

The School Engagement Initiative (SEI) is an action project of Building Community Through the Arts (BCA) coordinated by the Institute of Puerto Rican Arts & Culture (IPRAC) and Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education (CAPE).

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Organization & Web site	Contact:	About the Organization:
<b>Puerto Rican Cultural Center (PRCC)</b> <a href="http://www.prcc-chgo.org">www.prcc-chgo.org</a>	José López Alejandro Molina	PRCC in partnership with IPRAC, is the lead agency responsible for coordinating efforts of the Humboldt Park BCA Task Force. Founded in 1973, the Puerto Rican Cultural Center Juan Antonio Corretjer (PRCC) is a community-based umbrella institution that serves the social/cultural needs of Chicago's Puerto Rican/Latino community.
<b>Institute of Puerto Rican Arts &amp; Culture (IPRAC)</b> <a href="http://www.iprac.org">www.iprac.org</a>	Jorge Félix	The Institute of Puerto Rican Arts & Culture (IPRAC) is an arts and educational institution devoted to the promotion, integration and advancement of the Puerto Rican arts and culture through exhibitions and educational programs.
<b>Association House</b> <a href="http://www.associationhouse.org">www.associationhouse.org</a>	Miguel Palacio Sarah Beckstrom	Association House began in 1899 with the support of more than 100 community volunteers. Since then the agency has provided quality social services, cultural and recreational activities, and opportunities for individual and family development, responding to the changing needs of the diverse population of Chicago's Greater West Town neighborhoods—West Town, Humboldt Park, Logan Square, Avondale and Hermosa.

Organization & Web site	Contact:	About the Organization:
<b>archi-treasures</b> <a href="http://www.architreasures.org">www.architreasures.org</a>	Joyce Fernandes	<i>archi-treasures</i> is an arts-based, community building organization that uses participatory design and build processes to develop public space.
<b>Bickerdike Redevelopment Corp.</b> <a href="http://www.bickerdike.org">www.bickerdike.org</a>	Raul Echevarría	Bickerdike Redevelopment Corporation is a member based, nonprofit community development corporation working for the redevelopment of communities on the northwest side of Chicago by and for the low and moderate-income people who live in these areas. Bickerdike is deeply dedicated to preserving the ethnic and cultural character of neighborhoods, while improving the economic conditions of the community by providing quality affordable housing, struggling against gentrification and displacement, creating and preserving jobs, and advocating for additional resources.
Department of Environment Culture and Special Events <b>Chicago Park District</b> <a href="http://www.chicagoparkdistrict.com">www.chicagoparkdistrict.com</a>		The Department of Environment, Culture and Special Events (ECSE) coordinates programs for twelve cultural centers including Humboldt Park.
<b>Puerto Rican Arts Alliance (PRAA)</b> <a href="http://www.praachicago.org">www.praachicago.org</a>	Carlos Hernández	The Puerto Rican Arts Alliance (PRAA) is dedicated to promoting the richness and great diversity found in the Puerto Rican culture by presenting a wide variety of art forms produced by local Puerto Rican talent.
<b>West Humboldt Park Center for Performing Arts (WHPCPA)</b> <a href="http://www.whpcpa.org">www.whpcpa.org</a>	Marti Foster	WHPCPA offers after school and summer camp programming that focuses in drama and theatre arts.

<b>Organization &amp; Web site</b>	<b>Contact:</b>	<b>About the Organization:</b>
<b>Youth Service Project (YSP)</b> <a href="http://www.youthserviceproject.org">www.youthserviceproject.org</a>	Gina Zuniga Baldwin	Since 1975 YSP has worked with youth and families in the greater Humboldt Park community to provide positive alternatives for youth in the neighborhood through a spectrum of enrichment opportunities that meet their needs while focusing on young people's interests, assets and strengths. YSP works with youth rather than for youth, through program offerings in three core areas: career development, health services, and community building.
<b>Chicago Arts Partnership in Education (CAPE)</b> <a href="http://www.capeweb.org">www.capeweb.org</a>	Arnold Aprill	Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education improves student learning through partnering with schools to integrate the arts into curriculum. It achieves this by advancing innovative arts integration practice and policy within the fields of education and the arts and actively participating in professional dialogue with practitioners, researchers, and leaders in the field.

## **Building Community through the Arts (BCA)**

In 1999 LISC/Chicago began implementing an ambitious community development experiment called the New Communities Initiative (NCI). In 2003 the successful pilot was expanded to 16 Chicago communities and called New Communities Program (NCP). LISC/Chicago provided resources for hiring staff and engaging community stakeholders in a year and a half long planning process. With the support of planners, writers and seed grants, these 13 communities each produced a 5-year plan for improving the quality of life in their neighborhoods. Perhaps more importantly, they built new relationships among institutions and individuals in their communities and devised creative strategies for addressing social and economic problems. While the strategies and projects varied widely from one community to the next, ARTS and CULTURE became key strategies of each and every plan.

Inspired by the role of arts and culture in the NCP quality-of-life plans, LISC/Chicago launched a new action program known as Building Community

through the Arts (BCA) in 2005. The BCA initiative was funded primarily by The Joyce Foundation and was being implemented in three Chicago communities—Albany Park, South Chicago and Humboldt Park.

LISC/Chicago works with these communities to integrate the arts into their respective economic and community development strategies in order to leverage the arts as a catalyst for positive economic, physical or social change. Ultimately, the process aims to spur community stakeholders to develop, commit to, and apply a new understanding of the value of arts and culture to the sustainability and vibrancy of their neighborhoods.

BCA provides Humboldt Park and the other target communities with the technical and financial assistance needed for community stakeholders to work collaboratively over a period of eight to ten months to accomplish the following:

- articulate a vision for arts and culture in their neighborhood;
- launch short-term arts and culture projects that advance agreed-upon revitalization goals
- develop an arts-in-action plan to address community needs; and
- secure the resources required to advance long-term initiatives that employ the arts as a catalyst for positive neighborhood change

## **BCA in Humboldt Park**

The Puerto Rican Cultural Center (PRCC), BCA lead agency in Humboldt Park, in partnership with the Institute of Puerto Rican Arts and Culture (IPRAC), convened its first BCA Task Force meeting in the fall of 2005. Humboldt Park Task Force Members met monthly until the summer of 2006 to complete a cultural plan that leverage arts as catalyst for the economic development of the community through the implementation of what is called Early Action Projects.

The Humboldt Park BCA Task Force consisted of a group of 13 key players in the arts, community development, and social services in Humboldt Park, including Bickerdike Redevelopment Corporation, the NCP lead agency. They worked collaboratively on the BCA plan, putting aside institutional interests because, as one member stated it, “we all understand how important this opportunity is for our community.”

The BCA Task Force began its work with a review of the community strengths and challenges identified through the New Communities Planning process, and the strategies and projects developed to address these in the NCP plan.

BCA task force members agreed on the major challenges identified by NCP:

- the spread of gentrification
- fewer faces of color
- a shrinking working class population
- not enough affordable housing

- a need for more and better jobs and job training
- stronger retail corridors and economic independence
- the prevalence of gang activity
- street violence and drug trafficking
- the need for better schools and accessible health care; and
- a growing need for bridging cultural gaps among Humboldt Park's diverse populations.

It became clear that arts and culture are particularly well suited to address these issues, gentrification in particular, and the group agreed to incorporate several specific projects from the NCP plan. These include improving schools through cultural programming, a community walk/bike map, streetscape and community gateway markers, community art and murals, Paseo Boricua enhancements, and cultural bridge-building.

The Humboldt Park BCA Task Force recognized that since the 1970s, many artists and community institutions already have been merging the arts with community building and that BCA presented Humboldt Park with the resources to further these efforts in a new and deliberate manner.

BCA arts and culture planning led to frank discussions on issues at the heart of Humboldt Park's future including gentrification and affordable housing, Latino/White/Black relations, and the preservation and upholding of Puerto Rican culture while acknowledging and appreciating others. Further, the group explored arts opportunities for youth, arts and culture in schools, and the special roles that artists play as gentrifiers and community-builders in the evolution of the community.

### **Humboldt Park's School Engagement Initiative (SEI)**

In 2006 the Humboldt Park Task Force decided to request funds in support of an action project that would address issues of cultural relevancy at local schools. With the lead of the Institute of Puerto Rican Arts & Culture and in partnership with Chicago Arts Partnership in Education, the Humboldt Park Task Force received funding for the 2006-07 school calendar year implementation at 4 local schools.

**Building Community through the Arts (BCA) SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVE** trains and supports artists and school teachers in the development of effective collaboration at four Humboldt Park schools through the development of curriculum-based projects that address the learning needs of students as well as issues of community development. This arts-integrated approach to school improvement supports student academic achievement in the following ways:

- by reflecting Puerto Rican/Latino and African-American cultures and history of the neighborhood
- by creating connections between students and their communities
- by exploring young people's ideas on community development

- by exploring young people's ideas about the arts
- by creating service-learning projects (student work that meets community needs) for young people to contribute directly to community development

This project supports a network of 8 artists working with 4 schools (2 artists per school). The purpose of the **BCA School Engagement Initiative** is to *generate NEW school curricula connected to artists and to the community*, reflecting the Puerto Rican/Latino and African American cultures that are at the heart of Humboldt Park's vitality.