Lens trains anybody to just go out and get a job, I feel like it teaches you to, how to go out and run an organization . . . . [In the "frank discussions" with Executive Director I mentioned before] we talked about growing somebody into a leadership position. . . and together we put up different teams,. It all became natural to me, and I knew I could do even more than I was doing at New Lens . . . [Getting to figure that out] was really strong, I think. I feel like in other places it's either you are [in charge], or you're not. I don't feel like you really have too much of discussion, or too much of an opportunity to learn how to be a leader.
>
> - Matthew, New Lens

> I've learned so much from [Executive Director] and by being involved about how to lead an organization. But at some point my thinking started to change….It's weird, like, the dynamic here, because they say [young people and staff] form an organization but people like [Executive Director] and Emily are the adult staff who… have a larger role when it comes to the financial stability of the organization [and are seen as in charge]. …and that's part of the reason why I was [thinking] to step back [involvement]. It's because I felt like my roles in those areas was being stifled, because those positions were filled . . . . I think, probably [Executive Director] and I have moments of tension about the way that we're structured . . . and how youth leadership contrasted with adult leadership and organization, you know, sometimes for me it was really uncomfortable . . . [But] we all compromised and figured out a way to work things out . . . .My [take on the] resolution of that is because our organization is so new and, the concept of being "youth-led"— it's not like you can go read a book about how to do it. So what [Executive Director] and I, all of us, are doing together is trying to figure out what that looks like. And along with that, we're going to have a lot of problems and tensions and people's feelings and emotions, and even people's, like, relationships to society and power . . . are going to be compromised . . . it isn't necessarily going to be resolved right away. I understand that it's a work in progress . . . . But in the mean time we still have things that we have to accomplish.
>
> - Stephanie, New Lens

The quotes above provide very different examples of self-awareness in change processes stemming from New Lens' efforts to develop young people as leaders. Both participants recollected being mentored in leadership roles, but experiencing the limitations of still being in a "youth" role. Particularly for Stephanie, conscious awareness was an asset but created dissonance for her in light of organizational tensions. Dealing with these tensions offered an

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opportunity for transformative learning when she consciously reconciled discordant aspects of her role model's influence, choosing to be philosophical about her program. Incidents prompting consolidation of role models' varied influences are indicative of participants' active role in co-creating program change processes, providing a foundation for future meaning-making.

Like Stephanie, Abdi provided an example of self-aware meaning-making related to tension he experienced at New Lens. When asked if he remembered specific experiences that had changed him, he recalled that relatively early in his time there he had often been at odds with other students and butted heads with a teacher. However, after being on the verge of quitting for some time, staff intervened.

> You know, there've just been moments where I definitely wanted to quit [New Lens]. I was just like, "This is some bullshit, I'm done with this place. Kids on the Hill can sink down and roll down the hill for all I care." So, like, just wanting to quit but seeing that it was counterintuitive to my goals and sticking with it . . . . [Staff here] helped me push through. There was a couple of moments where I was tethering at the edge, I guess being really irresponsible, and they sat down and said, "You know we care about you here . . ." which got me to the point I could stay, and then I could see what here was in my [interests].
>
> - Abdi, New Lens

Although concerned staff dissuaded Abdi from leaving New Lens, his realization that leaving was not in his best interests also fueled a conscious choice to stay. Underlying this turning point was his progressive awareness, implicit above and elsewhere in his interview, that he had become someone who was capable of sticking things out. Later in his interview, within the context of discussing how having had different program roles (i.e., student, mentor, quasi-staff) made him feel differently about himself, Abdi described a pivotal event that prompted a new comprehension of his development in relation to the beliefs of others.

> [After being in New Lens I see myself as] capable, somewhat productive— at least that I have the potential to be productive . . . . [Thinking back] there have been a couple of

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> moments when I was aware [I felt that way]. I think the first was when we showcased some of my work . . . we showed some of our films for a fundraiser and my dad came and it was the first time he had ever seen any of my work because . . . he didn't approve of this organization at first. So when he saw it he was, like, "Man, my son can really act! . . . He can produce work, act, and direct." That was a real proud moment I guess because . . . my dad never really had no incentive to be giving a compliment . . . he didn't approve of me acting, like, ever. My dad was a devout Muslim so he just worried that it was against the codes of Islam . . . It definitely did bother me [that he didn't approve]. So after, he definitely was, like, "I can see why you do it." He understood . . . That meant a lot, that I was good enough at it to open his mind even that much.
>
> - Abdi, New Lens

Based on statements elsewhere in his interview, it was apparent that Abdi had had a close but conflicted relationship with his dad, who passed away while Abdi was in the program. Even though Abdi had otherwise become conscious of his new view of himself as talented and productive, the jolt of witnessing his father's thinking shift, even just a bit, in relation to this change was profound. The high emotional stakes involved when participants transformed their self-concepts suggests how meaning-making does and may continue to translate in-program experiences into the rest of their lives.

Other participants' narratives provided clues about how being self-aware while experiencing program change mechanisms could contribute to transformative meaning-making. Elena, in a retrospective assessment of the major ways that she had changed through program involvement, described how she became aware of a growing openness to experience that was fostered by Access Art.

> [Thinking back to the person I was when I started at Access Art] Now, I like to try a lot of new things. So it's just I want to travel now, a lot. I've actually thought of about even, you know, if I become a photographer, like, how they move around to different countries, and just like photograph jungles and stuff like that. [*laughs*] I've thought about that stuff. I'm just ready now to try a whole lot of new things, things I've never even thought about doing before . . . . After Access Art I do feel like I can succeed in any new things that I try . . . . [I knew I changed like this] because I would just hear people talking about things or, like, I would just see things and feel like, "Oh, I want to try that,". . . . . my family has noticed [this change in me] too. It actually ties right to the

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> whole theatre thing because at first I did want to be an actress, but they always told me, "You gotta travel and things like that", and at first I was close-minded to that.
>
> - Elena, Access Art

Elena experienced a progressive awareness of personal change, with her transformed self-concept accumulating more meaning as it was validated in others' eyes. This self-awareness appeared to be actuated in another facet of her view of herself— a certainty that she could succeed.

In addition to identifying decisive, eye-opening experiences that signaled positive changes had occurred for them, participants connected their perceptions of transformation to demonstrable, potentially enduring capabilities and perspectives. They further connected their altered self-concepts to their movement toward becoming the change agents that many thought their programs wanted them to be. Maia provided an example of program-related changes becoming cemented through active consideration and ongoing enacting of it in relation to others. She noted that her involvement with Wide Angle had effected a substantial change in her, which she conceptualized as a "personality" change. Like Elena, Maia seemed surprised by the extent of the difference she observed in herself.

> M: [Wide Angle changed the way I interact with people because] As far as my relationships with others, it really opened my mind up to the possibilities of what could be, so not just expecting to be friends with specific people or expecting to get along with that person because we have these things in common. What I like now is how different I am compared to other people and how those relationships can flourish . . . . It's just they've just given me a world of confidence that I've never had before and it's something that I'll always carry with me . . . . It's been a personality change, definitely . . . . I figured I was going to be the shy and awkward kind for the rest of my life, so I might as well just live with it. But once I started at Wide Angle I flourished. I really did.
>
> Interviewer: How did you or when and how did you know that this had changed for you?
>
> M: When I left Wide Angle I had actually started public school and I flourished there, and I figured I definitely wouldn't because I had been homeschooled for eight years. It

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> was because of the two years I was with Wide Angle— it was just that much of a learning experience . . . . And being open to new things, being open to new kinds of people. And being able to interact and kind of identify with anybody no matter who you are, what you do, or where you're form. That's something that will definitely stay with me forever . . . . I plan on being a teacher so I'm going to have to identify with all kinds of people and be able to be mature . . . to be able to keep [my] composure and work through problems . . . to just cope with all kinds of things.
>
> - Maia, Wide Angle

Maia appeared to construct meaning about her outcomes— mainly becoming more confident and open— from having the eye-opening realization that she did not have to "just live with" being a certain way. Personal change was something that was possible, presently and in the future, and the change process was something she had a hand in and was not entirely outside of her control.

Other participants depicted transformative meaning-making as a more explicitly developmentally congruent process. As such, it also appeared to have the potential to be perpetuated through attitudes and approaches that they can carry with them through life. Abdi highlighted his conscious reforming of his self-concept in adolescence, and Alex provided a complimentary observation about how she now sees the change process she started as teen carrying forward into adulthood.

> Knowing I was a teenager [at that time], you know, just having a very positive idea of myself and being okay with [who I was] and therefore being able to act [better] and not be corrosive with others . . . . The main thing was, like, nurturing the changes in myself so I can enact whatever changes I want in the outside community— so, what is the quote? Be the change you want to see . . . . [New Lens] definitely helps me get there. I would say it's like having a bag of resources and assets, and this will be a nice sturdy hammer in my tool bag, you know, and all the things that it comes with, so like teaching, acting filming [are a part] . . . . You know, sometimes people say, you know, "That should be a movie," or I should write a book on it. I feel like now I can . . . If I really feel like an idea is strong enough I will go ahead a do it. I have the confidence in that.
>
> - Abdi, New Lens

> I see all these [changes in myself] lasting and like evolving, because even though I'm older, those are also places that I identify as things I can still improve upon. I know now that there is this sort of constant growth that needs to happen, you know, and it's sometimes frustrating. It's like, "Oh my gosh! When will I be aware of the world

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> around me enough that I don't step into these situations that I'm kicking myself for? When will my planning and foresight ability be good enough? . . . But I definitely have the foundation to figure [that out] now. That's key in my life.
>
> - Alex, Wide Angle

Abdi and Alex's similar use of metaphors communicates their comprehension of the ongoing impact of their program learning. The entirety of their interviews substantiates that their program gains included both expanded expectations for themselves and real capabilities, including as life-long learners, to back up those expectations. Alex's ongoing exercising of self-assessment skills, attributable to Wide Angle, may further elucidate a path through which in-program effects may become longer-lasting. Through transformational learning, participants develop enduring and flexible faculties for ongoing meaning-making in their lives.

As has been shown throughout these results, the programs' cultivation of openness (open-mindedness and openness to experience)— through engaging setting aspects, relationships, and change mechanisms— was cited as a key in-program effect. Not only was openness a form of change, it appeared that it was implicated in meaning-making processes by encouraging and shaping new self-concepts that could convey beyond the program settings. In a notable example of this, Marlon cited actions related to feeling more open as the proof to himself that he had changed.

> M: [The biggest change in my life since I started going to Access Art is] acceptance of myself. Acceptance of others. And how I communicate with other people. The program— [Executive Director]— has taught me that before, you know, you can like be helpful to anyone else, you need to be able to help yourself and accept yourself, just who you are. And that has been a very good, big change. Because, as of right now, what people think of me does not really bother me. Like, people have opinions. And I do really like, I do love to hear people's opinions [*laughs*] like, about me. And, like, critique me all you like, but at the end of the day I have to make decisions that's right for me and that's what I do. And I'm a lot more open than I was before. [I know this change happened] because I can physically say and do things and I'm open to feeling *more*. And in the beginning, before I started the program I would never do half the things I do now, not even close.

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> J: Can you give an example of that?
>
> M: I…am…*gay*. And I can say that and not care . . . There's just so much that's changed. Like, I would walk outside in a geisha dress in a heartbeat [*snaps fingers*]. And the program has so much to do with that—believe it or not! Like, it made you feel completely comfortable about you, and—about yourself, and you just don't care, you just don't care . . . . I think that I am living proof of the difference [Access Art makes in Baltimore.] Because, honestly, I don't think I would be nearly as far as I am if it wasn't for Access Art.
>
> - Marlon, Access Art

In his previously reported quotes, Marlon described the numerous benefits he feels he has derived from his past and present involvement with Access Art. Particularly in combination, all of these benefits have the potential to positively impact his future. However, emerging patterns of self-learning that Marlon observed, as he changed over time, were distilled and made fully understandable when he internalized his greater openness to include full acceptance of himself. As he is more receptive to others and feels less inhibited in reaching out, particularly in his ongoing role at Access Art as a teacher and de facto program emissary, openness becomes self-actualization that translates outside of the program. Daniel also commented that he feels more open and connected that to feeling like he is an example of the difference Access Art makes in Baltimore. He now has the desire, the skills, and the confidence to be a change agent whenever he has the opportunity.

> I feel like Access Art allowed me, kids like me, to look at the world in our own way, in a different way, like through a lens that happens to be— we see the world differently and how we want to see it and not how we may see it when we're at home. People may have a bad situation at home but when they go to photography they can look at the world and see wonder in the world and be more curious about the world, and not feel so bad about their situation at home . . . . [It changed the way I am with others] I want to help people now in anything that I do. If I'm in a class in school, I'm always looking—I finish my work early, I get things really quickly so I'm always looking to help the next person who needs it. And I interact better with people, I'm more open to people's ideas . . . . It's given me that reason to try to put forth the effort. Because if I can understand [other people] then I can try to help them . . . . It creates these people, like us [in the program] [*gestured around the room*] and then we branch out and interact with a bunch of different people.

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- David, Access Art

In light of his and other participants' critiques about their programs' outreach efforts, stemming from their wish to reach more youth, David's comments further elucidate meaning-making as an actuating, consciously directed, and reinforcing process. Inspired by Access Art's mission and equipped with greater maturity and emotional intelligence, as well as creativity, critical thinking, and leadership skills, David wants to and can put forth a purposeful effort to help others. He comprehends how the program changed him, and not only understands how it can help others like him, but how *he* can create radiating change.

In sum, participants reported that their views of themselves were pivotally transformed through program involvement. Their narratives incorporated self-aware assessments of specific capabilities they had gained and more global impressions of how their personalities and attitudes had changed. Forms of participants' meaning-making that may serve as intervening paths between in-program experiences and external outcomes included the consolidation of program role models' influence and identification of and retrospective contemplation about key points at which they knew they had changed. Participants' employment of conscious meaning-making— about the overlapping, additive program elements that had affected them— provided clues rather than definitive answers about how and to what extent program impacts become external and carry on into the future. Nonetheless it is clear that all participants felt transformed and co-created that transformation. They gained foundational competencies, perspectives, and aspirations— and a commitment to applying these— that together allowed them to see themselves and others through new eyes, to critically and creatively reframe assumptions, and to develop higher expectations that were grounded and tempered by genuine experiences.

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Discussion

At the outset of this study, a wide-ranging review of literature confirmed that the potentially radiating change processes enabled by community-based arts organizations have received little research attention. Most research about these organizations has tended to focus on relatively static, individual-level outcomes and has not examined impacts over time. Consistent with challenges faced by the arts as a whole, arts programs have struggled with quantifying and communicating their value to society, and in recent times have more vigorously pursued evaluation in order to secure the funding they need to survive and to continue serving communities. In this context, organizations, as well as funders, have given precedence to research aimed at measuring social impacts that are improbable or unrealistic for individual arts programs. As noted in the Introduction to this study, many stakeholders are preoccupied with high-level outcomes— direct impacts on health, crime, education, and employment— that do not reflect the realities of programs, such as their duration of contact with participants and the actual methods they employ. Such an evaluation emphasis can inhibit realistic goal-setting for organizations, and push evaluation strategies that simply gather descriptions of benefits of a mainly transitory nature (Jermyn, 2004).

This study responds to calls for research that makes clear what community-based arts organizations are actually equipped for, and quite good at doing, and studies that establish relationships between program practices and intended outcomes (Borwick, 2012; Jackson, 2009). Moreover, I answered this research charge by applying a community psychology approach that is aligned with Community Arts' values, which prioritize participants' voices and emic understandings. By elucidating organizations' change-promoting mechanisms using participants' own perspectives, and looking across three similar but not identical programs, the findings of this

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research expand understandings about the construction of both processes and outcomes that are implicated in the pursuit of arts-based social impacts. In the remainder of this discussion, I will first briefly return to the extant literature about social impacts of the arts to summarize how the findings of this study confirm earlier findings about program impacts. Then, following the order of the guiding research questions for this study, I will discuss the contributions this study's findings make toward filling the gaps identified in extant research.

Although outcomes were not measured in this study, study findings drawn from participants' subjective reports did corroborate many extant findings about arts programs' individual-level effects. These findings included: acquisition of supportive social networks, development of new skills, increased self-esteem and self-understanding, improved social skills, increased confidence, personal growth, new occupational opportunities, transformation of identity, increased artistic skills, greater civic participation, and the creation of new roles (Hacking, et al., 2006; Howells & Zelnick, 2009; Jermyn, 2001; Stickley, 2007; Wright, et al., 2006). This study is novel in exploring detailed self-reports of program effects from the relatively under-represented standpoints of program alumni and long-term participants. In addition, my findings were consistent with the small amount of extant research that has connected participants' outcomes to particular program features. Features of community-based arts programs that my participants endorsed as important to their positive growth, which earlier studies had found to be associated with positive effects, included: structures and routines, opportunities to build social and emotional capital, progressive participation in a range of activities, training via Incremental skills development, mutually meaningful activities, group collaborations, formation of a community of artists, and bridging features to the outside community (Hacking, et al., 2006; Howells & Zelnick, 2009; Moody & Phinney, 2012).

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Confirmation of previous studies' findings about outcomes, and the program aspects that likely contributed to them, may in themselves help to build the broader research base about community-based arts. However, this study's findings go further to enrich understandings about setting features, mechanisms, and intervening factors that may facilitate the relationship between program components and enduring outcomes. Together, these illustrate an overall change process facilitated by engagement based in strengths-based offerings and a supportive relational community, as well as additive change mechanisms that emerge from programs' pursuit of their stated missions (e.g., projects and other activities). These features and change mechanisms appeared conducive to meaning-making and ongoing transformational learning that may propel in-program effects beyond the setting. These results were obtained by following the premises of theory-driven, process evaluation, and by posing open questions that allowed participants to directly address the program experiences that were most salient to them. This expands knowledge of what the actual "take-aways" from programs' efforts might be, as opposed to only measuring outcomes based on a priori assumptions.

The aim of this study was to fill the gaps in extant literature in order to inform future arts program evaluation efforts. This study was built from a previous one (Scheibler, 2011) by inductively generating new theory to answer the overarching question: *How do program participants' subjective experiences of the change processes created by their programs convert to external and longer-lasting impacts?* Although there were extensive findings from the reanalysis of pre-collected data and analysis of 11 new qualitative interviews, this research question was not definitely answered. However, as presented above, the findings do provide a great deal of information about two study sub-questions: 1) *How do long-term participants experience CBAOs' pursuit of outcomes?;* 2) *What mechanisms underlie/emerge from CBAOs'*

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pursuit of outcomes? What does it look like inside the "black box" of the change processes? Findings were interesting, but less clear, in regards to the third sub-question: *How do in-program experiences translate into external and long-term impacts: meaning-making that links internal program effects and external outcomes*?

Engagement was identified as a key driver for all subsequent individual and program impacts. An important finding of the first sub-question of this research– *How do long-term participants experience CBAOs' pursuit of outcomes?*— was that participants experienced engagement as a perceptible process, one that began at the point of entry into their programs and carried through with many of them to the time of their interviews. Without lengthy engagement, in which participants perceive that their programs are a good fit for them, change processes with the potential to create enduring outcomes cannot occur. All participants had strong recollections of how they were engaged by program activities that both fit with their specific, preexisting personal characteristics and interests and encouraged further development of their strengths. Although the three studied programs varied in their approaches and in the sets of arts and media activities they offer, all three engaged young people who were fairly highly motivated, and who were seeking something they could not get at school. It was apparent that programs maintained such youths' engagement for long periods of time, but conversely were *not* engaging to other youth who, in participants' estimations, did not share key characteristics with them. To my knowledge, extant research about community-based arts organizations to this point has not addressed the issue of person-setting fit as it relates to program function and/or effectiveness. This study's participants highlighted the distinctive fit of their programs to their strengths and needs, which may have encouraged them to remain in their programs over time in order to reap benefit but also suggests that young people may uniquely benefit from customized programming.

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This is in keeping with classic community psychology conceptualizations of the role of environment on individual outcomes (Barker, 1968; Kelly, 1966; Lewin, 1951).

Another informative set of findings related to participants' engagement emerged from their descriptions of program settings' encouraging of commitment by way of close, familial relationships and by fostering a sense of community, consistent with community psychology formulations (McMillan & Chavis, 1986), with adult mentors and peers. Trusting and mutually respectful program relationships facilitated varied forms of learning, including social learning that was particularly important for participants to partake of during their adolescences. Interestingly, participants connected conceptualization of their programs as "communities" with being more open-minded about others' differences, with some participants highlighting diversity (ethnically/culturally and in ideas) as an important feature of these communities. Participants' remarks suggested that "openness" was both a form of change that they experienced and was itself a marker of community membership. Per McMillan's and Chavis' (1986) definition, membership is comprised of boundaries, sense of belonging, and feelings of emotional safety, and it would be fruitful for programs to look more closely at how they can productively encourage the iterative functioning of these factors to support change.

Another important consideration coming from community psychology, related to these findings, stems from Weisenfeld's (1996) description of "micro-belongings", and her cautions about the related "myth of we" that assumes homogeneity of experiences within communities. Underscoring the conceptualization of community as a process, rather than a static entity, Weisenfeld defined micro-belongings as multiple, co-occurring senses of community that exist at the level of each of the multiple sub-communities within the larger community that an individual identifies with. Particularly in programs like those studied here, in which young people are seen

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not only as recipients of services but as artists and change agents, it is important for researchers and practitioners to determine and attend to how multiple senses of community (Brodsky & Marx, 2001) functions for participants across settings (program-school-neighborhood, for example) and within the setting. It may behoove programs to apply greater attention to how they help or hinder their members in constructing or traversing boundaries related to multiple communities that impact their lives. In light of my previous study findings about the strong influence of psychological sense of community on participants' perception of program outcomes, as well as Community Arts' practitioners' description of their work as "a relationship industry" (Borwick, 2012), the entire set of findings about programs as unique relational settings may signal directions for further exploration.

Relatedly, although this study was not designed to be explicitly comparative, it should be noted that the nature of adult-student relationships in programs varied among participants within programs and between participants in different programs. In most cases, this variation appeared to stem from the following: changes in leadership (i.e., a "new" Executive Director at Wide Angle within the last few years), the shifting of staff members' roles over time (e.g., Access Art's Executive Director concentrating more on grant-writing and less on hands-on work; former students becoming staff members), overall program evolutions due to growth and succession (Kelly, 1966). As the findings above illustrate, the relationships that developed within the settings were, overall, positive and supportive ones, but they were in many ways idiosyncratic to the individuals involved and not necessarily generalizable. Thus, relationships, just like other program setting aspects, need to be individualized in order to be most impactful. Taking steps to examine, measure, and adjust person-setting fit in this area utilizing foundational community psychology frameworks, such as Rudolf Moos' (1973; Moos & Moos, 1976) that assesses the

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relationship dimension of a setting's social climate, could improve interactions to create more effective program environments. Future research about the nature of program settings and the functioning of sense of community as an integral change process would be well-served by incorporating an examination of such issues, as participants' experiences could be sharply impacted depending on the strength of their bonds with other setting members.

A substantial set of findings was generated in response to the second sub-question explored in this study— *What mechanisms underlie/emerge from CBAOs' pursuit of outcomes? What does it look like inside the "black box" of the change processes?—* and these findings perhaps went the furthest toward filling gaps in extant literature about community-based arts. They did this by illustrating participants' perceptions of what actually happens within programs, via instrumental program components, to create positive changes that mattered to them. Changes broadly included their growth of professional and creative skills, new understandings and critical perspectives, self-regard, and openness to experience. As detailed above, four, sometimes overlapping, mechanisms thematically emerged from analysis of participants' narratives: 1) fostering healthy maturation, 2) developing professional competencies, 3) building a creative foundation, and, 4) promoting change agent characteristics. Once again, although this study was not comparative, it should be noted that each program, based on their mission, applied a different emphasis to activities such that the operation of the four mechanisms was more or less evident in participants' remarks, based on their affiliations (e.g., New Lens is the most focused on social justice, such that its participants' remarks were more revealing of the change agent mechanism). There were no dramatic differences observed in participants' perception of their outcomes based on programs' differing emphases, but similar programs that undertake self-evaluations should be mindful of what processes and outcomes are most worthwhile for them to attend to, based on

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their intended theories of change stemming from their missions. Although all programs may not have explicit theories of change, most do have notions of how their missions are meant to drive activities to produce certain outcomes. Thus, if a program's mission emphasizes social justice aims, for example, it behooves them to know if the mechanisms generated by their activities are actually conducive to achieving those aims.

All three studied organizations did have social justice-oriented missions geared toward adolescents. Therefore it is not surprising that their programs all employed structures, roles, and— similar to other programs described in extant research— purposeful arts and media projects that facilitated reflection and encouraged participants to take action to change their life's circumstances and their communities (Green & Tones, 2003; Purcell, 2004). This study's findings elaborate the additive function of the entirety of change mechanisms that encourage such action, including those arising from activities that are not explicitly derived from programs' missions. Further, in one of the few previous studies that also examined change processes in community-based arts programs, Heath and Roach (1999) reported findings about program aspects, similar to those described in this study, and potentially facilitative of the four identified mechanisms. These included the provision of roles of increasing responsibility for youth and the use of critique processes to provide youth with practice in assessing work and in behaving like adults. The current study substantively adds to the knowledge base, provided by studies such as Heath & Roach's, by having more closely examined the concurrent operation of multiple mechanisms from participants' perspectives as individuals who, feeling more mature, competent, creative, and critically-minded, had begun to put in-program learning into action. A salient, additive effect of the four change mechanisms for participants is that they became more critical media consumers, who were more likely to question the status quo of a society that did not

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appear to value their voices, even as they simultaneously grew more hopeful and aspirational because they felt, and saw, the evidence of their being more capable and confident.

This study's findings related to the mechanism of "building a creative foundation" attend specifically to the functioning of programs' arts activities, and are note-worthy because they corroborate some of the more intriguing extant findings about community-based arts, but also expand on them. These findings are consistent with Mulligan and colleagues' (2006) observation that the community arts projects they studied worked by making participants' "experiences cohere" by creating a sense of "narrative movement in their lives (pp. 183–188). The present study's findings suggest that creativity development in programs, particularly through personally-important arts and media project work, can prompt new levels of self-awareness, understanding about oneself in relation to others and to society, and critical thinking skills that together were promotive of meaning-making processes. In other research, community arts projects have been shown to serve a bridging function between programs and the larger community, and between individual and community-level outcomes (Howells & Zelnick, 2009; Moody & Phinney, 2012). This study's findings also corroborate those findings, particularly under the umbrellas of creativity and the development of change agent capabilities. Through inter-related project work and critical media examination, participants made connections between their personal and community/social concerns, often prompting new level of motivation to create change in their communities. One way they did so was by accumulating "eye-opening" experiences. For many these seemed to develop as greater relational openness, as well as to a greater openness to experience through arts activities, which together created young people who were more accessible and adventurous actors in their communities. Thus, this study generated new knowledge about pathways of meaning-making, that could result in external and durable

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post-program impacts, particularly through its uncovering of the progressive, multi-faceted learning that occurred for participants within arts and media projects. A key understanding about the functioning of these projects is how they are situated within overall contexts of multiple change mechanisms and the engaging setting components that supported and perhaps amplified those mechanisms. Figure 3, below, depicts a conceivable model of the full set of program engagement and change processes in relation to one another, based on this study's findings. (A larger version of the model appears in Appendix F.)

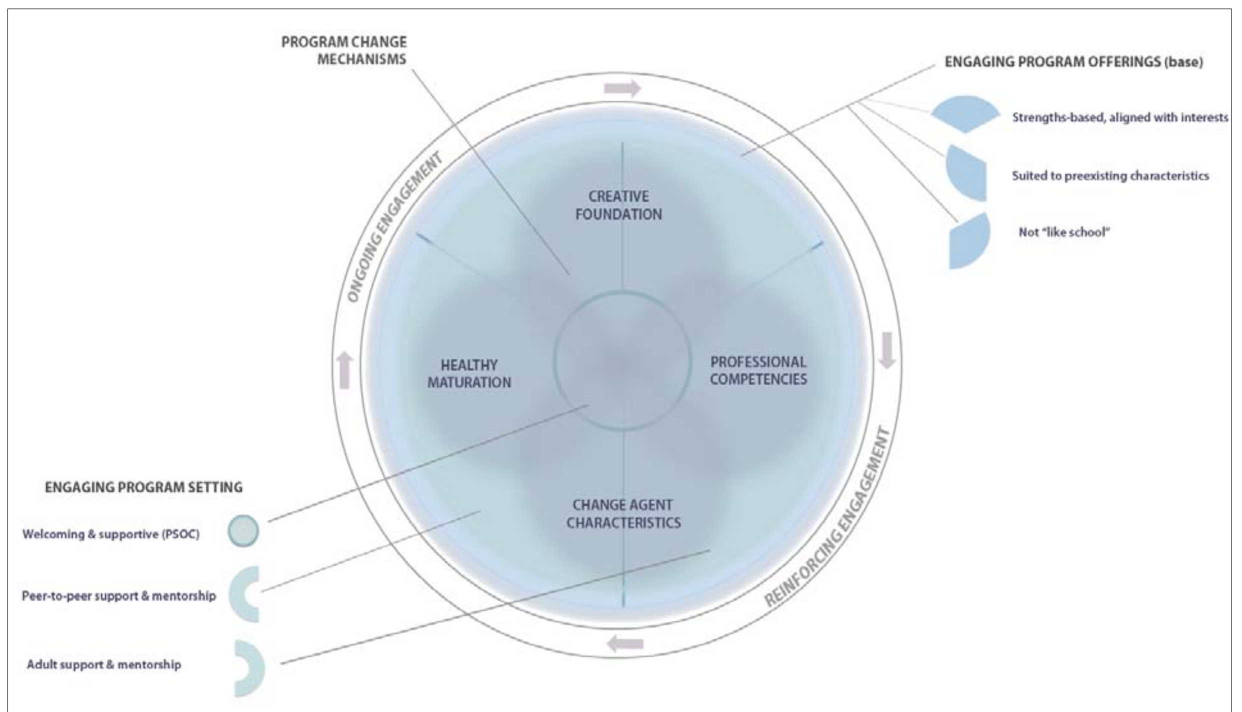

Figure 3. Engagement and change mechanism process model for CBAOs.

Together, this study's findings suggest ways that cumulative in-program learning becomes reinforced and then progresses from situated knowledge to more broadly applicable behaviors and understandings that can propel change processes forward in participants' lives and communities.

Under the heading of this study's third and final question, a selection of findings provided clues, but not definitive answers, about how participants' in-program experiences

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translate into enduring, external impacts via intermediate pathways. Several participants' recollections of their program experiences provided evidence of self-aware meaning-making that enabled them to assess themselves and others, to consciously put new behaviors into practice, and to construct individuated models for future thought and action. It appeared that all participants felt transformed by their program involvement, and that transformed self-images were, in part, a product of participants' long-term engagement, via its cultivations of their strengths and sense of community. These benefits may have fostered enough motivation to remain "bought in" to programs and thus to remain engaged. This engagement also led them to join with their programs in co-creating changes in themselves. The four program change mechanisms, particularly the building of creative foundations via arts projects, then provided participants with a diverse skill set, including self-assessment skills, and openness to experience that supported meaning-making. This combination ultimately may have provided a "launching pad," as John called it— a solid basis for initiating future action— for a productive adult life that was literally and/or metaphorically at a distance from participants' lives as adolescents.

Altogether, the sum of these processes engaged participants as active collaborators in a process of transformational learning that has the potential to create a permanent change in their self-concepts. Such a change may underlie future cycles of learning, action, reflection, and meaning-making to fuel self- and community improvement, and perhaps "empowerment", in keeping with Cattaneo's and Goodman's (2013, in press) definition: "a meaningful shift in the experience of power attained through interaction in the social world." As my previous study (Scheibler, 2011) found, and this study's findings support, a community-based arts organization's efforts to achieve a stated mission of "empowering" young people was more likely to encourage a combination of other processes, with psychological sense of community as

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the most dominant. Through close observation and evaluation efforts, such programs can determine if and how they want to adjust their efforts to encourage specific processes, tempered by the contexts of change, that would result in power gains for their participants. To facilitate empowerment, programs could examine how transforming participants' views of themselves would contribute to participants' abilities to set out and act on goals that could actually change their experience of "unsatisfying states" (Brodsky & Cattaneo, 2013) resulting from the societal status quo for young people and other marginalized groups.

As discussed above, many of this study's participants described a program-influenced openness, which they attributed to their exposure to new stimuli and experiences. Feelings of openness appeared to be grounded in participants' growing confidence in themselves, and the underlying sense of security coming from having a "toolkit" or "foundation" for life and a wealth of strong relationships. Greater openness prompts interaction with the wider world and expectations for life that perhaps didn't seem as possible before, and some participants derived a perception of enhanced power from this changed vantage point. Stephanie provides an illustration of how a transformed image of herself, as the salient outcome of the full set of change processes, can propel her on a positive, long-term trajectory.

> I wish there was something involved in [our mission] statement about that we do, like— transformation kind of work with people. I think that because we work with cameras, and we're kind of like techy in that way that we forget that, you know, we are doing work that is really impactful on the people who are involved with it. I really wish there was something in there about how we transform people, transform minds . . . . [For me] it gives me the ability to, like, be a scientist, and an artist, and a teacher, and a mentor all at the same time . . . . I feel lucky that I've been able to do that [because] . . . people my age from where I come from, they kind of value monetary success a whole lot and . . . I think it's giving me something that's worth a lot more . . . . I'm much more confident about what I want and what I don't want in my life . . . . [New Lens] forces me to have to look internally at *why* I do what I do . . . . What I've learned here is that you have to create that control for yourself, because we are so creative here, and because we have control over so many aspects of the work that we do. I *know* that I can't just work at McDonald's for the rest of my life . . . I've

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> developed my brain and my skills so much so that I can't just be part of the work force. I have to impact society and just not be affected by it . . . I know what it feels like to have power.
>
> - Stephanie, New Lens

Figure 4, below, is a tentative depiction of how the above process model could propel change outwards from the program and the individual. (A larger version of the model appears in Appendix G.)

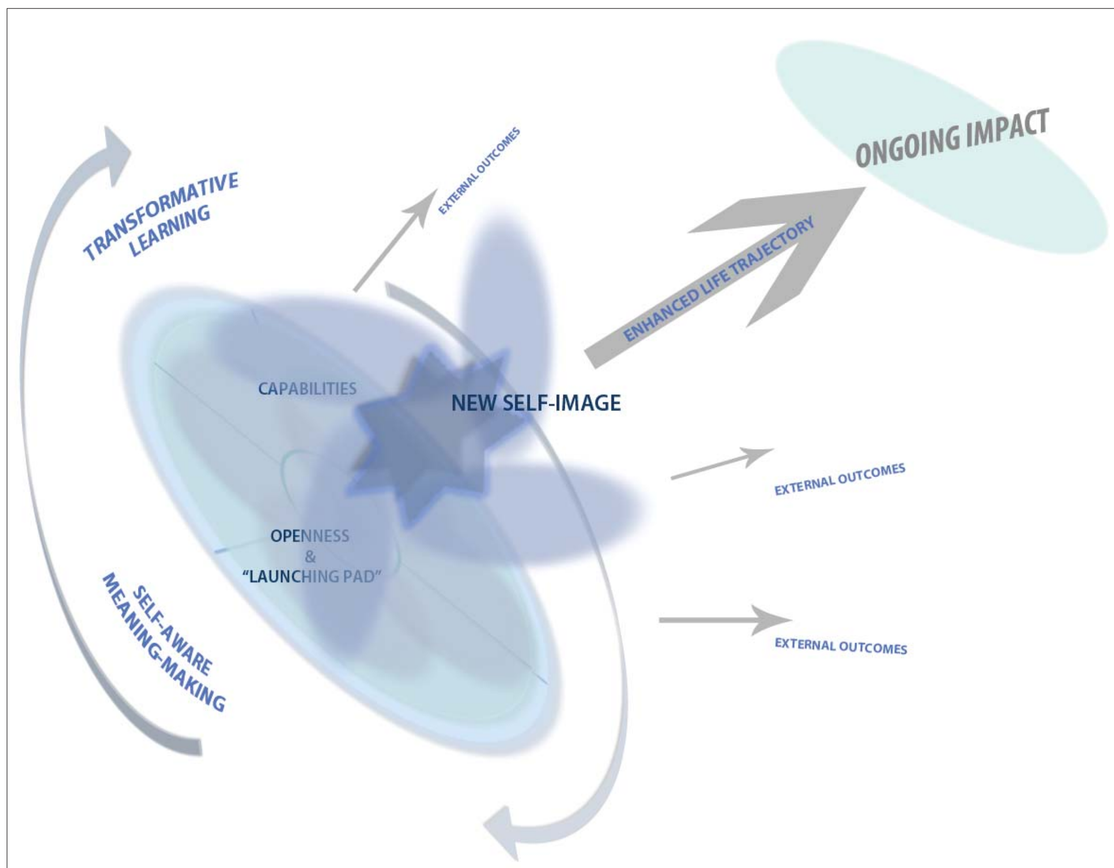

Figure 4. Depiction of in-program effects translating into external and enduring impacts.

To conclude this discussion of the standout findings of the present study, it is important to touch upon how the above selection of the results together may inform community-based arts programs' efforts to evaluate and improve their programs. Research findings such as these, which delineate the possible operation of program change processes and pathways, can help arts programs to hone in on those mechanisms that are associated with the approaches and activities

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that they are uniquely qualified to employ. This study's findings, in comparison to much of the extant research, can contribute to programs' ability to bring together theories of change with intended outcomes. They do that by highlighting ways that art and media projects can operate in a complementary fashion to mechanisms that are also found in other types of youth and/or human services programs (e.g., general job skills development, providing adult role models, social learning), and can independently promote change processes in distinct ways such as through working imaginatively with personally-meaningful subject matter, attending to audience considerations, and participating in critique processes. Lastly, the compelling findings about the importance of programs' relational settings, in promoting learning and fostering a potentially protective sense of community, underscore that nonprofit and alternative settings of all types can go a long way toward increasing their impact by intentionally optimizing the functioning of their internal communities, and their engagement with external, surrounding communities.

Limitations

There are a number of potential limitations to this study that must be considered. One limitation is that the sample size for this study is small relative to the majority of studies undertaken in psychology, and its participants were drawn from only three representative organizations. However, prevailing standards of qualitative research provided guidelines for achieving an appropriate sample of the size and specificity needed to maintain this study's focus on the in-depth exploration of individuals' narratives, narratives that were subjective and culturally-situated representations of their program experiences. Therefore they cannot be interpreted as generalizable representations of broader phenomena (Dyson & Genishi, 2005). Specificity of findings is an already recognized limitation of Community Arts research as a whole, which primarily consists of case studies. Yet, this study builds upon a prior study that

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applied well-established community psychology theory, developed in relation to a multitude of other types of settings and communities, to mitigate that limitation. This study also uniquely incorporated multiple organizations within an in-depth, interpretative analysis to produce locally applicable knowledge relevant to program evaluation efforts. Therefore this study's results may one day prove to be more broadly generalizable. Such generalizability will not be evident from this study alone, but it is also the case that the study's framework rests on the assumption that reality is contextually-situated. Moreover, in qualitative research the power of generalization is given to the consumer of the research (Baptiste, 2001; Crabtree & Miller, 1999).

Another potentially limiting sampling issue, as mentioned in the Methods, was the trade-off conferred by sampling criteria that favored the inclusion of individuals who had *not* been out of their programs for enough time to address how and which of their program impacts were perceived by them as enduring ones. When the study was designed it was felt that the potential benefits of speaking with individuals who had only "graduated" from their programs no more than two years before, ensuring that there was recency to their memories to off-set limitations associated with retrospective recall, would outweigh the lack of information about impacts over time. As it turned out, the final study sample included two individuals who had graduated from their programs at earlier points, but currently work with their programs, which provided a compromise to the competing interests of reducing recall bias and gathering evidence about program effects over time.

Another potential limitation of the study is instrumentation. In social science research, instrumentation refers to the use of various measurement instruments, which in quantitative research are often surveys or questionnaires. In qualitative research, however, the "instrument" is the researcher. Thus potential sources of researcher bias and participant reactivity to the

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researcher must be carefully considered (Creswell, 2008). My positioning as a researcher, and preexisting knowledge of and relationship to the study organizations, may have influenced participants' responses in some way, as a number of the participants may have entered their interviews having some familiarity with the nature of the information I sought to uncover. Participants may have attempted to shape their responses to give an especially favorable impression of their programs. I began to build rapport with participants early in the research process, starting at the point of scheduling their interviews, in order to decrease the possibility of participant reactivity and bias. I also clearly communicated to them that providing accurate data would ultimately be more useful to their programs and other, similar programs. It is difficult to completely avoid instrumentation problems, as there is always some level of risk that participants might be unwilling to answer questions, feel pressures from their organization or outside entities, or will simply choose to be untruthful for any number of reasons. However, in this study, the data collection process, including communications with participants, was exercised with care and consistency to minimize the chances of instrumentation problems. As an arts practitioner myself, as well as a seasoned interviewer with previous experience interviewing adolescents and young adults, I attempted to carefully employ the combined knowledge of my dual "insider"/"outsider" status to gauge and ensure participants' comfort level and honesty. Participants appeared to signal their willingness to fully participate in their interviews by often choosing to extend their interview times (by as much as 45 minutes in three cases), their frankness about sensitive, personal topics, and their good-humouredness throughout their interviews.

As noted above, the field of Community Arts and arts practitioners can also be quite, and often rightfully, distrustful of researchers and the research process. Although it is clear that the this field is actively seeking ways to substantiate the impact of its practices, even when

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practitioners partner with researchers they feel they can trust, the research process can seem foreign. Organizations struggle with the cost and difficulty of evaluation and often have the perception that evaluation is "a necessary but time-consuming task consisting of rigid processes and burdensome paperwork that might [appease] funders but did not add much value, insight or useable feedback to inform the work" (BYAEP, 2012, p. 9). There is pressure to define social impact by externally set standards, and to measure sets of ambitious and ostensibly intangible outcomes, which require precious time and resources. A key implication of this study, discussed below, is that it may help organizations to define both "clear and reasonable outcomes that the creative work is suited to achieve" (Korza & Bacon, 2012, p. 4) and indicators that can be realistically tracked as evidence of longer-term change, as well as supplement findings from research methods that are possibly better suited to show community-level change but are unrealistic for individual organizations to undertake.

Future Directions and Implications

This study has generated new understandings of the mechanisms through which individual-level benefits of arts programs, supported in extant literature, can be realistically studied and understood as leading to larger social impacts. This new knowledge may ultimately contribute to the social impacts of the arts' evaluation at that higher level. Overall, this study's findings suggest future directions for Community Arts and program evaluation research and, relatedly, have implications for expanding both applied and theoretical understandings about the social impacts of the arts and the functioning of psychological processes in community organizations. Both the findings and framework of the study could also potentially be applied to the extension of evaluation methods already established for use with other types of community-

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based organizations with strengths-based methods, in order to make them more accessible and applicable to arts programs.

As discussed in the Introduction, nonprofit programs are often staffed by artists who are very skilled in teaching and mentoring others in the arts, but are often underpaid and over-worked on top of not necessarily having the background training in human services and/or research that would aid them in tracking program indicators that are not overtly artistic in nature. Therefore a selection of questions from this study's interview guide, which are open-ended but tailored to intervening change mechanisms of interest to these organizations, could be utilized by arts practitioner, in concert with the validated program quality assessments that they have been tasked by their funders to use but often do not find very useful for self-evaluation (e.g., High Scope's Program Quality Assessment, or PQA, based on numerous personal conversations with practitioners, 2011-2013). Such an approach could meet both the needs of external assessment and programs' desires to refine theories of change and gauge how well they are fulfilling their missions, including aspects specific to art-making, and to do so in a way that does not feel restrictive or counter to their values**.** However, bearing in mind findings presented above about participants' view of their arts practitioner mentors as parent-like figures and those indicating that practitioners imparted or supported the notion that formal art institutions (e.g., museums, art schools) offer ultimate validation of one's work, programs undertaking their own evaluations should give careful consideration to the positioning and influence of its practitioners before they undertake data collection. Moreover, future research is needed to explore practitioners' roles and points-of-view, to include practitioner-participant relationships and the interplay of practitioners' personal values (including those specific to the art world) with organizational values.

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Future research informed by this study could include additional inductive and/or more deductively framed studies within the studied organizations or other arts settings that serve different populations or explicitly use singular types of media other than visual art (e.g., music, dance, theater), or similar studies of a larger scale involving several organizations. Such studies could refine understandings of organizational functioning and participant-level processes by utilizing this study's findings to compare the fit of various models provided by extant Community Arts and social science literature. For example, this study uniquely addresses participants' points of view and arts-specific mechanisms but, in light of its findings about maturation processes, future research specifically with youth-serving CBAOs could apply theory and models provided by the extensive Positive Youth Development literature, as described by Catalano (with colleagues 2002) and Larson (2000; with Walker, 2006), among others. As documented in this dissertation's literature review, there is a great deal of larger-scale research that has already been produced or is ongoing (particularly within the community development perspective) that employs methods that are more suitable, than individual interviews, for measuring external, community-level changes. Future research of this kind could be strengthened by incorporating this study's contextualized findings about pathways of change, while overcoming the limitation that they are quite specific. Lastly, the framework of this study could also be applied to updating evaluation methods that have already been established with other types of community-based organizations that use strengths-based methods. The incorporation of contextualized, qualitative methods for data collection that are often more applicable to arts programs would make the evaluation process less daunting to arts practitioners who are concerned about accessibility, ease-of-use, and flexibility.

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Constituent validity of future research would be strengthened by the incorporation of participatory methods, possibly to include participant observation and visually-based data collection techniques. These latter techniques can help increase the direct involvement of participants as well as arts practitioners to bring both groups' voices to the forefront of the research process (Balcazar, Garate-Serafini, & Keys, 2004; Becker, Roberts, Morrison, & Silver, 2004; Burton & Kagan, 2010; Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2005; Yeich & Levine, 1992). In addition, to adequately study organizations that manifest a transformative paradigm, the power differentials that can occur between researchers and research participants, as well as program staff and their participants, must be addressed (Fetterman, 2005; Mertens, 2009). The careful use of participatory approaches, alongside more traditional evaluation methods, can reduce imbalances and help reveal data that is of great pertinence and utility to organizations.

This study may also inform future arts evaluation strategies, specifically because it applies qualitative methods that are complementary to a participatory approach. Qualitative methods are often less objectionable to arts program staff because they allow for more rapport-building contact between researcher and participants, do not give as strong an impression of "putting people in boxes" as surveys do, and may be more accessible for practitioners who want to pursue their own evaluations. Despite increased calls for "concrete" evidence associated with quantitative methods, many arts practitioners and evaluators share the conviction that qualitative data provides relevant evidence of impact because these methods elicit data that will be deeper and more meaningful, more context-attentive, more emotive, and of greater complexity (Mulligan, et al., 2007; Stein & Seifert, 2009).

As was discussed above, a weakness of the extant research on the social impacts of the arts is the lack of longitudinal research. This limitation in that research is perhaps of particular

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import because of concurrent limitations in the knowledge base about alternative organizational settings. This study provided a preliminary identification of pathways that are intermediary to internal program process effects and longer-term individual and community-level outcomes, and so may contribute to the design of appropriate and fruitful longitudinal studies. An ongoing challenge for arts organizations is that funders and stakeholders unreasonably expect singular project results to be generalizable to broader impact (Korza & Bacon, 2012). A response to this expectation is the expanded pursuit of rigorous research, including studies at the level of individual projects and programs, that can contribute to an aggregated body of research spanning organizations, communities, localities, and/or the nation as a whole (Stein & Seifert, 2009). Although it is important for organizations to aspire to lofty social goals, Jackson (2009) emphasizes that arts projects that aspire to social change should not make claims about impacting conditions over which they have no direct control. Yet, that is what they are often compelled to do. This study contributes to a useful body of research that can help the field to improve its practices and attune expectations for realistic but meaningful evaluation.

Concluding Remarks

This study is small in scale, but provides richer understandings, centered on participants' voices, of how individual and community-level impacts of the art programs can be grown, felt, internalized, and acted upon. The broad context of social change for community-based arts organizations and their participants is complex and challenging. Yet it is clear that many of the now young adults who participated in such programs perceive an enduring personal impact, as well as why programs like theirs matter for youth in their communities; moreover, they are the experts on how programs effect change.

> [During high school] those are years when you're seeking a lot more independence all the time, but at the same time, while you're seeking that kind of independence, you

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> might not have been taught how to be independent yet, and having some sort of thing that's not your parents and that's not school to give you that boost, is really important . . . . [T[he creative process is really tied into troubleshooting and problem solving, being able to conceive about things that aren't necessary *there* at the moment . . . . You have to be able to *conceive* that there's a better thing, and then trying to figure out what are the steps.
>
> - Alex, Wide Angle

> [Now] I just think it's really important for [youth] to have a kind of outlet, like what I've had [at Wide Angle], no matter what they're doing. A lot of the time, especially in Baltimore City, kids don't get [what they need] because of funding cuts and things like that. So it's just sad, it's something that I want to see changed . . . . It's just they've just given me a world of confidence that I've never had before and it's something that I'll always carry with me. And I'll always be thankful to them for it. They're a part of me . . . . I would just like to see programs like this become a wider solution for youth. You know, afterschool [recreation] centers are closing down, kids don't really have many opportunities for what to do after school besides sports . . . to be productive . . . and programs like this actually open up a world of possibilities for youth who are looking for alternatives.
>
> - Maia, Wide Angle

To fully explore change mechanisms, extensive work that fully engages participants will have to be done. To this point, evaluation-minded researchers have played a leading role in documenting and working to substantiate arts impacts, and to coalesce research efforts. However, research initiatives will only be truly useful if they are integrated across disciplines and organizations, and are increasingly led by arts practitioners, participants, and community stakeholders. This study is one contribution toward ongoing efforts to uniquely build working relationships, provide accessible frameworks, and help generate the actionable findings needed to help propel community arts evaluation forward.

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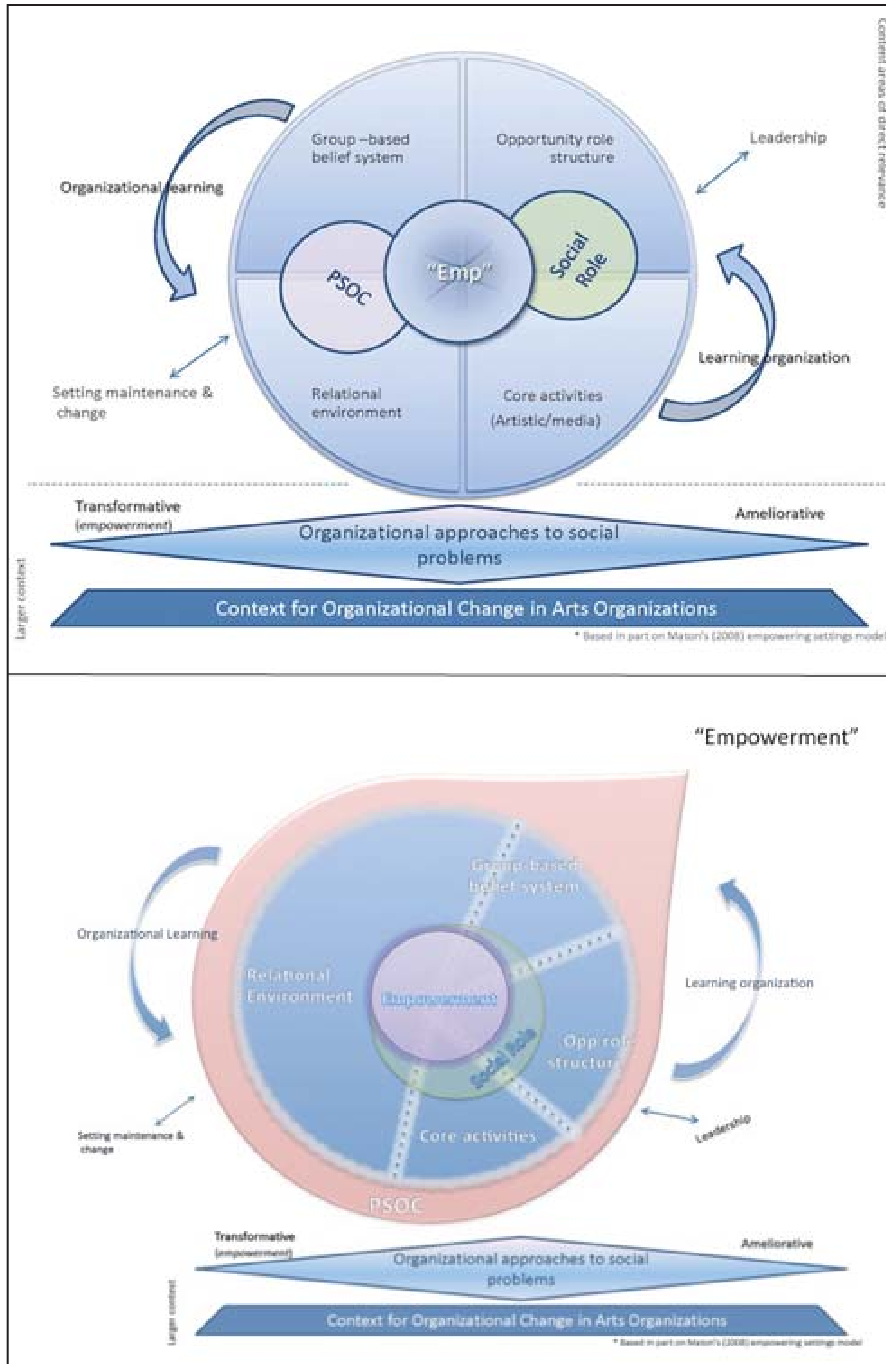
Appendix A

Preliminary and Final Process Models for Previous Study (Scheibler, 2011)



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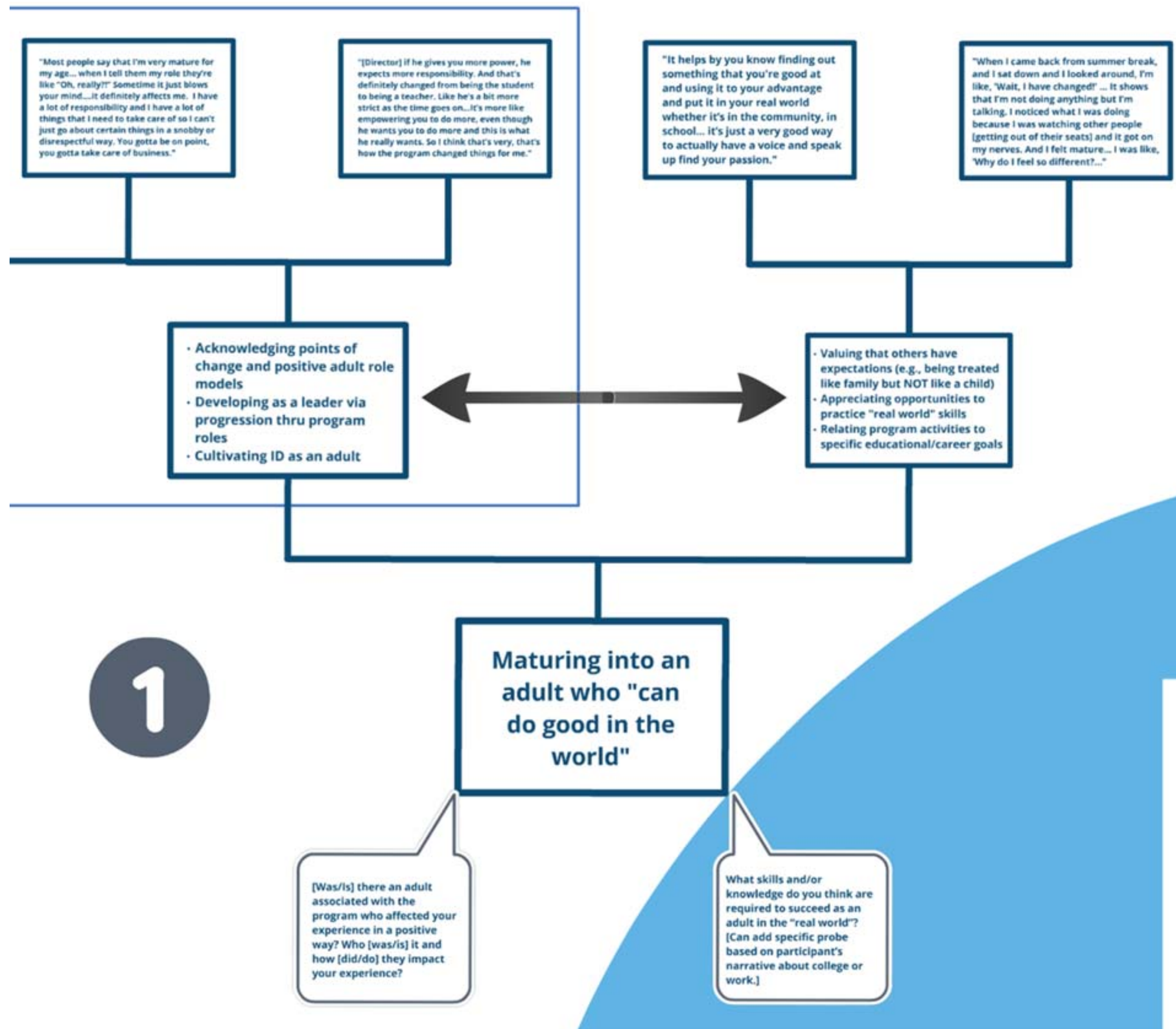
Appendix B

Reanalysis Highlights: Five Thematic Domains Charts



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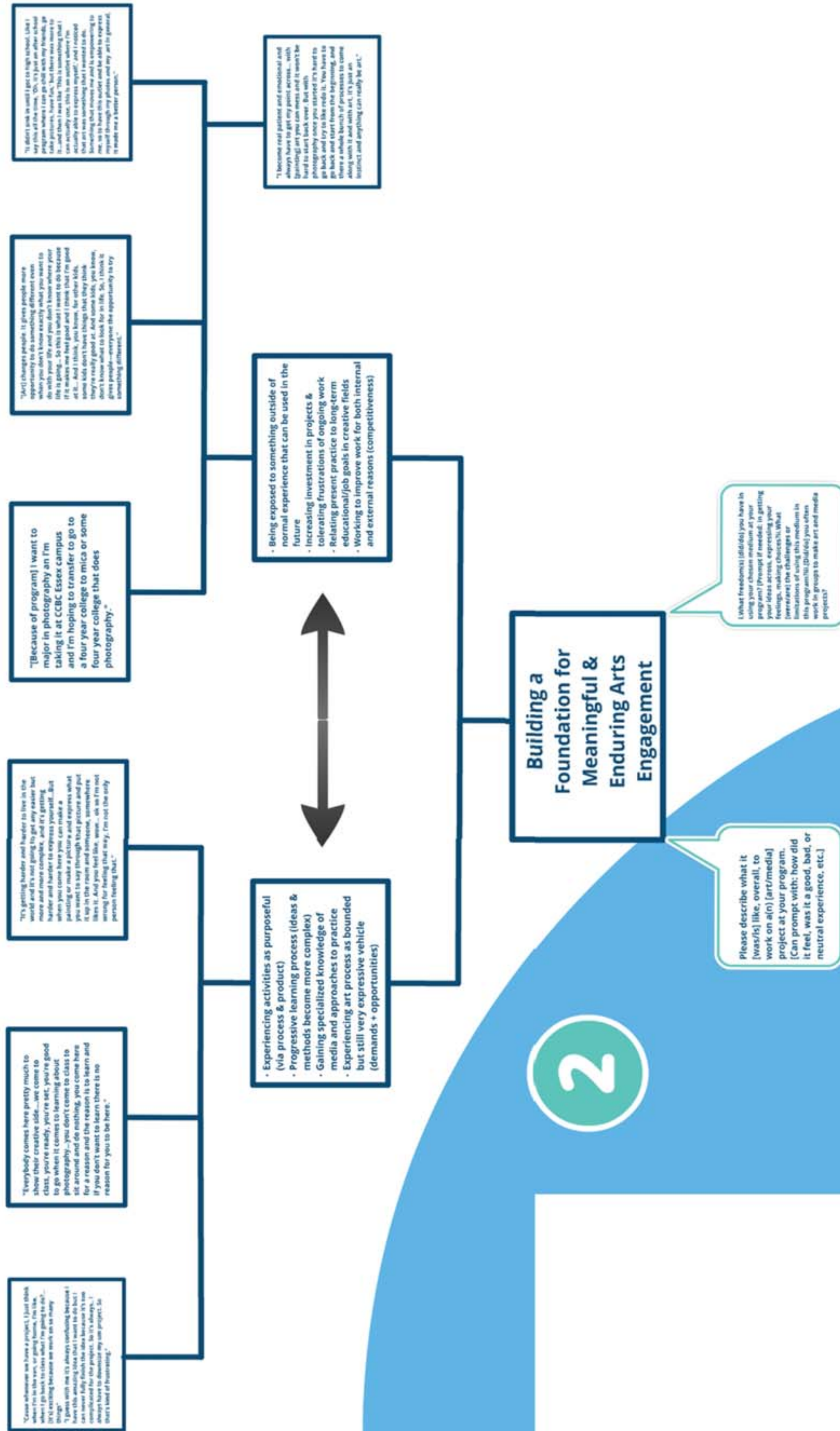

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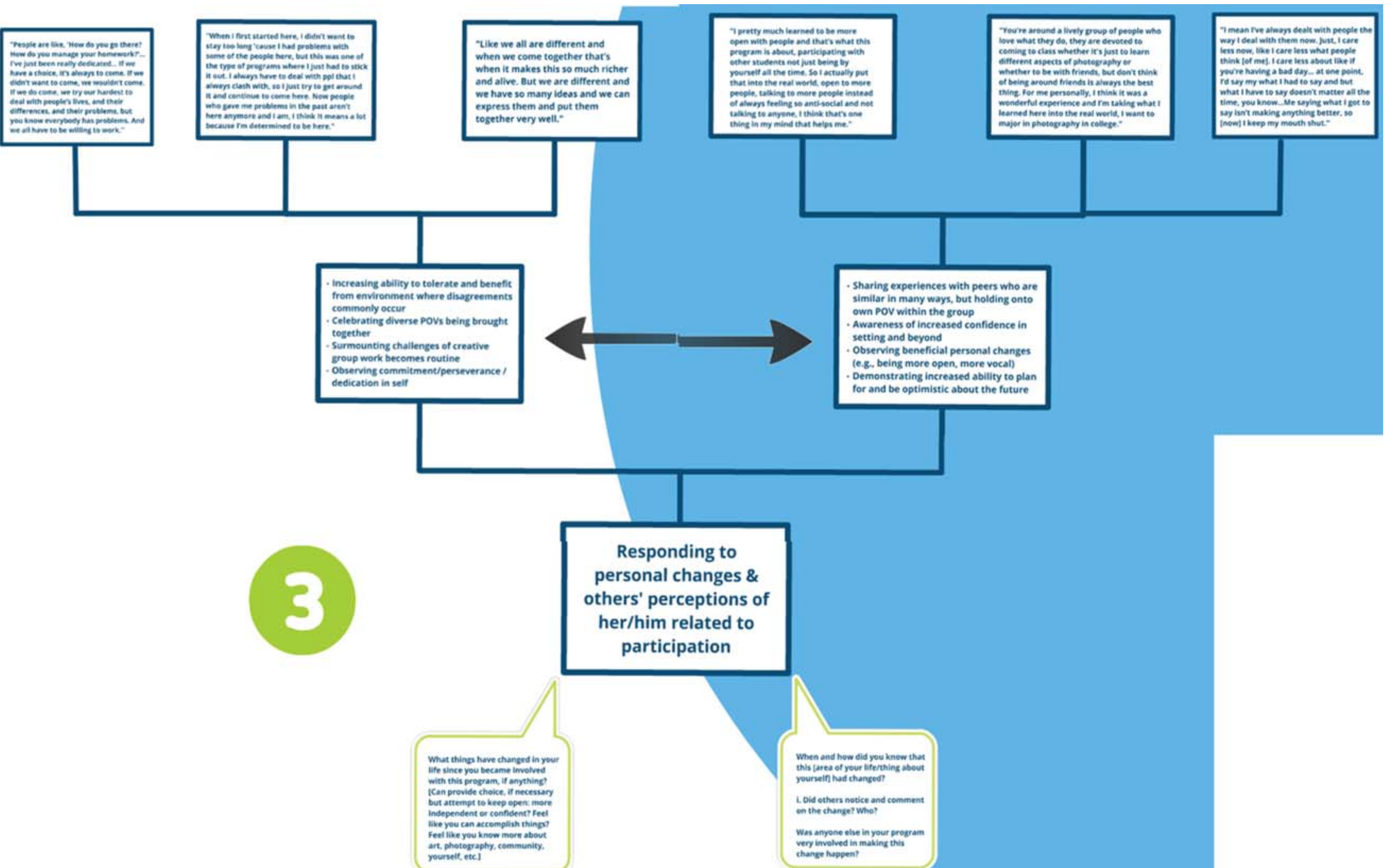

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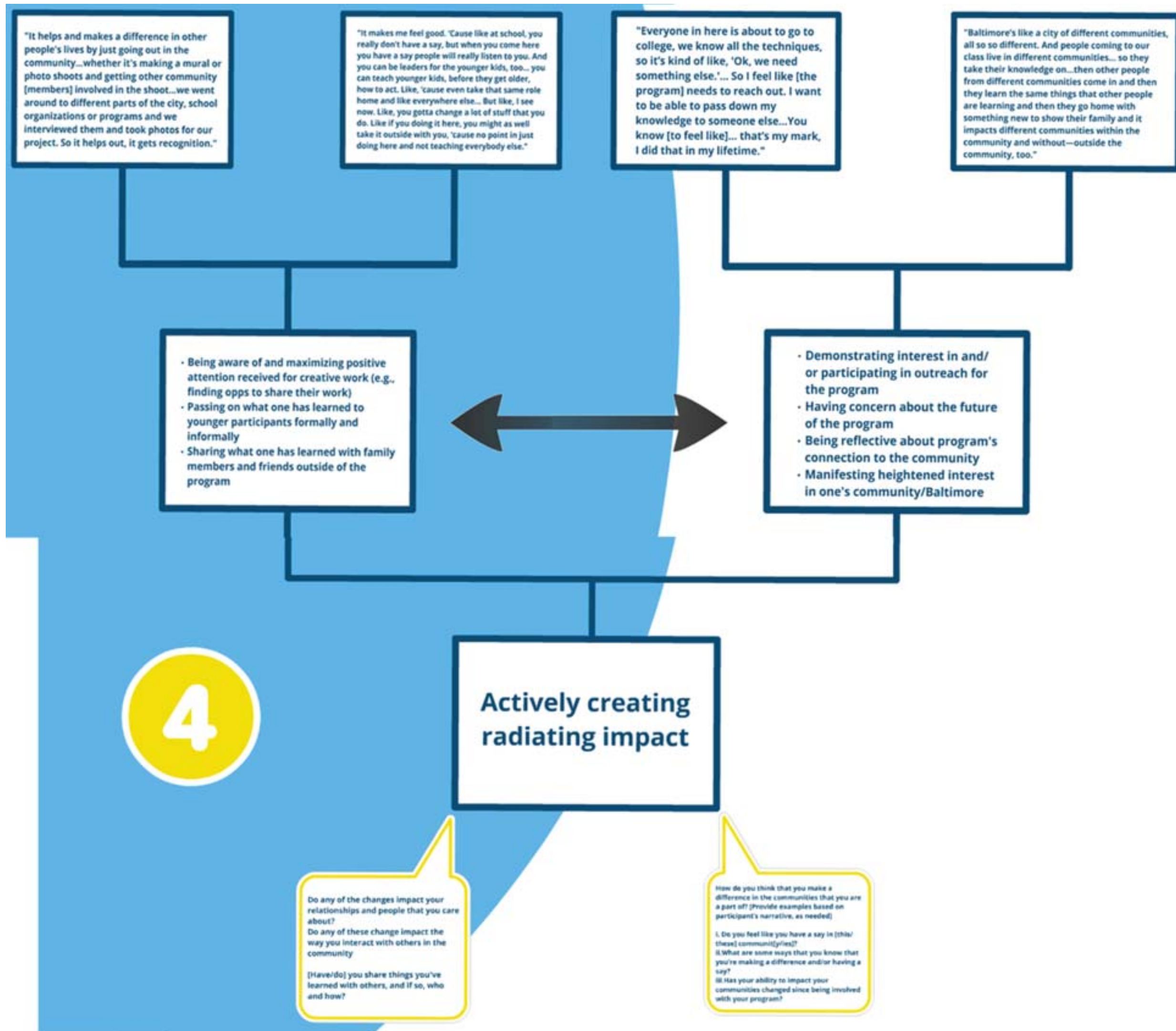

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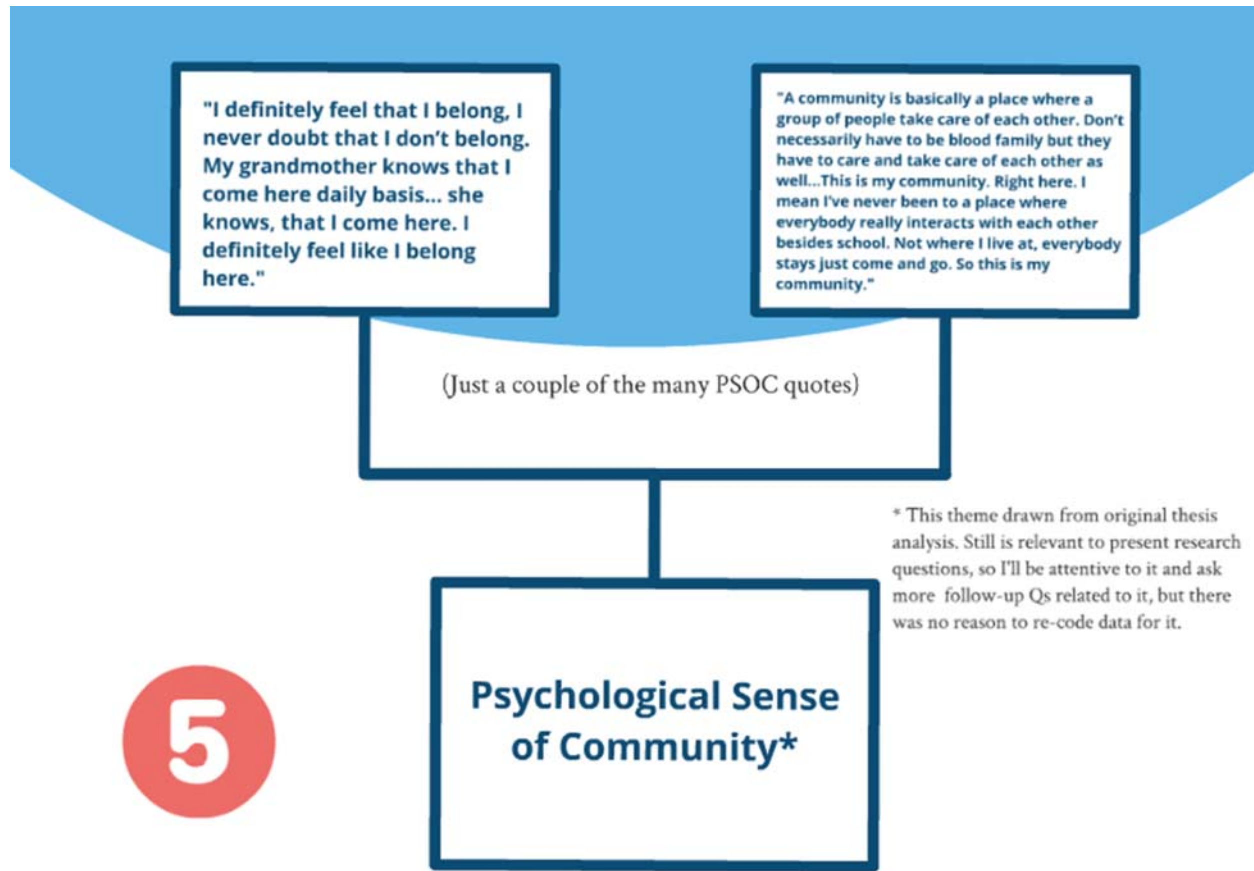

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Appendix C

Semi-structured Interview Guide from Previous Study (Scheibler, 2011)

Introduction Template

Thank you for your time and willingness to participate in this interview. I am interested in hearing about your experiences with the Access Art/Youthlight organization.

We will talk about topics such as your decision to become involved with Youthlight, Youthlight's mission and activities, what you do at Youthlight, and your feelings about being in the program and how it might have affected your life. This could include your past and present experiences in [leading/ participating in] activities here, and any changes or differences in your life since you became involved with Access Art/Youthlight. These changes can be small or large, and can have to do with opinions, attitudes, feelings about yourself, or other things (ex. new job/income or access to other resources). You may also wish to compare and contrast your life before your involvement with Youthlight and your life now. Finally, I would like to hear about your overall opinion of the organization and its role in the community, including suggestions you might have for improving it. You will also be given the opportunity to tell me about anything else you would like to regarding Youthlight.

If there are any questions that you do not understand, please tell me. If there is a question that you do not want to answer that is okay, please let me know and we will move to a different question. You can also ask to stop at any time. It is okay if you tell me stories without using anyone's real name. I will be speaking to other participants of Access Art/Youthlight about their experiences with the organization, so I may ask future interviewees about situations you've described or opinions you've expressed, but I will never use your name or reveal any information that could potentially identify anyone.

This conversation will take between 45 minutes and one and a half hours. I would like to digitally record and take some notes while we talk. As soon as the interview is written down (transcribed) and identifying information is removed, the digital file will be destroyed. I will also offer you a copy of the transcript if you are interested in having it. You are free to end our conversation at any time. Is that okay?

Interview Questions

I. *Background/early involvement*
   a. Please tell me your name, age, and position at Access Art/Youthlight
   b. When did you [found/begin working for/begin attending programs at] Access Art/Youthlight?
   c. What were you doing prior to this? **[Instead for youth: "Did you participate in any other after school activities before coming here?"]**

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d. Why did you [start the program/begin working here/begin attending activities here]?

   i. How did you learn about the program? **[instead for founder: "How did you develop the idea for the program?"; also for founder and long-term staff/board: "Please describe the early history of the organization and how it has developed to the present time." Then skip to II. for these individuals]**

      1. If through another person:

         a. Who?

         b. Did they or anyone else encourage you to become involved? How?

   ii. Did you know anyone [else] involved with the organization?

   iii. What did you know about the program before you started [working for/attending] it?

II. *Organizational mission*

I want to begin by understanding Youthlight's mission, and how you feel that mission is expressed and accomplished by the organization. **[For youth: A mission statement is how an organization describes its purpose and goals. *Provide analogy from advertising*.]**
The stated mission of Youthlight as an organization is ***[show mission in writing to participant(s)]****:*

> *Youthlight delivers a comprehensive, creative, youth-centered after school program to address the artistic, emotional, and cognitive development of middle and high school participants. Youthlight achieves these goals by providing students with a safe space to create, positive adult role models,* ***empowering*** *activities, leadership development, and alternatives to violence and high risk behavior.*
>
> *The Youthlight Photography Project* ***empowers*** *middle and high school age youth to document their lives, explore their creativity, build leadership skills, and encourages them to engage as activists in their neighborhoods through the creation of photographic images and community media.*

a. Were you aware of this mission statement? If so, how well? **[for everyone except the founder]**

b. What words are most important?

c. What do the words "empower" and "empowering" mean to you?

d. What does the word "activist" mean to you?

e. How do you think that Access Art/Youthlight does and doesn't accomplish this mission and its related goals? Let's start with does...

   i. How does it accomplish its mission?

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   ii. How is it not accomplishing its mission?
   iii. Is it doing something on top of or instead of its mission?

f. How could it do more or something else to achieve this mission?

g. Would another mission better describe what Youthlight does? If so, what would that be?

III. *Experiences within the organization*

Now I am going to ask you about your personal experiences within Access Art/Youthlight. For each of your answers, please try to give me a specific example so I can see things the way that you do *[repeat prompt for concrete examples, as necessary]*.

a. How would you describe your experience with Youthlight, both
   i. In the past?
   ii. Presently?

b. What would you say you "do" at Youthlight?
   i. What does the organization do for you?
   ii. What do you do for it?
   iii. What do you make at Youthlight? *[ideally keep open, but can prompt with projects, money, friends, etc.]*

c. People play a lot of different roles in life, brother, sister, friend, student, athlete, and more *[elaborate as needed].*
What is your "role" in Youthlight, or are there different roles that you fill? [if youth participants need prompts, some possible options include student, mentor, assistant teacher, artist, photographer, interviewer, etc., but preferably answer in own words]

d. For each role, tell me more about that role.
   i. What are the specific tasks for it?
   ii. How does that role make you feel? *[may provide examples: important, talented, liked, respected, good about self, or the opposite, ignored,unimportant, etc.]*
   iii. How is this different from how you felt before you had that role?
   iv. How does it change the way you are with other people?
   v. How do other people see you now that you have this role?

e. **[for youth and staff]** Describe what it is like to work on a(n) [art/ photography/media] project at Youthlight.

f. Please tell me a story from a recent, typical day spent [at/working for/ representing] Youthlight/Access Art? **[alternate option for youth: If you were to make a movie of a typical day at Youthlight, what would the story would that movie tell?]**

g. What do you think someone hearing that story [or watching that movie] would think it says about what you do at Youthlight?

h. Please tell me a story from a day spent [at/working for/ representing] Access Art/Youthlight that is NOT typical of your experience with the

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organization? This experience could be a very positive or very negative one?

   i. If a special event (e.g., exhibit, media project premiere, etc.), can you tell me more about that event?
   ii. If a negative experience, can you tell me more about how that situation was resolved or not resolved?
   iii. For all responses, is there anything that Youthlight did or did not do to contribute to that situation?

i. Who are the people at Youthlight who have the most impact on your experience in the organization?

j. Do you feel like you "belong" at Youthlight? *[reference participant's narrative as necessary, particularly III.c.-g.]*

   i. If so, why?
   ii. If not, why not?

k. How do you know if people belong at Youthlight? **[for youth: For example, if you saw someone walking down the street, is there something about them you could see that would tell you they could be a part of Youthlight?]**

l. Are there different "groups" within Youthlight? If so, how does that affect you?

m. What does it mean to you to be involved with Youthlight?

n. Values are beliefs that people or groups of people have about what is important and what is right or wrong. What are Youthlight's values?

   i. How do you know?
   ii. Do members share the same values? Which ones?

o. Are there "signs" that other people would notice that would tell them you are involved with Youthlight? *[provide examples, such as "things people can see about you", "things that Youthlight members say/do in the same way"]*

p. What are the rules that Youthlight has for its members?

   i. Formal/informal?
   ii. How are those rules communicated? [Written/unwritten?]
   iii. Does everyone follow all of the same rules? If not, how do the rules differ for different people?
   iv. Is there a "normal" way for someone to act when they're at Youthlight? How does that differ for people in different roles? *[remind of different types of roles]*

q. How does Youthlight affect the way you interact with other people?

   i. Inside Youthlight?
   ii. Outside of Youthlight?

r. What does the word "community" mean to you?

s. In what ways is Youthlight a community?

t. How does Youthlight differ from other communities you are a part of or know about?

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IV. *Changes*

Now I would like to learn about any changes that have happened in your life since you became involved with Youthlight/Access Art. As a reminder, these changes can be small or large, and can have to do with things such as your lifestyle, opinions, attitudes, feelings about yourself, or practical matters (e.g. new income or access to other resources). *[Throughout, remind participant of time frame, ex. "So, you joined in 20xx and it's now 20xx, so that's blank years..." Or, "You were blank years old then..., etc.]*

a. What things have changed in your life since becoming involved with this organization, if anything? *[Can provide choices: more independent? Feel like you can accomplish things? Feel like you know more (about art, photography, community, yourself)?, etc.]*
    i. *If a change is identified, follow-up with subsequent questions (b-d), and then probe for additional changes in different areas*
    ii. If no changes are cited, Did you expect that something would change? Why do you think that change did not occur?
b. When and how did you know that this [area of your life/thing about yourself] had changed?
c. Was anyone else in Youthlight very involved in making this change happen?
d. Did a particular program activity help that change to happen?
e. How do you think Youthlight's mission relates to this change? *[reference participant's narrative]*
f. (optional) Please compare and contrast your life now with your life before [founding/starting working for/starting attending programs at] Youthlight/Access Art.
g. How has Youthlight changed?
h. How have you changed Youthlight?
i. How does Youthlight "make a difference"?
    i. *In your life?*
    ii. *In others' lives?*
    iii. *In the community/Baltimore?*

V. *Overall assessment*

Now, I would like to ask you a bit more about your thoughts about Youthlight/Access Art as a whole, its effectiveness, and its relationship with the community.

a. What is your overall opinion of the organization?
b. Do you consider it to be successful, whether or not you agree with its mission? (reference participant's narrative)
    i. If so, what makes it successful?
    ii. If not, what makes it unsuccessful?

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c. In light of your overall assessment, provide a specific example of one thing that is a successful aspect of Youthlight.
d. In light of your overall assessment, provide a specific example of one thing that is a successful aspect of Youthlight.
e. Do you have any suggestions for it to improve its programming? **[for founder: "What steps would you like to take to improve or expand programming, if any?"]**
f. How do you see Youthlight relating with the communities it is involved with (e.g., immediate neighborhood, participants' neighborhoods, wider Baltimore). **[following questions are primarily for adult participants, but also for select youth, such as those who are in their "mentor" program]**
    i. Does it engage directly with these communities? How?
    ii. Are community members aware of Youthlight, that you know of?
    iii. Is Youthlight involved with other community organizations or groups, that you know of?
    iv. How do you think community relationships affect your experience in Youthlight?

g. Do you think Youthlight will be around for a long time? Why or why not?
h. What challenges does Youthlight face, if any? Do you have any ideas to overcome those challenges?

VI. *Ending*
a. Was there anything I didn't ask that I should have?
b. Was there anything you didn't get to say?
c. How did the interview feel?
d. How was it for you to talk about these experiences?
e. (If applicable) If you were uncomfortable in sharing them, would you like me to inform a trusted *[colleague, staff person, family member*] about it and help you to receive support in dealing with these feelings?

** Notes. Modifications will be made to this basic template upon completion of interviews with key informants (e.g. simplifying language, abbreviating or adding to sections, or limiting scope) to enhance its use with focus groups and other participants.*

In addition, the interview with the founder/Executive Director may be more open-ended, allowing for extensive follow-up questions relating to the history of the organization, his interpretation of the organizational mission, and Youthlight's prospects for the future.

Also, themes identified in Appendix B may be pursued through the addition of more direct questions, as is appropriate, based on key informant interview results.

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Appendix D
New Interview Guide for the Present Study

Starting Interview Guide- 4/12/13 (final) version

I. *Background/Overview of current situation*

a. Please tell me your name, age, and art program you attend(ed)
    i. [*If still involved*] So you're still involved with [ ]? Can you tell me a bit about your role here?

b. I'd like to know a bit about your life *[if still in program:* outside of the program*]*.
    i. Are you currently employed? Where, FT or PT?
    ii. Are you attending college or receiving technical training? Where, FT or PT?
    iii. Where do you live?
    iv. Do you live alone? [If not:] Do you have roommates or live with family?
    v. Has that changed [since you left the program/while you've been in the program]?
    vi. What activities do you like to do outside of work or school?
    vii. Do you volunteer and/or are you involved with a community group?
    viii. Overall, are you satisfied with what you're doing in your life right now?

c. [*If alum:* When did you last [ ]? How long did you attend?; *If still involved:* How often do you currently attend [ ]? When do you think you will finish/leave the program?]

d. When did you begin attending programs at [ ]

e. Why did you begin attending activities there?
    i. How did you learn about the program? **[]**
        1. If through another person:
            a. Who?
            b. Did they or anyone else encourage you to become involved? How?
    ii. Did you know anyone [else] involved with the program?
    iii. What did you know about the program before you started attending it?
    iv. Did you have expectations about the program-- what it would be like, what it would do for you? *[If so:* What were they?*]*

II. *Perspective on program purpose and goals*

I want to begin by knowing your thoughts about the purpose and mission of your program, and how you feel that the program accomplished its goals during the time you [have been] attend[ed /ing] it.

a. In your opinion, what is the purpose of the program, and what are its goals?
    i. How did you form this opinion? What did you observe or do in the program that made this clear to you?
    ii. How effective do you think it [was/is/*both if applicable*} at accomplishing its goals?
        1. How [did/does] it accomplish its goals?
        2. How [did/is] it not accomplishing its goals?

b. To the best of your knowledge, what is the formal mission of your program? [*Prompt if needed*: A mission statement is how an organization describes its purpose and goals]

c. [*If provided a mission*] How do you think that your program [did/does] and [didn't/doesn't] accomplish its mission and its related goals?
    i. [Did/Is] it doing something on top of or instead of its mission?
    ii. Thinking back to your answer about your program's purpose and goals, would another mission better describe what it does? If so, what would that be?

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III. *Overall experiences within the program*

Now I am going to ask you about your personal experiences within your arts program. [*If participant is no longer in the program:* I know time has passed since you have attended [ ], so for each question, try to answer based on memories of the program that most stand out in your mind.] For each of your answers, please try to give me a specific example so I can see things the way that you do *[repeat prompt for concrete examples, as necessary]*.

a. How would you describe your experience with [ ], both
   i. Towards the beginning?
   ii. [Towards the end?/Presently?]
b. What would you say you ["did"/"do"] at [ ]?
   i. What [did/does] the program do for you?
   ii. What [did/do] you do for it?
   iii. What [did/do] you make at [ ]? *[ideally keep open, but can prompt with projects, money, friends, etc.]*
c. People play a lot of different roles in life-- brother, sister, friend, student, athlete, and more *[elaborate as needed]*.
   Keeping in mind that your program might have assigned roles for people, what was your main "role" in [ ], or [were/are] there different roles that you fill[ed]? [*if participant needs prompts, some possible options include student, mentor, assistant teacher, artist, photographer, interviewer, etc., but preferably answer in own words*.]
d. For each role, tell me more about that role.
   i. What [were/are] the specific tasks for it?
   ii. How [did/does] that role make you feel? *[May provide examples: important, talented, liked, respected, good about self, or the opposite, ignored, unimportant, etc.]*
   iii. How is this different from how you felt before you had that role? [*If felt different:* When did you become aware that you felt differently, and how did that happen?]
   iv. How [did/does] it change the way you are with other people?
   v. How [did/do] other people see you [when/now that] you have this role? [*For any role mentioned having leadership component and/or increasing responsibility, follow up with probes for more details, possibly inc. to describe a scenario where increased leadership and/or decision-making involved.*}
e. Please tell me a story from a typical day spent at [ ].
f. Please tell me a story from a day spent at [ ] that is/was NOT typical of your experience with the program? [*This experience could be a very positive or very negative one*.)]
   i. [*If a special event (e.g., exhibit, media project premiere, etc.)*] Can you tell me more about that event?
   ii. [*If a negative experience*] Can you tell me more about how that situation was resolved or not resolved?
   iii. For all responses, is there anything that [ ] did or did not do to contribute to that situation?
g. Who [are/were] the people there who [have/had] the most impact on your experience in the program?
   i. How did they impact you? Do they continue to impact your life?
   ii. [*If not adult*] [Was/Is] there an adult associated with the program who affected your experience in a positive way? Who [was/is] it and how [did/do] they impact your experience?

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h. [Did/Do] you feel like you "belong[ed]" at [ ]? *[reference participant's narrative to this point, as necessary]*
  i. If so, why?
  ii. If not, why not?
i. How [did/do] you know if people belong[ed] at [ ]?
j. [Were/are] there different "groups" within the program,? If so, how [did/does] that affect you?
k. What [did/does] it mean to you to be involved with [ ]? [*For past participants:* What does it mean for you now to have been involved?]
l. How does [ ] affect the way you interact with other people?
  i. Inside [ ]?
  ii. Outside of [ ]?
m. What does the word "community" mean to you?
n. In what ways [was/is] or [wasn't/isn't] your program a community?
o. How does [ ] differ from other communities you are a part of or know about?

IV. *Experience with art/media projects*

Now I am going to ask you about your experiences doing art and/or media projects, both within and outside of [ ].

a. Overall, please describe what it [was/is] like to work on a(n) [art/ photography/media] project at your program. [*Can prompt with: how did it feel, was it a good, bad, or neutral experience, etc*.]
b. In your experience, [did/do] projects in your program have a purpose?
  i. How [did/do] you see that purpose or purposes in the way that projects [were/are] planned and completed?
  ii. How [did/do] you see that purpose or purposes in the finished product?
c. What [is/are] the main media and methods that you use[d] at your program?
  i. Before starting the program, had you used it and/or worked in that way before? [*Can follow up to gauge prior familiarity*.]
  ii. *[if not before:]* Did you ever imagine yourself working with it (or other media) used in your program? Do you think you would have otherwise been exposed to it?
  iii. *[If new:]* Describe how you went about learning to use it. *[If famiIiar:]* If you improved in using it while in the program, please describe how you improved?
  iv. [Do/did] you want to improvte? If so, what motivate[s/d] you to do better?
  v. [*If alum:]* Do you continue to use it?
    1. If so, how often and in what way?
    2. If not, do you use other artistic media? If so, how often and in what way*? [Unless self-evident from earlier narrative.]*
d. How important to you [are/were] the projects you [did/do] at [ ]?
  i. [Was it/has] it always [been] this way?
  ii. *[[f not always:]* [Does/did] the importance of your work there depend on the project, or did they become more or less important to you over time?
  iii. Why do you think so?
e. [Do/did] you compare your performance in the program, artistic or otherwise, to others'?
  i. Whose performance and when?
  ii. In what ways?
f. Now I'd like to know a bit more about the experience of making art or media projects for you.

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i. What freedom(s) [did/do] you have in using your chosen medium at your program? *[Prompt if needed: in getting your ideas across, expressing your feelings, making choices?*
ii. What [were/are] the challenges or limitations of using this medium in this program?
iii. [Did/do] you often work in groups to make art and media projects?
   1. What was that experience like at [ ]?
   2. Would you describe your peers at [ ] as an artistic community?
      a. Why/why not?
      b. [If yes] how did being a part of that community impact your experience?
iv. If you've used this medium elsewhere, does it differ from using it at [ ], and if so, how?

V. *Changes*

Now I would like to learn about any changes that have happened in your life since you became involved with [ ] [*in case of alums:* and since you left your program]. These changes can be small or large, and can have to do with things such as your lifestyle, opinions, attitudes, feelings about yourself, or practical things (e.g. new income or resources).

a. What things have changed in your life since you became involved with this program, if anything? *[Can provide choice, if necessary but attempt to keep open: more independent or confident? Feel like you can accomplish things? Feel like you know more about art, photography, community, yourself, etc.]*
   i. *[If a change is identified, follow-up with subsequent questions (b-d), and then probe for additional changes in different areas.]*
   ii. [*If no changes are cited:]* Did you expect that something would change? Why do you think that change did not occur?
b. When and how did you know that this [area of your life/thing about yourself] had changed?
   i. Did others notice and comment on the change? Who?
c. Was anyone else in [ ] very involved in making this change happen?
d. Did a particular program activity help that change to happen?
e. What do the words "adult" and "mature" mean to you?
   i. Do you feel that you've became more [whatever definition provided] since you started attending [ ]?
   ii. *[If so:]* When and how did you know you were more mature than before?
   iii. *[If so:]* Were there notable experiences in your program that helped you to be this way?; *[If not:]* [Was it/has it been] mainly experiences outside of the program that changed you, and if so, what were they?
   iv. [*For alums only:*] Have you continued to become more mature since you left the program?
      1. In what ways, and what has caused you to become more mature in the past X years?
f. What skills and/or knowledge do you think are required to succeed as an adult in the "real world"? *[Can clarify meaning life outside of the program or secondary school, or specific probe based on participant's narrative about college or work.]*
g. [Did/does] the program provide you with experiences that prepared you for the real world*? [If yes, ask for examples.]*

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  - *i.* [*For alums only*:] Do you remember any experiences in the program that you think directly relate to your work/college now?
- *h.* Please compare and contrast your life now with your life before starting to attend [ ].
  - *i.* [*For alums only:*] Please compare and contrast your life now with your life right before you left [ ].
- i. Of the changes in your life that you've discussed to this point, which ones do you think will last, and for how long?
- j. Do you think that any of these changes have direct impact on your current jobs/college/activities? Which ones and in what way(s)?
- k. Do any of the changes impact your relationships and people that you care about?
- l. Do any of these change impact the way you interact with others in the community?
- m. [Have/do] you share things you learned at [ ]with others, and if so, who and how?
- *n.* How [did/has] your program change[d] while you were a part of it? {if changed:] How do you think you might have changed it by being a part of it?
- *o.* If you had not participated in the program, where do you think you'd be now?
  - *i.* What would you be doing?
  - *ii.* Would anything be different in your life compared to now?
- *p.* How [has/does] [ ] "make a difference"?
  - i. In your life?
  - ii. In others' lives?
  - iii. In the community/Baltimore?
- q. How do you think that you make a difference in the communities that you are a part of? [*Provide examples based on participant's narrative, as needed*]
  - i. Do you feel like you have a say in [this/these] communit[y/ies]?
  - ii. What are some ways that you know that you're making a difference and/or having a say?
  - iii. Has your ability to impact your communities changed since being involved with [ ]?
  - iv. How do you think being involved with [ ] has or has not changed the way you engage with your communities?
  - v. Has your interest in making or supporting positive changes in your community changed over time?

VI. *Overall assessment*

Now, I would like to ask you a bit more about your thoughts about your program as a whole, its effectiveness, and its relationship with the community.

- *a.* What is your overall opinion of [ ]?
  - *i.* [Did/does] it meet the expectations you had for it when you started attending?
- *b.* Thinking back to when I asked you about it being effective, do you consider it to be a successful program?
  - *i.* If so, what makes it successful?
  - *ii.* If not, what makes it unsuccessful?
- *c.* In light of your overall assessment, provide a specific example of one thing that is a successful aspect of it.
- *d.* In light of your overall assessment, provide a specific example of one thing that is NOT a successful aspect of it.
- *e.* Would you send your own child to this program, or recommend it to a sibling, cousin, or younger friend? Why or why not?
- *f.* Do you have any suggestions for it to improve what it does?

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g. How do you see [ ] relating with the communities it is involved with (e.g., immediate neighborhood, participants' neighborhoods, wider Baltimore).
    i. Does it engage directly with these communities? How?
    ii. How do you think community relationships affect[ed] your experiences with it?
h. Do you think [ ] will be around for a long time? Why or why not?
i. What challenges does it face, if any? Do you have any ideas to overcome those challenges?
j. [*For alums only*:] Are you still involved with [ ] in any way, or have contact? To what extent?
    i. What are experiences like engaging with it in the present?
k. What does [ ] mean to you now?
    i. *What do you think it will mean to you in the future?*
    ii. [*For alums only:]* What did it mean to you while you were a part of it?
    iii. [*For alums only, If opinion has changed*] What has happened since you left to change its meaning to you?

k. Looking back now, from the time you started attending [ ] to the present, what is the one most meaningful experience or relationship, if you had to choose on thing, that has made you the person that you are today.

i. [*If not a program experience or acquaintance:]* Did you experience with [ ] have any impact on the relationship or experience?

VII. *Ending*

a. Was there anything I didn't ask that I should have, or was there anything you didn't get to say?
b. How did the interview feel and how was it for you to talk about these experiences?
c. (If applicable) If you were uncomfortable in sharing them, would you like me to inform a trusted *[colleague, staff person, family member*] about it and help you to receive support in dealing with these feelings?

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Appendix E

Participant Consent Form

Y13AB20155 03/05/2013

Whom to Contact about this study:

Principal Investigator: Jill E. Scheibler, M.A.
Department: Psychology
Telephone number: (410) 455-2973

INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

Constructing Change that Lasts: A Grounded Theory Study of Community-Based Arts' Creation of Social Impacts

I. **INTRODUCTION/PURPOSE:**

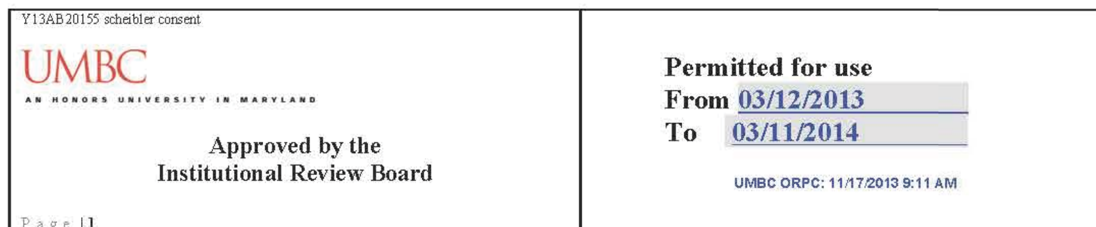
I am being asked to participate in a research study. The purpose of this study is to create better understandings of how community-based arts organizations and their activities produce positive outcomes. The aim of the study is to look closely at how the changes that participants experience, while being part of an arts program, become longer-lasting impacts. I am being asked to volunteer because I have attended a selected organization for at least 2 years. My involvement in this study will begin when I agree to participate and will continue until approximately October, 2013. About 10-15 persons will be invited to participate.

II. **PROCEDURES:**

As part of this study, I will be asked to participate in an interview that asks questions about my arts program experiences and about how they may relate to current events and circumstances in my life. The interview will occur in the location of my choice. My direct participation in this study will last for up to 3 hours, made up of 1-2 interviews of up to 1.5 hours each. My interview may be digitally recorded, and transcribed afterward. This will only be done with my permission. (If I do not give permission to be recorded, I still may participate in the study but written notes will be taken instead.) Following transcription, any identifying information will be removed and the digital audio file will be destroyed. No identifying information about me will be included in any written notes that are taken. I may request that the recorder be turned off at any point in the conversation. At any time, I may decide to end the interview or withdraw from the study. If I withdraw, no more information will be collected from me.

III. **RISKS AND BENEFITS:**

I have been informed that participation in this study may involve only minimal risk, such as the possibility that I may experience some discomfort in discussing uncomfortable memories or in talking critically about areas for improvement in the program that I attended. I have been informed that I will receive a retail gift card in the amount of $15 as an incentive for my participation. I have also been informed that my participation in this research will not otherwise benefit me personally, in a significant way, but it may contribute to an understanding of how community-based arts organizations function. This may help my arts



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program to better evaluate and improve its programming, indirectly helping those still involved in the program. I may also enjoy the opportunity to voice my thoughts and concerns, gain new insights or learn something about myself, and know that my participation is important to creating an even more positive experience at my arts program.

IV. **CONFIDENTIALITY:**

Any information learned and collected from this study in which I might be identified will remain confidential and will be disclosed ONLY if I give permission. The investigator (s) will attempt to keep my personal information confidential. To help protect my confidentiality, the written transcription of the interview and/or written notes from my interview will contain no identifiable information and will be stored in a locked file cabinet in a locked room. Only the investigator, Ms. Scheibler, her adviser, and members of her research team may have access to these records. If information from this study is published, I will not be identified by name. By signing this form, however, I am allowing Ms. Scheibler to make my records available to the University of Maryland Baltimore County (UMBC) Institutional Review Board (IRB) and regulatory agencies as required by law.

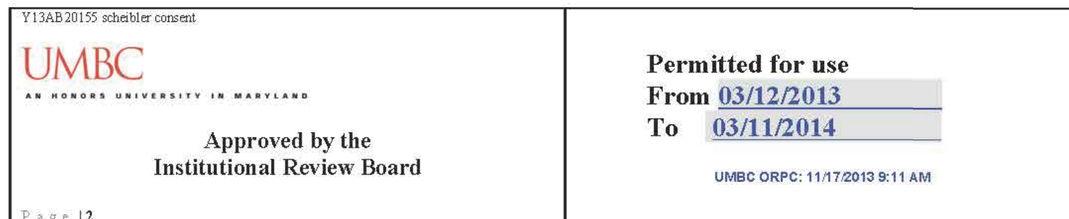
Consenting to participate in this research also indicates my agreement that all information collected from me individually may be used by current and future researchers in such a fashion that my personal identity will be protected. Such use will include sharing anonymous information with other researchers for checking the accuracy of study findings and for future approved research that has the potential for improving human knowledge.

Please, check the appropriate box regarding the use of recording instruments during the research:

☐ Yes, I give permission to record my voice.

☐ No, I do not give permission to record my voice. By placing my initials next to this paragraph, I am requesting that my interview not be audio recorded, but am consenting to participate in the interview and to have written notes taken by the interviewer while we speak.

Although my confidentiality in this study is protected, confidentiality may not be absolute or perfect. There are some circumstances where research staff might be required by law to share information I have provided. For example, if the interviewer has reason to believe I may bring harm to myself or others, she may be required by Maryland state law to file a report with the appropriate agencies.



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Y13AB20155 03/05/2013

V. <u>COMPENSATION/COSTS:</u>
My participation in this study will involve no cost to me. I will receive a retail gift card in the amount of $15 in recognition of my time and participation.

VI. <u>CONTACTS AND QUESTIONS:</u>
The principal investigator, Jill E. Scheibler, has offered to and has answered any and all questions about my participation in this research study. If I have any further questions, I can contact Ms. Scheibler at 410-455-2973 or jscheib1@umbc.edu, or her faculty advisor, Dr. Anne Brodsky at 410-455-2416 or brodsky@umbc.edu.

If I have any questions about my rights as a participant in this research study, contact the Office for Research Protections and Compliance at (410) 455-2737 or compliance@umbc.edu.

VII. <u>VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION:</u>
I am 18 years of age or older and have been informed that my participation in this research study is voluntary and that, if I choose to participate, I am free to withdraw or discontinue participation at any time. I may skip any question that I do not want to answer. I have been informed that if I do choose to withdraw, the data collected for this study will be retained by the investigator and analyzed, and the investigator may use my information up to the time I decide to withdraw but no further information will be collected from me.

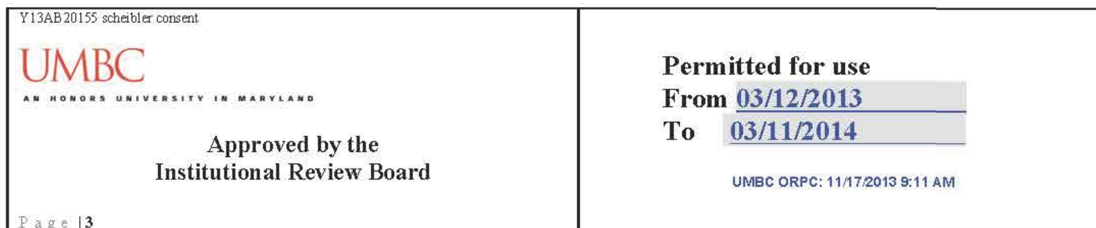
I will be given a copy of this consent form to keep.

VIII. <u>SIGNATURE FOR CONSENT:</u>
The above-named investigator has answered my questions and I agree to be a research participant in this study.

Participant's Name: ______________________________ Date: ____________________

Participant's Signature: ___________________________ Date: ____________________

Investigator's Signature: __________________________ Date: ____________________



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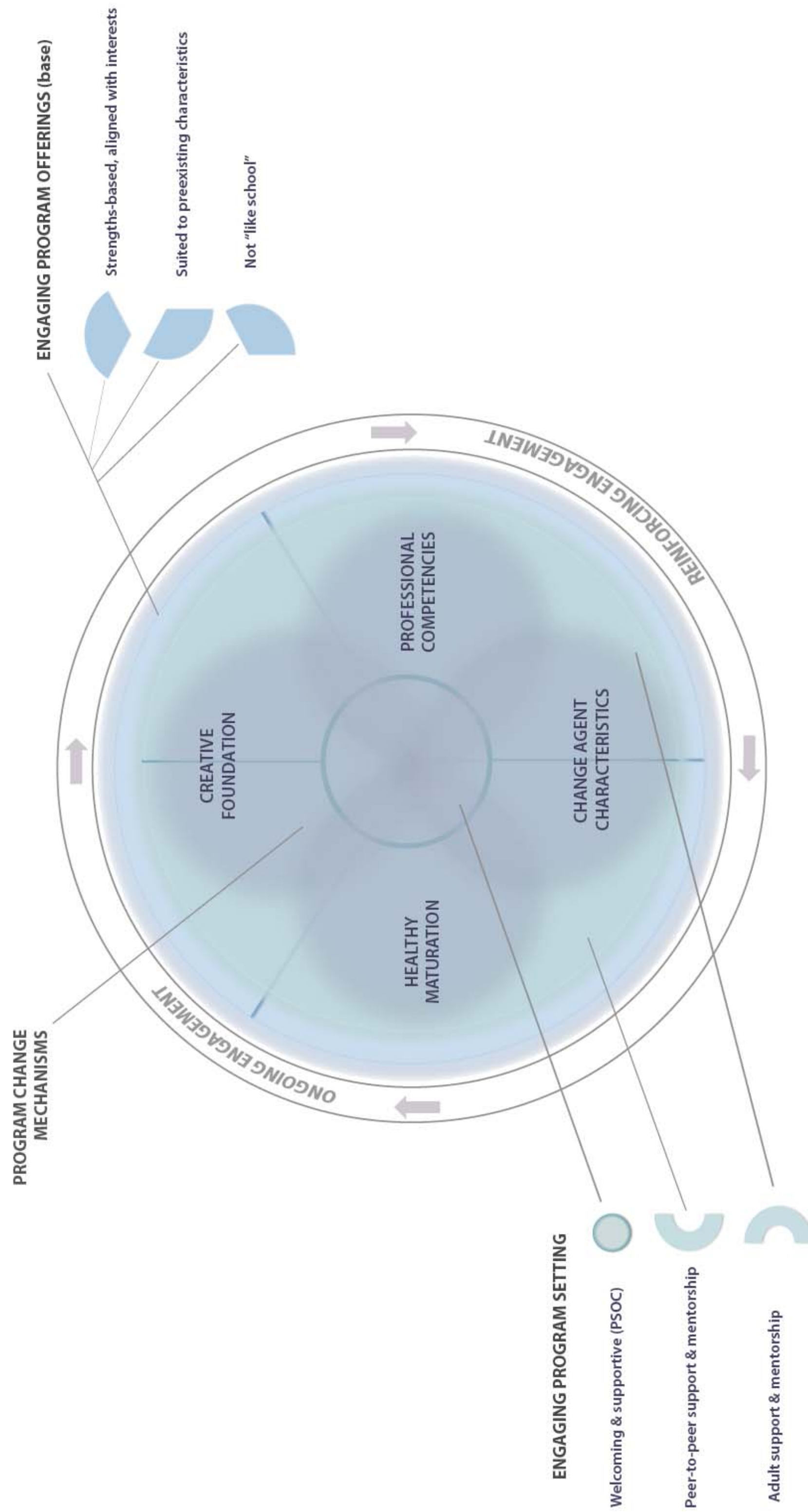
Appendix F

Process Model of Program Engagement and Change Processes



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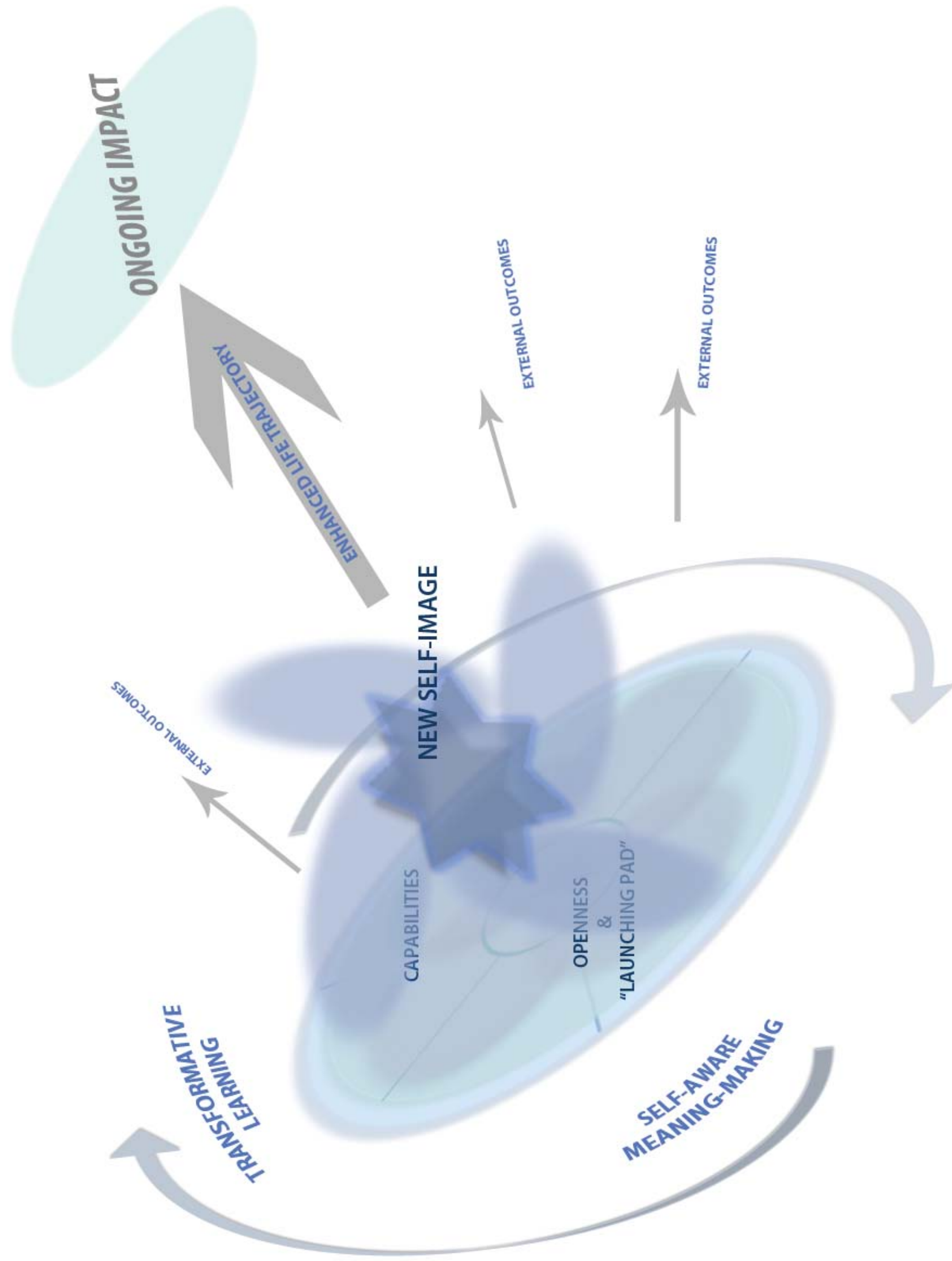
Appendix G
Tentative Process Model of External Change Pathways



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