



Safescape

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I. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Hearth is an established local, community arts organization that focuses on developing sustainable communities in Oakland, California and the surrounding area. Through this mission, Hearth acts as a community liaison between long-standing partnerships with other local organizations, school systems, and governmental agencies. Hearth, however, places emphasis on continually developing an abundant database of teaching artists, who develop and implement stand-alone and arts integration curriculum across Oakland. Through these core relationships, Hearth is able to increase the demand for the arts as well as create opportunities for community members, particularly students, to actively engage in the arts.

As a new arts program for the 2015 school year, Hearth will develop and implement Safescape. This program will combine technology, community development, urban planning, and recreation by collaborating with a neighborhood elementary school in Oakland, California to create an interactive playground. For this program, Hearth will partner with stakeholders (community members, school personnel, and the Department of Parks and Recreation) to remodel and reinvigorate the existing playground into a more exciting and meaningful space for students as well as community members.

Safescape will include a year-long artist-in-residency program, featuring visual artists, graphic designers, and architects from a local architecture firm. These teaching artists will guide 4th and 5th grade students from the school to create the concept as well as models and replications for the new playground. In order to bring in more of the community and establish a vested interest in the project, high school seniors will also have the opportunity to participate in the process. Through roundtable discussions with elementary school students, high school students will cater the design of the playground toward their interests. Additionally, the high school students will work in conjunction with architects and designers, gaining artistic and professional experiences that are poured directly back into the community.

In order to heighten engagement and physical activity in Safescape, students will also develop ways people can interact with the space through technology - incorporating audio, touch screens, and QR codes to tell narratives about the neighborhood, the process of creating this playground, and navigating around the space. Additionally, Safescape will provide a media platform that allows people to describe how they have used the space to the creators. This will provide feedback for improvements and concepts for future playgrounds in other elementary schools.

Resources for Justification:

Jenkins, H. & Bertozzi, V. (2007). Artistic Expression in the Age of Participatory Culture: How and Why young People Create. In Steven Tepper and Bill Ivey, (Eds). *Engaging Art: The Next Great Transformation of America's Cultural Life*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Hager, L. L. (2010). The arts matter in afterschool: Community youth arts and out-of-school time. *Afterschool Matters*, 11, 33-41.

McLaughlin, M. (2000). *How youth organizations matter for youth development*. Public Education Network: Washington, D.C.

Smith, L. & Heath, S. B. (1999). *ArtShow: Youth and community development*. Washington, D.C.: Partners for Livable Communities

Sutton, M. J. (2011). In the hand and mind: The intersection of loose parts and in evocative settings for young children. *Children, Youth and Environments*, 21, 408-424.

II. LEADERSHIP

Leadership is a vital component to Safescapes. Without the leadership teams working together, nothing will get accomplished. The primary leaders in this program are the School Administration Committee, the Resident Artists, the PTA Committee, the Student Committee, and the Professional Committee.

The School Administration Committee (also referred to as the Teacher Committee) is made up of the elementary school's principal, a fourth grade teacher, a fifth grade teacher, and a kindergarten teacher. This team works together to determine what the school's needs are and how this program can help address them. They work with the rest of the committees to help make the program go as smoothly as possible.

The Resident Artists facilitate the artistic endeavors of the children while understanding the overarching goals of the program. Resident Artists foster productive creativity and help develop the children's skills.

The PTA Committee is made up of members of the PTA who want to be a part of this project. This committee will help oversee the planning through a parent's perspective, meaning that they will be hopefully looking out for educational aspects of Safescape, as well as for safety issues.

The Student Committee is made up of dedicated fourth and fifth grade students who want to take on a leadership role in the project. They will be selected by the School Administration Committee and will meet on a regular basis to discuss progress and ideas under the guidance of their teachers.

The Professional Committee includes an architect, a landscape architect, a software engineer, the city manager, the Department of Parks and Recreation, our construction crew, and any community members who want to be invested in this project.

In order for the project to be carried out most effectively, each committee will need to work together to solve any problem that might arise.

III. RESOURCES

Through a recent grant application, Hearth has received \$65,000 award from the MacArthur Foundation to implement Safescape. This award provides Hearth with the ability to hire teaching artists to develop arts integration curriculum with existing teachers and school personnel. Additionally, the award will provide Hearth with the ability to contract staff members from a local architecture firm to develop Safescape as well as a construction company to demolish and remodel the current playground.

Hearth, however, will not solely rely on this award. Other funding streams and resources will include corporate sponsorships through suppliers of technology, such as Google, Radio Shack, and Best Buy. Construction materials as well as art supplies will be provided through in-kind donations from Home Depot, Blick Art Materials, as well as local business in Oakland, California. Also, as a part of Safescape, Hearth plans to incorporate opportunities for stakeholders to physically become a part of the playground through the Donation Brick Program. This program will provide Hearth with additional financial resources while giving stakeholders recognition of their support.

IV. PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

Planning and Implementation

Before the school year even begins, Hearth has been in conversation with city officials, the Department of Parks and Recreation, school officials, and major community partners, like an architecture firm, a local construction company, and major donors. Additionally, we have secured the necessary grants to fund this project and pay our resident artists.

The timeline of this project spans an entire year, beginning and ending in September. Elementary school students and high school students will participate in developing a new playground for elementary school students and the community through working with resident artists and professionals, who will guide them along the way. The program will be implemented into the standard core curriculum and seeks to supplement students' learning with art.

A more detailed timeline can be found in Appendices A-C.

Into the Future

Because we want this playground to stand the test of time, we are developing ways to maintain the playground through physical facilities, which will be provided through Parks and Recreation. Our organization will continue to provide arts integration programs, using the playground as a setting. For example, PE teachers will be asked to develop

physical activities within the playground, and Hearth will provide afterschool programs and summer programs that take place in the reinvigorated space.

We recognize that it will take money to maintain the playground and its corresponding app, which is why we will run a Kickstarter campaign to raise enough funds to keep it beautiful and operational.

V. TEACHERS

Our Teachers

There are two distinct groups of teachers working with Safescape: those who are employed by the school and the Resident Artists who are employed by Hearth. The schoolteachers already have a presence within the school system and have a fleshed out job description, but they still need to be trained for this particular project.

The Resident Artists employed by Hearth must fill certain requirements.

We have a strict application process:

Artists are required to submit an application packet that includes a cover letter, portfolio of past work, three letters of reference, and a personal statement outlining the question “What is the importance of arts and education and how would you integrate arts into the classroom for this particular project, emphasizing how you would envision your role in collaborating with current teachers and other teaching artists?”

Requirements:

- Education: Bachelors in Education, Art, or related field (preferred: Masters in Early Childhood Education with an emphasis in art, Fine Arts, or related field)
- Work Experience: At least 3-5 years working in early childhood education, formal or informal educational programming, preferred
- Knowledge of Adobe Creative Suite preferred
- An interest in arts integration, in-school arts programming, community development, urban planning, working with children

We will contact those applicants whose applications best match the requirements for an interview.

Support for Teachers

Each participating teacher will receive a formal training manual that includes the school’s and the project’s schedule, information about the school district and the city, an outline of participants’ roles and expectations, and important contact numbers for the school and the community partners. This manual will be the first source for answering any questions relating to the project.

There will be monthly meetings between committees, which include teachers, monthly to ensure that everyone is on the same page. These meetings will provide an appropriate venue for members to raise any concerns about the project and are an excellent opportunity to troubleshoot any problem areas. It should be noted that if there are any major concerns, they should be brought up immediately, regardless of a scheduled meeting time.

Expectations

We expect that our teachers, artists, and community partners all work together in a productive and supportive environment. Artists and teachers, especially, need to be in constant communication and must help each other with their lessons. Teachers are expected to share curriculum insights with the artists, who in turn can show teachers ways in which to integrate arts into the lessons.

Because they are coming into an existing structure, artists are responsible for learning about educational standards and developing programming that connects it to the playground construction.

Evaluations/Documentation

There will be several modes of documentation:

- Teachers and artists write out their goals at the beginning of the program and are expected to refer back to them periodically.
- Teachers and resident artists evaluate each other on a regular basis in order to improve collaboration.
- Issues can be resolved in monthly meetings, or as needed, but it is important that teachers and resident artists resolve issues in a timely fashion.
- Teachers and teaching artists write weekly reports and logs of progress towards their goals. These reports will be discussed during the monthly meetings and used to recognize where improvements can be made.

Professional Development

As a community arts development liaison, we provide mandatory free workshops for our teachers. These workshops focus on strengthening teachers' investment in the project, collaboration, and creative development, which will help them better guide their students' work.

VI. EVALUATION OF PROJECT

From the logic model (Appendix D), Hearth will collect and analyze the data to sustain and improve Safescape for the current school while keeping in mind future program opportunities for other elementary schools in Oakland, California. In particular, Hearth will focus on attendance data, using mobile check-in features, which will provide insight of ways to increase accessibility and awareness of Safescape. Hearth will be especially interested in attendance outcomes during after-school hours and the summer program. Additionally, since Safescape relies heavily on community partners and stakeholders, the level of interest generated through this program will help Hearth gauge how and where to increase support through building new relationships and strengthening existing ones. Finally, Hearth expects to assess the role of the teaching artists in order to understand the actual number of professionals needed to successfully execute the program as well as what qualities and competencies are required to develop and implement arts integration curriculum.

APPENDIX A: ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IN-SCHOOL TIMELINE

SAFESCAPE IN-SCHOOL TIMELINE: ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

September

- Students are introduced to the project
- Student Committees are formed under guidance of the Teacher Committee (Committees meet once a week)
- Research unit: Students develop surveys and research the general opinions of the student population

October

- Data is analyzed
- Students learn about individual needs and desires
- Community partners are introduced and begin to work with students
- Student Committee "pitches" idea of redesigning playground to community partners and stakeholders

November

- Students take trips to other parks to get more ideas
- Students collaborate with architect and begin designing ideas with the help of younger children

December

- Students build models of their designs using craft materials, such as clay, Play-Doh, paper, etc.

January

- Architects surprise students with a draft rendering of their playground
- Students meet and discuss rendering
- Students provide the architect with constructive feedback

February

- Mid-point check-in: Students write "Valentines" to community partners and stakeholders
- Architects work on improvements

March

- Architects have a final meetings with students
- All committees OK the final draft

April

- Project is officially passed through the proper channels and is OK'd
- Students complete a letter-writing campaign to bring speakers to the Groundbreaking Ceremony and Opening Ceremony

May

- Sponsors and food and beverage contracts are secured for groundbreaking
- Students form different committees to prepare for groundbreaking, such as decorations and public outreach

June

- Groundbreaking Ceremony! (Incorporated into the end-of-the-year celebration)
- Special guests include Freddie Spaghetti and Lil' Sebastian

APPENDIX B: HIGH SCHOOL IN-SCHOOL TIMELINE

SAFESCAPE IN-SCHOOL TIMELINE: HIGH SCHOOL

September

- Students are introduced to the project
- Students decide if they want to participate for graded credit

October

- Students sit in on meetings to learn more about the project and their roles

November

- Students are brought in for extra support
- Students collaborate with the architect
- Students begin to learn design fundamentals in class

December

- Students sketch preliminary models based on the elementary students' conceptual designs

January

- Architect shows students preliminary rendering
- Students meet with elementary school students to discuss rendering

February

- Architects continue to work and provide workshops for students
- Students continue to work on design skills

March

- Architects have a final meetings with students
- Students prepare real models of the final playground
- Students practice Adobe skills
- All committees OK the final draft

April

- Project is officially passed through the proper channels and is OK'd
- Students complete a letter-writing campaign to bring speakers to the Groundbreaking Ceremony and Opening Ceremony
- Students design marketing materials for the Groundbreaking Ceremony

May

- Marketing materials are produced and distributed
- Students begin developing content for interactive web materials

June

- Groundbreaking Ceremony! (Incorporated into the end-of-the-year celebration)
- Special guests include Freddie Spaghetti and Lil' Sebastian

APPENDIX C: SUMMER TIMELINES

SAFESCAPE SUMMER TIMELINE: ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Students also have the opportunity to take part in a summer program that continues work on the new playground. The summer program is scheduled like a camp, and runs every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 9AM to 4PM and serves as a form of child care. Children will be supervised by licensed child care providers and will participate in creative and fun activities, all while advancing the development of the playground with the help of our resident artists.

June/July

- Playground is being torn down & students work on indoor and outdoor activities, such as:
 - having info sessions with high schoolers, designing murals with chalk, taking field trips to different parks, etc.

August

- New playground is being installed; children play and work outside when there is no construction
- Outdoor activities include:
 - installing mosaic, painting mural, putting their hands in the wet cement

September

- Final steps
- Construction is finalized
- Opening Ceremony on the first day of school
- Special Guests: Michelle Obama, Bo, and Sunny!

SAFESCAPE SUMMER TIMELINE: HIGH SCHOOL

Students also have the opportunity to take part in a summer program that continues work on the new playground. The summer program is a two-week intensive course and is graded for credit. Students will meet Monday through Friday from 8AM until Noon to work on developing the interactive web component, which provides a historical context for the community through the lenses of the children who helped design the playground. In order to complete this project, students will be aided by a software engineer.

Week 1

- Students interview elementary schoolers about their designs
- Students finalize their content

Week 2

- Students work with software engineer to create a simple app that describes different parts of the playground
- Students test app and finalize the project

APPENDIX D: LOGIC MODEL

OBJECTIVES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a safe space for after-school learning and exploration • Create an interactive playground, incorporating new media features • Develop arts integration curriculum • Foster teambuilding and collaboration among students and the community
INDICATORS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of students and community members, who participate in the summer program • Number of students and community members, who engage in Safescape • Number of constituents and stakeholders invested in Safescape • Heightened interest in developing similar programs and playgrounds for other elementary schools
ACTIVITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High school students become familiar with architectural and graphic design software • High school students help design interactive technologies and marketing collateral for Safescape • High school and elementary school students develop small-scale models and replications • Elementary school students produce concept design journals and present to stakeholders
QUESTIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How often do you come to Safescape after school? • How much time do you spend at Safescape during the week and weekend? • Why do you choose to come to Safescape? • How comfortable and safe to you feel in Safescape? • How has your community changed since the opening of Safescape?
MEASURES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surveys and semi-structured interviews with students and community members • Observations through attendance tracking, using mobile-check-in features
EXPECTED OUTCOMES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in sense of belonging in the school and community • Increase in level of focus during in-school hours • Increase in appreciation of the arts • Increase in excitement and interest in core curriculum classes, such as Mathematics and English • Increase in students' ability to creatively solve problems • Increase in partnerships between schools, community organizations, stakeholders, and constituents