



Art & Healing in HOPE SF Communities

A Community Engaged Assessment

July 2015

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ASSESSMENT PARTNERS



HOPE SF
Mayor's Office SF,
Enterprise Community
Partners & The San
Francisco Foundation

HOPE SF is the nation's first large-scale public housing revitalization project to invest in high-quality, sustainable housing and broad scale community development *with minimal* displacement of current residents. There are four active HOPE SF sites – **Alice Griffith, Huntersview, Potrero Terrace & Annex and Sunnydale**. HOPE SF is led by the San Francisco Mayor's Office with dozens of public and private sector partners including The San Francisco Foundation and Enterprise Community Partners.



San Francisco State University
Department of Health Education
Health Equity Institute

The Department of Health Education currently offers a BS degree in health education with emphases in community-based health, holistic health, and school health. At the graduate level, the Department offers a Master's of Public Health (MPH) degree in community health education.

The Health Equity Institute (HEI) is a trans-disciplinary research institute at SF State University that links science to community practice in the pursuit of health equity and justice. HEI is conducts original research and partners with communities to understand and address critical health equity issues.

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BACKGROUND

In November 2011, HOPE SF, the San Francisco Department of Public Health, and San Francisco State University’s Department of Health Education and Health Equity Institute came together in a partnership to further the development of strategies to address health issues facing HOPE SF communities.

From its inception, this partnership has been guided by recommendations developed by the HOPE SF Health Taskforce and has a focus on gathering additional information and best-practice examples for effective implementation of the Taskforce’s recommendations. The collaboration builds on the many community efforts already underway to improve the health of San Francisco communities, including HOPE SF sites, as well as the significant research endeavors that have already and continue to take place with HOPE SF communities.

Current HOPE SF Communities

Alice Griffith	Potrero Terrace and Annex
Huntersview	Sunnydale

Goals

The partnership’s work seeks to illuminate how the City of San Francisco, private partners and other stakeholders can best support the development and implementation of health strategies at all of the HOPE SF sites in a manner that honors the uniqueness of each community and recognizes commonalities to ensure a coordinated and thoughtful approach.

Commitment to Health Equity & Meeting Immediate Urgent Health Needs

This partnership and the related projects stem from a commitment to health equity and the urgent need to address the health issues facing the HOPE SF communities today. Actions at all levels – the individual, interpersonal, community and societal levels – are needed to address health inequities in the HOPE SF communities. This work seeks to balance a commitment to both long term changes in social determinants and the more immediate individual, interpersonal and community changes that have an impact on health.

Assessments

- **Peer Health Leadership (2012)**
- **Children and Families Affected by Mental Health Issues (2013)**
- **Youth (age 12-24) Health and Wellness (2014)**
- **Art and Healing (2015)**

Key Partnership Components

Resident and Community Engagement

Residents and community representatives of HOPE SF sites play a critical role in partnership activities. Resident leaders and site based HOPE SF staff and community organizations provide guidance for assessment activities (including development of data collection tools, outreach, and data collection), and participate in the design and lead implementation of new service and community-building strategies. In the Art & Healing Assessment resident engagement was a key component of both the data collection and strategy development process.

MPH Students Practice Based Learning

A key aspect of these projects is that they are designed to result in meaningful products for the community and City partners as well as serve as a practice-based learning opportunity for San Francisco State University (SFSU) MPH Students. Students and faculty conduct the assessment activities as part of the Community Assessment for Change and Professional Public Health practice courses in the SFSU MPH program, which take place over a 7 month period.

Assessment Timeline

All of the assessments conducted follow a similar timeline.

- Assessment Planning (November – January)
- Community Art Workshop & Meetings (January - July)
- Literature Review (February –April)
- Data Collection (April – June)
- Data Analysis (July)
- Presentation of Findings and Recommendations (July)

PURPOSE AND KEY QUESTIONS

Purpose

To examine how art can act as a vehicle for community building and healing in HOPE SF communities

Key Assessment Questions

National/Context

- What has been done across the country to use art as a vehicle for healing and community building in public housing communities?

Local Context

- What current programs and activities engage HOPE SF residents and staff in arts or creative expression?
- What is the current level of investment in art programs, activities and resources in HOPE SF communities?
- Where are the significant gaps in arts programming and investment in HOPE SF communities?

Barriers/Needs

- How can existing and emerging community artists play a role in HOPE SF's community development efforts and what supports do they need?
- What are the barriers to participation in art activities for adults and youth in HOPE SF communities?

Opportunities

- How can the physical redevelopment process in HOPE SF sites incorporate ongoing community engaged creative processes?
- How can community engaged artistic processes and arts programs promote individual and community healing in HOPE SF communities including:
 - Bridging cultural divides and supporting cultural expression
 - Fostering community safety
 - Enhancing and supporting physical and mental wellbeing
- How can community engaged artistic processes and arts programming engage adults in HOPE SF communities
- How can artistic process foster community connections within the HOPE SF site and to adjacent neighborhood?

ASSESSMENT METHODS

This assessment took place over the 7 month period January through July 2015. Advisors who represented key stakeholders in this work provided guidance throughout the assessment. Twenty MPH students were divided into three data collection teams. The *Resident Assessment Team* included of MPH students gathered the voices of residents; The *Program Staff Assessment Team* spoke with program staff who work in art-based programs within HOPE SF communities or with HOPE SF community members; and, the *Key Stakeholders Assessment Team* talked with key policy makers, agency staff and other stakeholders. Assessment methods included a literature review that was conducted to lay groundwork for the primary data collection. Then interviews were conducted with residents, program staff and key stakeholders. **In total the experiences and views of 65 people were captured in this assessment.**

Methods			
Voices	Method	Conducted by	#
	Literature Review	All MPH students	200 articles
Resident Artists	1 In-depth, semi-structured interviews	6 MPH students on <i>Resident Assessment Team</i>	17 interview
Program Staff	In-depth, semi-structured interviews	8 MPH students on <i>Program Staff Assessment Team</i>	21 interviews
Key Stakeholders	In-depth, semi-structured interviews	6 MPH students on <i>Key Informants Assessment Team</i>	27 interviews

Literature Review

An essential element of this assessment was a comprehensive review of the literature regarding art and healing efforts in public housing settings. Prior to making contact with assessment participants, the class of 20 MPH students read over 200 articles and reports with the purpose of better understanding strategies for engaging individuals and communities in art based programs and movements. Students aimed to limit their searches to studies in the U.S. published between the years 2000 and 2015. Ultimately, 200 articles were determined to be relevant and were reviewed for lessons learned. In some areas where there was a limited amount of literature specific to public housing, articles about communities with similar demographics (e.g. low-income, poverty, impoverished urban communities, minority women and children) were reviewed. However, a full review of this larger body of work was outside the scope of this literature review.

To review the literature of art and healing efforts in public housing settings, the MPH students worked in two teams –Art & Healing (10 students) and Art and Community (10

students). The Art & Community team further divided into sub groups to examine ways that art can be a vehicle to cut across various divides including social engagement, place-making and community building. The Art & Healing team divided into sub-groups to examine the impact of art as mechanism of healing on various levels of the ecological model including impact of individual, relationships and social. Each literature review team used a variety of databases available through the San Francisco State University Library server including: PubMed, ERIC, Web of Science, Academic Search Complete as well as Google Scholar.

Data Collection

Twenty MPH talked to a total of 65 participants over the course of 3 months. Interviews were used to gather the perspectives of program staff, key stakeholders and residents. All interviews were recorded if consent was given and hand written notes were taken as well.

Resident Voices

17 interviews with resident artists from four of the HOPE SF sites – Sunnydale (3), Alice Griffith (1), Potrero (6) and Hunter’s View (7) were conducted. 53 % of those interviewed were African American while other participants identified themselves as Asian or Pacific Islander, Hispanic or Native American. Ten self-identified as females while 7 self-identified as male. Residents were identified by community program staff, site leadership and Peer Health Leaders who made initial contact. Participants were also identified by asking interviewees to suggest other resident artists. Students in teams of two conducted interviews and gave all resident interviewees an appreciation gift with notebooks and other art supplies.

Program Staff Voices

Eight other SFSU MPH students comprised the *Program Staff Assessment Team* and gathered the views of art-based programming staff who work with HOPE SF communities. The team conducted **21 interviews** with program staff from various organizations. The programs serve a wide variety of participants in age (new born-90) and ethnicity (African American, Latino, Pacific Islander and others). Length of service at organization ranged from under 1 year to 40 years, with an average of 11 years. Site leadership and assessment advisors identified program staff to interview. Pairs of MPH students contacted and interviewed program staff and provided interviewees with a \$5 gift card to Starbucks as a token of appreciation. The following organizations were represented in interviews:

Program Staff Interviews		
African American Holistic Wellness Program	Hunters Point Family	Sunnydale Seed Program
Bay Area Video Coalition (BAVC)	Leah's Pantry	Sunnydale YMCA Tiny Tappers
Bayview Hunters Point YMCA Women's Painting Group	Precita Eyes	Urban Services YMCA: Healthy Living
BRIDGE Healthy Living Program: Feeding Potrero Catering Team	Rebuild Potrero: Texas Street Farm	Urban Services YMCA: Men's Group
Dance Mission Theatre	ROCK SF- Real Options for City Kids	Y-PLAN
EDC Potrero Student Studio Sessions	SCDC-Samoan Community Development Center	Youth Leadership Institute

Key Stakeholder Voices

Another group of 6 SFSU students comprised the *Key Stakeholder Assessment Team* and conducted interviews with **27 key stakeholders**, including individuals in leadership roles in organizations and city agencies that are involved in HOPE SF. Key advisors and city leaders identified key informants to be interviewed. Interviews were done by students in teams of two and included representatives from the following organizations:

Key Stakeholder Interviews		
American Conservatory Theater (A.C.T)	John Stewart Company	SF Department of Public Health
Bayview Opera House	Mental Health Services Act	SF Public Utilities Commission
City Attorney's Office	Mercy Housing	SF Housing Authority
First Five San Francisco	Office of Early Care & Education	Visual and Performing Arts (VAPA)
Grants for the Arts	SF Arts Commission	Walter & Elise Haas Foundation
Housing & Urban Development	SF Arts Task Force	Youth Speaks

Community Art Collaborative Process

Individuals across sites and organizations were brought together to develop relationships, share experiences and discuss the role of art in HOPE SF communities throughout the assessment process. Workshops were facilitated by professional artist, Brett Cook and held with various audiences (MPH students, HOPE SF Initiative staff, site leadership) in a variety of settings to assure a diverse range of voices were elevated.

Process Facilitator

Brett Cook is an interdisciplinary artist, educator, and healer who uses creative practices to transform outer and inner worlds of being. His objects feature painting, drawing, photography, and elaborate installations to share pluralistic stories that reinvent representation. His public projects typically involve community workshops featuring arts-integrated pedagogy, along with music, performance, and food to create a fluid boundary between art making, daily life, and healing. He has received numerous awards, including the Lehman Brady Visiting Professorship at Duke University and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and the Richard C. Diebenkorn Fellowship at the San Francisco Art Institute. Recognized for a history of socially relevant, community engaged projects, Brett was selected as cultural ambassador to Nigeria as part of the U.S. Department of State's 2012 smARTpower Initiative and was a 2014 A Blade of Grass Fellow for Socially Engaged Art. His work is in private and public collections including the Smithsonian/National Portrait Gallery, the Walker Art Center, and Harvard University. www.brett-cook.com

Process Elements

San Francisco State University Workshops January – July 2015

Beginning in January, Brett Cook facilitated a series of workshops with San Francisco State University MPH students and faculty to explore the role of art in community building and healing. The workshops included discussions of the importance in collaboration and community-driven processes while also engaging students in community building exercises.



HOPE SF Site Leadership Workshop February 2015

Site leadership representatives convened for a workshop facilitated by Brett Cook to discuss the history of public art and the role of art in HOPE SF communities. This workshop also included community building exercises and opportunities for site leadership to practice collaborative skills.

Site Discussions February – July 2015

Over the course of the assessment discussions were held at every site to better understand current art programs and practices utilized in the communities. Discussions included site leadership and peer leadership program staff. Opportunities for further integration of art and creative expression in on-site programming were also discussed.



**Community
Collaborative
Workshop
June 2015**

Over 40 Community artists, HOPE SF Adult Peer and Youth Leaders, Site Leadership representatives and SFSU students all



participated in a full day art workshop at San Francisco State University. The workshop included representation from all 4 HOPE SF sites and provided space for individuals to build community across sites while also discussing matters specific to each community.

The goals of the workshop were to understand the following:

- How can looking deeply through creativity and dialogue with others help to refine our understanding about Community and Healing?
- How can creativity promote wellbeing?
- How can discussing the role of art and healing in HOPE SF communities provide an opportunity to support the Alice Griffith, Huntersview, Potrero and Sunnysdale communities?

Participants did this by practicing mindfulness, learning and modeling basic concepts of collaboration and reflecting on their own work in connection to art in HOPE SF. Participants utilized contemplative education strategies and participant generated review protocols to generate ideal community and healing statements. The collaborative exercises from the highly interactive experience mirrored the other workshops given to the University and Site Leadership. One community leader shared the following reflection at the end of the workshop time:

“This is inspirational and healing because it inspires us to try a new strategy to engage our residents through art. We have a clear understanding now that art plays a major role in our lives emotionally, physically, mentally, and visually. By implementing the ideas and practices we have learned today, we will be able to work with our residents on a level that they have not experienced before. A level of higher awareness that art is a major part of our lives, and will inspire them to have a better view of community, healing, diversity, and most importantly unity!” – HOPE SF Resident

Data Analysis & Recommendation Development

Over a 6 week period, SFSU students and SFSU faculty participated in a collaborative process to compile, organize and analyze interview data gathered from residents, program staff and key informants. Each Assessment Team transcribed and then analyzed data for key themes. The teams developed their own findings which were then combined into one overarching set of findings that are presented in this report. The three Assessment Teams developed separate recommendations for how art can act as a vehicle for community building and healing in HOPE SF communities which were also combined into one overarching set of recommendations presented in this report.

Limitations

There are several limitations related to this assessment's methods that should be acknowledged. Due to capacity, time, and resource constraints, the sample of this data collection is relatively small and not randomized as with most descriptive qualitative data. All interviews were conducted in English. No data was collected from residents who speak other primary languages. Lastly, the assessment captured the experiences of the small sample and cannot be generalized to all individuals connected to the HOPE SF initiative. However, it is clear from the review of the literature that the experiences captured in this assessment related to HOPE SF communities share many similarities to those in other public housing communities in the United States.



FINDINGS

The following findings were developed by the MPH students in collaboration with the course instructors who guided the data analysis process. The findings reflect themes that were found in the interviews and the community art process that engaged adult and youth residents, key stakeholders, and program staff.

Impact

Finding 1: HOPE SF residents want their community's history acknowledged and see public art as a way to document and validate community identity as the physical environment is transformed.

Residents and program staff are deeply concerned that as the HOPE SF communities undergo physical transformation the history and identity of the historic and current community will be erased. Many HOPE SF residents are proud of their communities and see art as a way to document and validate the community's identity and history. One resident asserted, *"Once they tear it down to like, you're tearing down the history of Potrero Hill, what makes Potrero Hill. Whether you call us a ghetto or a project...there's a lot of history here and a lot of stuff has happened here."* Residents expressed worry that they will lose their sense of belonging after the redevelopment is complete and that the rebuild process might "erase" their presence. Multiple generations have lived in public housing and they believe that redevelopment may diminish that history. Residents want the history of past generations who have lived at HOPE SF sites to be remembered. For some, photos are seen as a way to tell stories about the connections residents have with their community and to document the hardships they have faced living in public housing. One resident specifically noted the importance of remembering significant accomplishments, not just negative community events, citing an example of family members who marched with their community to force the removal of a polluting power plant.

Residents see public art and creative expression at the HOPE SF sites as a critical opportunity to counteract the potential diminishment of community history. Public art projects serve as a way for HOPE SF residents to designate locations or spaces that are of particular community importance and create a visible cultural legacy that can endure into the future. Furthermore, concerns about the redevelopment are exacerbated because public housing residents do not own their homes and have little control over their physical environment. In response they describe that displaying their own art in their communities helps give them a feeling of some ownership of the space. Several of the HOPE SF sites have already created murals that are currently displayed and are a source of pride for residents. Program staff and residents described the importance of creating artwork in a space that

the community can look back on after the redevelopment process is complete. One resident commented, *“If they have a certain space that they’re not gonna tear down, that’s gonna stay there, I’d like to do another mural. Just because, as a signature, like, we’re still here even though you guys are rebuilding.”* A program staff who worked on one of the HOPE SF mural projects agreed, observing *“It was a really good, fulfilling process, for everyone. And I don’t think they [the community] expected it to be as beautiful as it actually turned out to be. It will be there for many, many years to come for future generations.”*

Finding 2: Participation in community art processes and programs nurtures personal and community pride for HOPE SF residents and staff while the dilapidated physical environment undermines it.

HOPE SF communities are often publically perceived as places of deficit, and residents are aware of and sometimes internalize these negative expectations. Art activities can be a way to challenge such stereotypes and recognize the many assets that the residents in these communities have to offer. Participation in art activities encourages HOPE SF residents to find their voice through creative expression, and share that voice with those around them. *“It’s just different things like that that brought the community together, to where it’s still up there, people walk by, and it’s like, ‘that’s my idea that’s up on that mural.’ And that’s a really good feeling, when you can see it...or, that’s my hand print right there.”* Program staff pointed to the artistic achievements and dedication of residents, including one young woman who had won a national competition, and to young men who record rap in a studio five days a week.

Arts programs provide residents with a platform to creatively express themselves within their environment. The creation of public art allows HOPE SF residents to become deeply connected to their local surroundings by contributing creatively to the environment and the site’s aesthetic. Art programs that emphasize a community’s culture and/or history often ignite feelings of pride and ownership within HOPE SF residents, which may contribute to residents feeling more respectful and responsible towards the community and the environment: *“You’re feeling that you contributed something to your community and to your society and not feeling separated from it. And I think the more you experience that...you’re going to feel better and better about yourself and more compassionate about the things that are around you, your environment, your family, your friends, and be there to do your work and to help other people.”* Specifically, program staff and residents expressed a desire to participate in creating large-scale works of art, such as the murals that have already been created at the HOPE SF sites.

While residents strongly identify with their physical environment, they also see its dilapidated state—including boarded up or gated windows, and trash and mattresses strewn

around—as “*depressing*” and “*unsettling.*” They suggest that beautifying the grounds might increase resident investment in maintaining them. As one resident stated, “*If they felt some value in their community, even making it more beautiful and visually inviting, they would take more care.*” One method of beautification suggested by several residents was creating gardens and flowerbeds. One resident noted that newly added gardens helped to transform his site so that it was less like the “*wild, wild west.*” The effect of beautification is even more powerful if residents themselves are involved in the landscaping process. One young resident imagined how good it would feel to wake up in the morning, look at a garden and say, “*I did that. We did that.*”

Finding 3: Collaborative creative expression activities foster social cohesion, strengthen cultural identity and create bridges across community divides at HOPE SF sites.

Collaborative art activities connect residents and counteracts the persistent community fragmentation in HOPE SF communities. Forming strong, healthy interpersonal relationships is especially important in a context where poverty, trauma, and violence puts stress on families and strains relationships. In HOPE SF sites, concerns about safety isolate people in their homes and residents report a sense of stigma connected to being public housing residents, separated from surrounding communities and the rest of the city, as well as a sense of distrust toward their neighbors. A key stakeholder posited “*There is a lot of trauma that has happened in the HOPE SF communities, and longstanding trauma. Incorporating the arts as a healing mechanism and as a way to express oneself, I think, can be used to help create a gel for the community. I think its immediate benefit is the healing aspect of it... It can be used to help to bond the community to help them build closer-knit relationships.*” Program staff also observe that residents participating in arts programs are building a sense of togetherness that helps heal feelings of alienation. A program staff who is also a resident observed “*Residents in these isolated neighborhoods are very untrusting of other people...You create your own world and then you learn there's no boundaries in painting or drawing—there's no boundaries in doing art. It's honestly made me not worry so much about trusting other people.*”

Existing formal and informal HOPE SF art and creative expression activities allow residents to meet and connect, share themselves in a nonjudgmental atmosphere and build relationships that allow them to be seen and understood by others. A long-time artist and community organizer at one HOPE SF site shared that “*there's no way to make a better connection with other people than through art.*” At the Assessment’s Community Art Workshop attended by HOPE SF residents and site staff, residents expressed that the process of group art making created a space where everyone could participate equally, sharing

experiences that transcend power dynamics. HOPE SF residents participating in group-based art programs may get along better, and begin to establish trusting relationships that some program staff comment feel like family. As one staff member who is also a resident, said *“I feel that we are all able to communicate better because we are all doing something that makes us feel really good...we are family...not a dysfunctional family; we're starting to be able to relate to one another in a positive way.”*

Collaborative art processes foster cultural identity.

Existing cultural/ethnic art programs inside and outside of HOPE SF public housing sites are viewed by program staff as extremely valuable. They allow participants to learn about their culture, gain a sense of identity and pride in that culture, and help counter negative stereotypes. As program staff noted, *“if people are already stereotyping [us] as savages, or as bullies, or as athletes...how do we get our kids to get out of that mindset of being a stereotype?”*

One HOPE SF Samoan resident who began a cultural dance program in the community described the way that it helped to foster a sense of pride among Samoan youth and break down racial and cultural stereotypes. She stated that Samoan youth do not see their culture as *“cool,”* but that dance will *“open doors for them to really see the Samoan culture.”* Program staff of culturally based art programs also see significant positive outcomes for youth who participate in these activities. *“We’ve seen our young people pursue higher education...we see that change of attitude, that change of the way they think...”*

Residents also see art as a way to strengthen intergenerational bonds. For example, creating art with youth can give elders an opportunity to share their unique histories and experiences. Several residents also reflected on the inspirational role that doing art with family members played in their own art-making practices. One staff member was surprised to learn the older folks in her community had become so disconnected from gardening--something that was a traditional cultural practice--that they were learning how to do so for the first time in her program. Another staff member said gardening, planting, and harvesting allowed the elderly to *“go back to their roots,”* and practice something they had long done in their homelands.

Collaborative art fosters community identity and integrates disparate groups.

Program staff members felt that building upon the collective cultures at the HOPE SF site through the use of arts programming was at times a preferred focus over emphasis of cultural differences. Program staff described that the feeling of actually being able to do something that one typically would not have felt they were able to do because it is not associated with your culture can be powerful. For example, at one HOPE SF site a tap

dancing program engaged many youth residents who initially did not see themselves as being able to tap dance. But, over time the program successfully nurtured a group of Sunnydale tap dancers. Residents also observe that connecting across divides is facilitated by art. *"...bond with each other, and across all of those differences; across racial differences, religious beliefs...you'll see a kid...singing on each other's albums, and just having a lot of respect."*

Finding 4: Art programs help HOPE SF residents heal from stress and trauma by providing outlets and safe spaces for expression of feelings.

HOPE SF residents see the process of creating art as an outlet to cope with the pain and stress that results from the trauma present in public housing. Art-making helps residents find peace and regain a positive state of mind. As one resident said, *"I would say that it's an outlet. It's calming for me. Even throughout...a lot of the violence that goes on, art has been a whole, like, a transformation to help me be able to live in this community, survive in this community and continue to work hard in this community."* Residents and program staff who work onsite feel that art provides a necessary outlet that can be at times more effective than traditional behavioral health therapeutic approaches. One service provider commented, *"I've seen some art and thought, wow. I have clients who don't say anything and their art says everything...it's a very good way to get those suppressed feelings out in the open."* Program staff who work onsite in HOPE SF communities also struggle with trauma and see that engagement in art practice facilitates their own healing beyond other mental health interventions. *"I feel that relieves so much stress. I've received therapy on my own, but this community is really suffering from PTSD, I am, everyone is. I didn't think it would have this much of a positive effect on us at is has, but literally, it's like you need it...it's like with every brush stroke you're brushing away the pain".*

Creating art is also seen as an area of their lives that HOPE SF residents can control when much else is not within their control. As one resident explained, *"[Art] is something you can kind of control. You can't control the shootings that are happening out there. Or maybe you can't help whatever situation your family is in, but [art] is something you can carve out for yourself."* Consistency of programming reinforces that feeling of control and calm. Program staff believe youth who are particularly vulnerable to the negative impacts of growing up in chaotic environments especially benefit from the consistency of regular art programming. In addition, one key reason that residents use art-making as a coping mechanism is its accessibility; everyday materials such as a pen and paper or cooking supplies can be employed in creative expression.

Many HOPE SF residents interviewed see youth involvement in the arts as an alternative to participation in violence and criminal activity both providing an engaging activity as well as allowing for constructive ways to express anger and other negative emotions. As one young resident said, *“I could spend 12 hours on recording music or writing a song or doing some music; that’s good ‘cause I could have been doing 12 hours lost in the world...it keeps [you] out of trouble, it keeps you safe.”* Residents also observed that art programs also provide an opportunity to receive positive feedback and validation because there is no “right” way to do art. As one adult resident stated, *“Some of the kids in this neighborhood, they’ve got family problems...problems at school, like some kind of learning disability. So art has no right or wrong...there’s more room for positive reinforcement because it’s just a way of expression.”*

Engagement

Finding 5: There is a nascent arts community within HOPE SF sites -- made up of artists, programs initiated and led by residents and, activities provided by CBO’s -- that is challenged by a lack of supportive infrastructure.

Art programming and activities already existing in HOPE SF sites have the potential to form the basis of a thriving arts community. Resident artists are interested in taking leadership positions and sharing their art practices with their communities. Similarly, residents are interested in participating in art activities and programs. Despite the fact that there are a number of resident artists and art programs, a well-established network of local artists, residents and programs does not seem to exist. Residents interviewed were often unaware of existing programming, and few could think of other artists that lived in their communities. The full potential of an arts community within HOPE SF has yet to be realized.

Resident Artists

There are artists who live in all of the HOPE SF sites. Musicians, poets, textile artists, photographers, writers, painters, cooks, dancers and more contribute to these communities. For the most part these individuals receive little recognition and are known by very few as “artists.” Many of the artists interviewed for this assessment questioned if others believe there is “value” in their art or in some cases did not perceive the creative activities they engaged in as “art.” Furthermore, few of these people have been engaged as artists in the community transformation process. There is also no network of community artists and no mechanisms for identifying and nurturing artistic talent. Community artists enrich these communities but need support and connection.

Resident Initiated and Led Programs

In response to the challenges of living in public housing, many HOPE SF residents have taken the initiative to develop and run art programs and activities themselves. Most of these resident-led art activities developed organically, and demonstrate residents' desire to use informal arts activities as a way of engaging with members of their communities. One powerful example is the women's painting group at Huntersview, in which residents paint independently and then discuss what they created; participants described this process as *"therapeutic."* At Potrero, one resident who is also a professional artist, described how she initiated informal art activities in response to her observation that children at the site are often alone, *"We'd bring out chairs and tables and set up or we'd do gardening outside. Sometimes we'd just pull out some art projects like making the rubber band bracelets or painting outside or something. And then sometimes the neighborhood kids—a lot of them are on their own—sometimes they'll stop by and they're interested, so then I'll invite them to make art with us."* At Sunnydale, a resident led a dance program in her house.

Despite the value provided by resident-led art programs, these activities are difficult to sustain due to a lack of infrastructure, including inadequate funding, space, and staffing. Many resident leaders either invest their own money, or spend the time to fundraise in order to sustain their programs. Lack of financial support actually prevented one resident from continuing to teach her cultural dance program. As she described, *"the reason why we stopped...we felt we had no funding. I had no funding from nobody."* Many residents also do not have the staffing support they need, and ultimately become overwhelmed by the demands of running a program while attending to competing obligations. Lack of infrastructure on these multiple levels has led to a trend of programming that starts and then stops, which prevents residents from wanting to become engaged in art programs. Residents perceive programming that ends abruptly as detrimental to participants. As the cultural dance instructor regretfully shared, *"When I completely stopped with the dance group, two of my kids from the dance group...got locked up.... And one of them specifically [said]...that it's my fault. That if I didn't stop it, the dance group, none of this would happen."*

Local Community Based Organization Programs

There is appreciation for activities and the staff who lead programs implemented by community based organizations them. In particular the trust built with staff is crucial is a crucial aspect of successful programing with HOPE SF residents. Trust evolves over time when program staff demonstrate care, concern, and support for residents; give participants rooms to express themselves; prove open to feedback; and, importantly, participate in art-making along with residents. Some residents and staff feel that establishing trust is easier when program staff are known in the HOPE SF communities and, ideally, are residents themselves. *"The Executive Director of [the organization] grew up here, so they knew her by name, and then, another person they also knew, she's from our community, she's got a*

master's degree but we knew her...So that changed the dynamics...So the trust was actually intentional on all of our parts." However, it is perceived that there is a high turnover rate of art program staff which threatens trusting relationships which are necessary for meaningful classes. Though relationships of trust were paramount, program staff find that for arts programs to have a healing effect, it was not necessary to have an "expert" artist or psychologist facilitating them. *"It's done without a psychologist over it, just women and girls, and we just offer the materials. And it's really opened up some beautiful stuff."*

Onsite arts programs of all kinds face some significant challenges including competing life demands for residents. One parent spoke highly of a cooking class that was offered; however, she explained that it was in the middle of a weekday and that, as a working mother, it was not possible to attend. In addition, limited or inconsistent access to resources in these programs can also hinder engagement. One resident recalled, *"I come to a lot of events where people are kind of like, 'we'll bring whatever and just throw it,' and it's not enough [supplies] for everybody, and it gets kind of chaotic, and the kids are fighting, and it's counterintuitive for what you're doing."* Similarly, residents of Hunters View noted that their existing music studio is missing several pieces of equipment that prevent it from being fully functional. Another resident noted that art-related equipment, such as laptops, is likely to be stolen.

Current programs serving HOPE SF residents are not able to expand and allow more residents to participate because they do not have enough space and staff. The average number of participants served by current art programs on-site is about 35. In addition to securing more space, funds to hire additional part time or full time staff and to pay for materials need to be secured. *"We don't do a lot of outreach now for this, because we can't handle any more people. I mean, you'll see, we'll have 25 people in here tonight, and literally everybody is standing up, and we just can't handle it."* Based on the significant positive impacts that program staff perceive, they are eager to obtain the resources necessary to expand their programs. *"I recommend this for everybody. I can't wait until we can do it on a larger scale. It is nice having an intimate group, but I can't wait to see—when all the women are involved. Or maybe the men starting it. I can't wait to see how that might affect them."*

Key to securing more funding is demonstrating the value of these programs. Stakeholders spoke to how the impact of arts programming is challenging to measure because it may not be immediately visible. Funders generally look for impacts over a certain period of time to determine whether or not a program merits long-term funding. However, the desire for immediate outcomes often leads to short-term evaluations and limited focus on larger and/or long-term impacts. A stakeholder explained, *"The arts, their impacts, are not always easily visible quickly... The question needs to be, what is the criteria and how are you measuring it? ... With the arts, there is always the qualitative piece that's hard to measure, but it's equally if not more important to measure."* Although some of the outcomes of arts

programming may be easy to measure, most impacts tend to be transformative which may require a non-traditional approach to evaluation. One key stakeholder explained the importance of evaluating art programs in stating, *“We have to recognize their value, and that things are not always measured in an economic sense.”*

Finding 6: HOPE SF residents want opportunities for adults and youth to engage in programs that provide artist role models and build towards jobs that can engage their art skills.

Many HOPE SF residents who currently engage in a personal art practice want opportunities to be employed in jobs that engage their art skills. However, they feel that art is not currently viewed as a marketable asset or skill in the HOPE SF communities. One resident said, *“I never thought I could make money off of it because it’s... just a hobby”*. Furthermore, HOPE SF resident artists often do not see opportunities to use their artistic skills professionally and believe that artists must be formally trained to be hired in arts related jobs. Resident artists and program staff do not believe that there is much public recognition that HOPE SF sites include active artists.

Residents also said they are more inclined to participate in art programming if their involvement provides them with the skills that could translate into a professional trade. In particular, residents value skill-based arts programs for youth in their communities and want art programs that empower youth to pursue art related jobs. Residents recognize a broad range of opportunities for employment that can stem from developing art skills. However, an ongoing challenge facing youth and adult resident artists is a lack of professional artist role models or mentors who can provide guidance or support. In response, artist mentors within the community are desired to foster the professional development of young resident artists. *“If a kid can look at it and say, ‘that’s what I want to do when I grow up, because look at what it’s doing for him,’ it would be cool.”*

There are a few art programs that engage HOPE SF residents and offer opportunities for them to interact with working artists and experience, first-hand, how artistic interests and skills can develop into real-world careers. One program staff commented on the value of these collaborations for HOPE SF youth saying, *“I think probably the most important thing for these students was getting to meet and working with African American architects. These are great role models; one of them was a woman. I think it was especially important for the students to see and work with these role models.”* Another program that works closely with residents of a HOPE SF site has exposed residents to pathways for job opportunities and has served as a tool for mobilizing careers. *“We’ve definitely had some folks start to engage around looking for work, getting some training, going back to the training they had done previously. A sort of picking up some of those pieces and run with some professional goals. Some people have actually left to take other work—which we’re really happy about.”*

Finding 7: There is insufficient, dedicated space at the current HOPE SF sites for residents to engage in a variety of arts activities including the creation, display and performance of creative works.

Residents and key stakeholders agree that the HOPE SF sites lack sufficient dedicated physical spaces for art-making and displaying, such as dance studios, performance spaces, galleries, or rooms for art supplies. Dedicated spaces that would provide opportunities to train and support resident artists do not currently exist. One stakeholder who talked at length about access to cultural and art spaces in low-income neighborhoods commented, *“There’s basically very little infrastructure built. There isn’t physical space.”* Stakeholders believe that the lack of studio, art-making, and art displaying space hinders resident artists from practicing their art. Residents supported this analysis as some interviewed lead art programs out of their own homes, and expressed the challenges presented by inadequate space. For example, space was a factor in a HOPE SF site’s dance instructor’s decision to end her program as she had to sacrifice her own living room and kitchen space and removed her furniture in order to teach the class.

Residents are eager for a welcoming, central community space that will accommodate various art practices and allow their art to be displayed. One resident contributed, *“I’m hoping at some point there’s a space on the new development where we’re able to bring out art and paint and express ourselves in that manner. You know where it won’t just be put in a room somewhere. Where it will be exposed for all of the residents to be able to see it and know that here’s some work, some art work that’s done by people who actually live here on the development.”* Residents would like the space to be multifunctional. Some mentioned the need for a central gathering spot for residents and artists. Others expressed a desire for the space to be a *“safe and comfortable”* place that will make them feel *“peaceful”* despite the day-to-day stresses they experience. Music and recording artists would like a space that will offer them studio time. Put most simply, resident artists want to have *“somewhere to go”* to do art *“freely and without limit.”* Stakeholders supported the redevelopment process addressing the issue by ensuring dedicated art space. One stakeholder asserted, *“I’d also like to see unity in the community and... the space [to] help really create emerging artists. When you have this place that’s catered, centered for the community, they can create all kinds of things there that can go on and impact not only their community, but the rest of the state or city or the world.”*

Finding 8: Accessibility of opportunities for residents to engage in art outside of the HOPE SF sites is challenged by physical isolation, lack of transportation, and safety concerns.

In San Francisco, and more specifically in the surrounding neighborhoods of the HOPE SF communities, there are several organizations and program offerings that focus on creating

or viewing art. Some examples mentioned by key stakeholders were Zaccho-Zaccho, the Stage Coach program at A.C.T., and the Bayview Opera House. These and many more organizations throughout the city have rich, engaging cultural programs for participants. However, stakeholders spoke to several perceived barriers for HOPE SF to access these opportunities. One key stakeholder explained, *“I think a big problem for access is that a lot of people living in public housing don’t feel safe leaving their housing and coming to events that we might be putting on [at a local arts center].”* The lack of safety in the HOPE SF communities leaves residents fearful of leaving their houses. One resident explained, *“On some days I don’t want to walk across the street for reading group, because there was just a shooting like a couple of hours ago.”*

Furthermore, the physical and social isolation of HOPE SF sites makes it difficult to find convenient transportation out of the HOPE SF neighborhoods to arts programs. Another key stakeholder explained, *“These are distressed communities that have been isolated for a very long time, in many aspects, not just because the housing is isolated, but because the schools have been isolated, because transportation has been isolated... every part that you can imagine has kept these communities isolated from the rest of... the greater San Francisco.”* Program staff observed that residents feel it is safer and easier for them to participate in art programs on-site. Parents do not have to travel far to drop off and pick up their children, and residents do not have to walk or commute to off-site locations. On the other hand, residents also desire opportunities to participate in arts programming outside of their communities. Program staff were open to partnering with outside organizations to broaden their capacity to outreach and serve more residents when asked.

For residents competing obligations, including work and childcare, are additional barriers to resident engagement in art activities. Other parents noted that caring for their children leaves little time for personal participation in arts, and that they primarily do art with their children as a result.

Finding 9: There are financial resources available for the arts in San Francisco, however, there has not been a coordinated effort to leverage these resources and make them more accessible to HOPE SF residents.

Many key stakeholders talked enthusiastically and at length about the abundance of resources both in close proximity to and external to the HOPE SF sites, including, but not limited to: partnerships, potential space, arts organizations in the neighborhood, arts initiatives within the greater San Francisco area, and funding streams that could be accessed for arts programming. However, many also commented that they did not know how these resources could be leveraged to best support the HOPE SF communities. A common theme was the existence of silos, termed the *“San Francisco problem”* by one

stakeholder. The lack of a central agenda for the arts in the HOPE SF sites was thought to be at the core of the struggle. One stakeholder who works in the health field asserted, *“I think that is something we struggle with, not just the collaboration, internally and externally, but really being a really good collaborative partner, in figuring out how art can intersect with the work we’re doing around specific health outcomes.”*

Several stakeholders who were deeply involved in civic leadership were unaware of arts initiatives already present in the HOPE SF communities. However, virtually all stakeholders were knowledgeable about some aspect of the arts in San Francisco, and those more connected to the HOPE SF sites mentioned that it would be feasible to develop arts programs within the current city budget or within the current funding stream for the HOPE SF sites, rather than starting from scratch. One stakeholder suggested that the mandate for funding the integration of the arts into city public infrastructure projects could be utilized for arts programming at the HOPE SF sites. When asked about the role that the arts could play in community transformation, many stakeholders mentioned that this was the first time they were prompted to consider it. A stakeholder summed it up in saying, *“One of the challenges with art [is that] it’s not something that people, especially city folks, are going to think of, or prioritize as much as they probably should.”*



RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations aim to bring forward the many desires and ideas voiced by residents, program staff and key stakeholders. In some cases the ideas presented also reflect the perspective of the MPH students who conducted the assessment and their instructors. In sum, the recommendations lay out a concrete plan for how to support and sustain the arts and artists in HOPE SF communities and honor the identity and history of the HOPE SF communities. Of utmost priority is the need for a radical act of longevity: The financial support of programs over time, the creation of works of art that last over generations, the public display of art that reflects what has come before and link to the future of the HOPE SF sites.

Recommendation 1: Establish a HOPE SF Community Arts Council comprised of resident artists, program staff and community stakeholders to guide the support and development of the HOPE SF arts community and foster a network of local artists and programs.

Create a HOPE SF Community Arts Council to bring together a wide array of community members who are invested in nurturing the HOPE SF arts community. This body should include representation of resident artists, local arts program staff and other community stakeholders. The primary purpose of the Arts Council would be to guide investment in the local arts community including working with funders and the City of San Francisco to determine how to expand and support the HOPE SF arts community and arts programming for residents. In addition, the Arts Council could serve as a convening and supportive group that can foster connections between local artists and programs. Activities might include the creation of forums for artists across HOPE SF sites to network, collaborate, and support each other. Many HOPE SF resident artists are disconnected from each other, from other local artists, from existing arts programming and economic opportunities to use their art skills. Forums in person, on line and other means should be created for HOPE SF resident artists to network with each other. Finally, the Community Arts Council should advise and guide the proposed HOPE SF Artist-in-Residence program.

Recommendation 2: Dedicate space at each HOPE SF site for creation, display and performance of resident art and programs.

There is an overwhelming desire for the creation of permanent space for art activity within each HOPE SF community. This space can be a place in each community for both art-making and public display of resident art in all forms, including performances. Ideally,

space would be available for art studios for resident artists. This space should have a large gathering room for events, programs and performances, in addition to smaller rooms with focused purposes Residents suggested space should include a computer lab with audio engineering software, a visual arts studio, a music studio, and a functional, commercial-grade kitchen.

In as many ways as possible, the development and creation of this space should engage residents. Residents can take part in all aspects of the creation and maintenance of this space, and take leadership roles in advising the types of activities and services taking place there. A primary concern of some residents is the maintenance, both financially and physically, of this space. Residents have identified that proper maintenance and upkeep is a critical element of a welcoming space, positions should be created that are specifically designated for maintenance of the building and surrounding outdoor spaces. This positions should be prioritized for residents in further supporting economic opportunities within the community.

Recommendation 3: Create a HOPE SF Artist-in-Residence program.

A formal HOPE SF Artist-in-Residence program should be created to expand the role of art at the HOPE SF sites and connect residents to working artists. Working artists should be recruited to serve as “Artist-in-Residence” for HOPE SF sites to increase resident exposure to art practices, facilitate the creation of art at the sites and provide mentorship to resident artists. The HOPE SF Artist-in-Residence program should include the following components: 1) paid residence that engages an Artist at each of the four HOPE SF sites for at least a year or two; 2) leadership of collective art processes that result in public art at the HOPE SF sites; 3) art studio space at the HOPE SF sites for the Artist in Residence that is visible to residents; 4) display at the site of the Artist-in-Residence works of art and projects created with residents; 5) classes/tutorials led by the Artist-in Residence for youth and adults at the HOPE SF site; 6) mentorship of youth and adults through apprenticeships and more informal relationships. The Artist-in-Residence program should be guided by the HOPE SF Community Arts Council that is also proposed.

Recommendation 4: Implement collective art processes at each HOPE SF site that engage residents in development of public art pieces that reflect community history and identities.

The redevelopment of the HOPE SF sites and the complete transformation of their physical environment is a unique opportunity for the creation and display of community engaged art. For the residents of the HOPE SF sites it is a time marked by anxiety that their community’s histories will be erased by generic and unfamiliar developments.

Furthermore, the migration of new residents into these communities will forever alter the composition of these communities. In the midst of all of this change, residents strongly desire that the identity and history of their communities are acknowledged through public art. In addition, residents and program staff want to engage in public art processes that further tie them together and heal collective wounds and counteracts the pervasive trauma experienced in these communities. Collective, community engaged art processes should be financially supported and led by Artist-in-Residence in collaboration with resident artists and local programs. A wide array of art process and pieces should be envisioned, including spoken word, music, visual arts, dance, poetry and others and they should be allowed to develop over the many years of the redevelopment of the HOPE SF communities. The creation of permanent pieces of art, prominently displayed in the community should be made possible.

Recommendation 5: Nurture resident-led arts programs and prioritize the employment of resident and local artists in HOPE SF art programs.

Residents described an interest in taking leadership roles in local art programs and a desire to build their own arts related skills that might lead to employment. Some residents have already developed their own arts programming at the HOPE SF sites. The programs that are currently in existence have developed through the wisdom and investment of resident artists, and residents have expressed the value that they place in these programs. As such, existing art programs should form the basis for future programming and should be expanded throughout HOPE SF. Residents and current program staff who developed these programs should continue directing them with adequate support. In addition, residents should receive priority consideration for leadership and employment opportunities in community art projects and programs. Nurturing local leadership is also a way to help sustain programs. Local arts programs that are already in place or have been successful in the past should be supported with financial resources and mentoring by more established program staff. An incubator program for local arts programs could be created to help local artists establish viable arts programs through seed funding and mentoring.

Recommendation 6: Integrate art practices into mental health services for HOPE SF residents.

Numerous residents and staff members spoke about the healing aspects of participating in art activities and the alleviation of stress and distress felt when expressing themselves artistically. Art provides opportunities for individuals and communities to acknowledge

and share their experiences with trauma and violence. Art programs and activities in HOPE SF communities can integrate art practices to support resident mental health and well-being. Due to the perceived stigma of mental illness and residents' hesitancy to seek treatment, prior HOPE SF assessments have recommended the integration of mental health services with other programming and resources. Embedding mental and behavioral health support into art programming or incorporating art into "traditional" mental health service models, opens up opportunities for residents to express themselves and deal with trauma in different ways. For example, Hunter's View has developed a women's painting group modeled after lay art therapy methods. Support and training is needed to increase the capacity of behavioral health service providers to incorporate art into their own practice.

Recommendation 7: Improve access to the wide range of art opportunities outside HOPE SF communities.

HOPE SF communities are isolated from much of San Francisco, and have limited access to art outside of their communities. Bringing art to HOPE SF and providing field trips outside of their communities are ways to expose residents to the full range and spectrum of art opportunities. Hosting performances that typically take place in locations that are inaccessible to residents at HOPE SF sites would offer these communities a chance to experience art mediums with which they may have little experience. In addition, there are many art programs offered outside HOPE SF sites that residents would like to participate in, but are unable to access due to program fees. Scholarships or discounts should be leveraged for residents to participate in these programs. Residents spoke of the healing aspects of participating in art, and this exposure can serve as another access point for residents to connect with art.

Recommendation 8: Leverage private and City arts funding to support, expand and sustain the arts in HOPE SF and ensure meaningful evaluation of its impact.

Long term and flexible funding should be leveraged from existing sources and dedicated to supporting already existing and new arts programming in HOPE SF communities. In the HOPE SF sites there are some arts programs already in place, but it is difficult to sustain and maintain them. In addition, there are effective and engaging arts programs in San Francisco that with additional support could expand or focus on serving HOPE SF residents. Some current policies exist in that mandate the integration of the arts into city public infrastructure projects, such as the "2% for art" requirement or programs that provide funding for diverse artists, such as the cultural equity fund. There is also an extensive and

robust philanthropic community that supports the arts in San Francisco. These funds and policies should be leveraged to support, expand and sustain the arts in HOPE SF communities.

A key step in ensuring the support and sustainability of arts programming in HOPE SF communities is to strengthen its evaluation. Evaluation of arts programs in HOPE SF should aim to (1) measure the individual- and community-level impacts of participating in art programs, and (2) make these impacts visible to funders. Because art programs operating within HOPE SF sites are working at capacity and have limited resources, they are largely unable to conduct the program planning and evaluation necessary to justify the need for programming and in turn attract alternative funders. There is also an opportunity to help build program and resident capacity around evaluation by supporting “participatory evaluation” practices and involve residents and staff in the entire evaluation process, from the development of evaluation tools to the interpretation of findings.



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Community and Healing

Made from the HOPE SF Arts Assessment and the Defining Community and Healing with Mindfulness Workshop

6' X 9' Various inks and mirrored paper on fadeless paper. July 2015.

About the Imagery:

The Exquisite Corpse and Collaboration

One of the basic tenants of Surrealism was the notion that creativity/genius could be a shared experience. Developed in 1925, *the Exquisite Corpse* was designed for group participation and relied on the chance encounter as a disruption of rationality and a product of the shared, oceanic unconscious in which the Surrealists believed.

In the **Defining Community and Healing with Mindfulness Workshop** we used *the Exquisite Corpse* to begin our investigation of collaboration, individually crafting a head, torso, and legs on separate sheets of paper, and collectively creating a body of extraordinary community. This image features the workshop participants at the end of the Exquisite Corpse exercise, marveling at the wonders of their work.

Siapo, also known as tapa, is one of the oldest Samoan cultural art forms. For centuries Siapo has been passed from generation to generation. Siapo is not only a decorative art, it is a symbol of Samoan culture. It's uses include clothing, burial shrouds, bed covers, ceremonial garments.

<http://www.siapo.com/aboutsiapo.html>

The **sunflower** was a perfect symbol for the faith because the blossom (bright and bountiful) is always seeking out the light. Symbolically, this is spiritually akin to the heart/soul of humankind always seeking and attaining unity with the light of faith and keeping a connection with the Source/God/Goddess of one's own understanding.

<http://www.whats-your-sign.com/symbolic-sunflower-meaning.html>

