

Enriching the Community with Youth Arts

BCGA Arts Impact Story

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Jeff M. Poulin: BCGA Arts Impact is an audio series telling the stories from members of the Boys and Girls Club of America community about the power of arts, cultural, and creative programs around the world.

Hey there, Jeff here. As Director of Operations, Durell is supporting growth efforts for his Club's arts program, sharing the importance of **youth voice** and **culminating experiences** embedded through programming. Currently the Club offers a Visual Arts program and engages members in the Boys & Girls Clubs of America's National Arts Contest. Youth artwork from Durell's programs have been displayed at their community library for a month as a culminating experience for young artists to see their work throughout their community. Durell has seen the impact of art programs by allowing youth an outlet for communication, opportunities to build connections with other youth, and as a platform to showcase their work to their community. Check it out.

Creative Generation: Can you tell me a bit about your role and what you do in your club and where you're located?

Durell P: Yes. So I am the Director of Operations for the Boys and Girls Club or the Todd River region located in Rocky Mount, North Carolina, and we serve Nash and Edgecombe County of North Carolina.

CG: Oh, awesome. Can you describe your arts program to me?

DP: Yet, so we are laying the foundation of our program because I've been in the movement for 12 years. And I had the privilege of seeing Pepe out of the White County Boys and Girls Club, lead us with our national Fine Arts exhibit and image makers exhibit. So I say that to say, when I came to Rocky Mount North Carolina, it was a big focus for me to pull off a national Fine Arts exhibit. And we were lucky enough to host one at our library and it worked out perfectly, because they allowed us to keep it. We may allow the exhibit to be there for a month, because they will also be celebrating their anniversary.

CG: Oh, that's so cool. Can you tell me a specific memory, like your favorite memory from the arts program so far?

DP: Yeah the value and the value and how much weight. And when I say wait, like you, you don't realize how much art exposes your club. You know, it takes a lot of work, you know, you got to all your labels and all that just like everything else is work. But the exposure it did by having that art exhibit up for a month, and the traffic of people coming in and out of the library. It was just amazing that people would mention it, and I could barely remember right. And then we redid our office. And you know, we're looking to decorate and we're like, oh, man, we got artwork. So it's like, you just don't see how, like how vital it is to do an art exhibit. And even though at the moment while you're hanging those pieces, you don't think that you'll ever use them. They come in handy for so many things, right? fundraiser, exposure decorating, it's just amazing. And then guess who gets all the credit? The kids, it's the one program where you don't need a staff member, you know, standing next to the pitcher talking about and I created this curriculum. And no, what category is it? What's their name? And then there's their artwork. They deserve all the credit. So it's amazing.

CG: That's awesome. It's like the gift that keeps on giving. Right, really?

DP: And it's just it's all about them. Yeah, it is so much like agency and power. They're never see the art teacher. Right. Yeah.

CG: I mean, because they're the artist, the artist. My last question is, what do you think the impact of the arts is on the youth in your club?

DP: From my experience with the art program inside of clubs, that I've always loved about it. It really diversifies your club. And what I mean by that is that young man or that young woman that you see in your club, and I guess you got to be a true Boys and Girls Club worker to know what I'm talking about. You just see them kind of sitting by themselves. They don't talk much or, you know, they're but they're looking for an outlet. And you see that when you open up that art room, they love to be in there. That is their niche, right, just like some of the boys and some of the girls love to just be in the gym. Right? I just want to know who and what it does. It also makes that person that was in the gym, if they're friends, that's the beauty of the club, right? So also be like, Man, what's going on in the art room? Right? Like, they always got some crazy instance and weird music playing but you know that that's Do you know, and it gives them another outlet. So it's amazing.

CG: Yeah, that's amazing. Those are all the questions I have for you today. Thank you so much for sharing your stories with me. Oh, yeah, no problem. Thank you for that you're doing yeah

Jeff M. Poulin: Thanks for listening to BCGA Arts Impact. This episode was produced by the team at Creative Generation: Katie Rainey, Valerie Killebrew, and Emma Lamberti. The series

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