

Arts & Culture: Art-Reach

For 30 years Art-Reach has connected underserved audiences, including disabled and low-income residents in the Philadelphia region, with cultural experiences so they may benefit from the transformative power of the arts. Art-Reach achieves their mission by providing discounted tickets to cultural events for thousands of disabled people who otherwise might not be able to attend. They also conduct onsite performances and workshops for their members. In 2015, one Art-Reach program, ENCORE, served 5,300 disabled individuals by pairing up many of its 172 human services agency members (such as Magee Rehabilitation and Overbrook School for the Blind) with its 175 arts partners (including the Penn Museum, Barnes Collection, Philadelphia Orchestra, Walnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia Zoo and Flower Show).

Art-Reach seeks to expand the ENCORE program by working with their arts partners to further tailor the arts experience to their members. They want to help member agencies provide low or no-cost transportation for the disabled, expand In-Facility programs, develop training curricula and materials, in addition to offering online toolkits to teach arts organizations how to better adapt their performances to a disabled audience. Art-Reach will also produce a documentary of the ENCORE outreach programs to better “tell the story” to potential funders and potential program partners. Lastly, they will upgrade the Art-Reach website to better communicate their message. www.art-reach.org

Members of the A&C FAC were impressed with how eloquently Executive Director John Orr passionately spoke about the needs of the disabled and the possibility that Philadelphia can serve as a model for other cities outside the region. The FAC felt strongly that Art-Reach is well poised to take advantage of an Impact100 grant at this time and the proposal clearly articulates a thoughtful and organized approach for the expansion of this project.

Education: CASA Philadelphia

The overall mission of CASA Philadelphia is to train and support community volunteers to serve as court appointed special advocates for abused and neglected children who have been removed from their homes, placed in the foster care system and under the supervision of the Department of Human Services (DHS). Founded in 2006, CASA Philadelphia works to promote and support quality volunteer advocacy helping assure each child a safe, permanent, and nurturing home.

In 2013, CASA Philadelphia launched a pilot Educational Decision-Maker (EDM) Program at the request of the Philadelphia Judiciary. Court appointed EDMs are the law in Pennsylvania but the state does not provide funding. EDM volunteers require training additional to that of a CASA volunteer. An EDM is a legal decision-maker for a child’s educational rights, addressing a child’s educational needs rather than his/her general welfare needs. EDMs work primarily with children living in congregate care settings (group home) without an adult authorized to make educational decisions on the child’s behalf. With the Impact100 grant, CASA Philadelphia plans to double the number served in its pilot EDM program and create a training module, including the metrics needed for measuring success, that can be used by other organizations across Pennsylvania to train EDMs. www.casaphiladelphia.org

Education FAC Members were compelled to address the urgent need for EDMs in the Philadelphia Court System and to address a significant need for children who are at-risk in the most extreme ways. Because many of the affected children have learning, behavioral and emotional issues, making school a particular challenge, a CASA EDM may provide the only advocacy, attention and resources needed and deserved by a child, from the Philadelphia school system. Additionally, CASA EDMs often provide the only consistent presence in the lives of these children.

Environment: Delaware Valley Green Building Council

Delaware Valley Green Building Council (DVGBC) fosters transformation in our local community through green building, education, and advocacy. Founded in 2001, DVGBC began as a volunteer endeavor later evolving into an organization with more than 500 members. Their diverse membership includes architects and real estate developers, building product manufacturers, and healthcare providers. DVGBC has four primary programs: *Education*, which focuses on industry best practices in green building; *Policy and Advocacy*, impacting green building and sustainability design practices at both the state and local levels; *Green Schools*, developing cost-effective strategies to improve the operations and maintenance of school buildings; and *Ambassadors*, which focuses on building the next generation of leaders in sustainable design and construction. DVGBC is the local chapter of a national organization.

With the Impact100 grant, DVGBC will launch a new project aimed at harnessing the collaborative potential between government, the private, non-profit, and academic sectors to accelerate the pace of change. This three-part project includes: 1) The advancement of deep carbon emissions reductions achieved through DVCBC's relationships with major real estate holders, utility companies, service providers, and local government; 2) The implementation of a retrofit accelerator model to help gather and translate performance data into useful information for building owners and operators, municipal agencies, and industry; and 3) To partner with private sector service providers and the City of Philadelphia to deliver cutting-edge training for facility managers and building engineers to implement green management practices.

www.dvgbc.org

DVGBC is an impressive, well organized nonprofit led by an impressive group of young professionals. The Environment FAC members were inspired by the leadership's passion toward their mission. Members felt confident in their ability to execute on this project because of their track record establishing vital relationships among the relevant constituents. In addition, the group felt this project well represented Impact100's revised definition for the Environment FAC.

Family: CASA Youth Advocates Inc. of Delaware County

Founded in 1992, CASA Youth Advocates Inc. of Delaware County's mission is to represent and speak for the best interests of abused and neglected children who are adjudicated dependent in Delaware or Chester Counties. The CASA model pairs a rigorously trained volunteer with one child or sibling group for the purpose of focusing exclusively on their needs as they navigate the dependency system, working with the child's caregivers, preparing court reports based on the child's records, attending court hearings, and advocating for the child for available but often untapped social services. The CASA volunteer is often the only consistent adult presence in the child's life. Statistics both nationally and locally demonstrate that CASA associated youth are more likely to find a safe permanent home, half as likely to re-enter foster care, and more likely to succeed in school.

CASA Youth Advocates Inc. of Delaware County is requesting Impact100 funding to expand their program into Montgomery County. Presently in Montgomery County, there are two attorneys representing 600 children in the court system. The gravity of the situation was strikingly outlined by the Montgomery County Public Defender himself at the Impact100 site visit. The funding will also go towards recruiting an additional Case Supervisor to increase the number of children served in the three counties and the number of trained volunteers by 25. CASA volunteers come from all walks of life, and undergo an intense training by Masters' level social workers and attorneys to become familiar with the dependency system, courts, and social service landscape. www.delcocasa.org

The Family FAC members feel strongly that this organization's mission of providing a consistent and committed adult advocate to a child for whom family, for whatever reason, has failed embodies the definition of this focus area. In addition, the dedicated staff and board provide strong leadership, the need is urgent, and there is a strong and viable plan for expansion. www.delcocasa.org

Health & Wellness: Supportive Older Women's Network

For over 30 years, Supportive Older Women's Network (SOWN) has been a pioneer in developing innovative solutions to help older adults function independently, live healthier lives, and age in their homes and communities. SOWN's mission is to support adults, particularly women age 50+, through life transitions. SOWN reaches over 800 older adults and families with services that are prevention-driven, client-focused and evidence-based. They build strong community social support networks that enable older adults to function independently, live healthier lives, and reduce isolation and depression. They provide peer groups for older women at over 20 different community sites in Philadelphia and weekly telephone support groups for frail homebound older adults. SOWN employs a national model of integrated mental and physical wellness programming for seniors; and a network of support services for grandparents raising grandchildren.

SOWN seeks Impact100 funding for a new project called Parkinson's Caregiver Telegroups. The program leverages SOWN's evidence-based telephone support group intervention model. Led by a skilled Master's level clinician, the pilot project will provide weekly telegroup services to caregivers of family members or loved ones with Parkinson's Disease. Telegroups provide a structure for participants to express concerns and learn coping strategies ranging from cognitive reframing techniques to practical ways of organizing routines. The goal of the Caregiver Telegroups project is to improve the emotional well-being of the caregivers, and in turn, the mental and physical well-being of individuals with Parkinson's Disease. SOWN's telegroups have proven success in reducing isolation and depression, and increasing social connectedness. www.sown.org

Members of the Health & Wellness FAC feel that caregivers are truly an underserved community. One in four American households includes an adult providing care for someone over 50 years old. Health professionals often refer to the caregivers as the "hidden patients" because their needs so often go unidentified and unmet. In addition, FAC members believe the ripple effect is broad, impacting both the Parkinson's community and caregivers of other medically challenged populations.