



# Cultivate

## Denton Arts & Culture Co-op

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Cultural Programming  
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## I. Introduction and Overview

### Introduction

This plan is for a creative place-making project in Denton, Montana. The project will focus directly on community identified needs and assets, and with the partnership of community members, stakeholders, artists and other creative minds, develop small projects from the ground up each summer in response to community dialogue.

The idea for the arts and culture co-op began with a mural created in 2005 as part of the Montana Meth Project. This 18" x 24" painting was the first major public art piece in Denton, but after ten years of withstanding harsh weather conditions it needs to be transformed, restored or removed. At its inception the arts and culture co-op was directed specifically at revitalizing this downtown mural space, but as time passed, a more significant project was realized; one that could have a greater and longer lasting effect in the community.



*Public artwork, Montana Meth Project, Denton, MT (Stacey Ray, 2005)*

Rather than focus on one large project, the co-op would stimulate a series (of one to three) smaller projects each summer, each led by a project taskforce. This series of smaller projects would create a bigger impact that is more manageable. It would also potentially involve more people, eventually leading to growth in cultural assets, social and cultural capital, as well as activate previously neglected spaces and involve community members in continued improvements and brainstorming creative solutions to local needs. The Cultivate Arts & Culture Co-op will re-emphasize the culture of the place through diverse art and culture projects, physically revitalize parts of the downtown area, provide opportunities



for community members to take part in a creative process during the summer months when school is not in session, and begin to provide cultural markers and a sense of rejuvenation for a place that is often considered to be a “drive-by” town. The projects will incorporate the personality of the community and identity of the place. The end goal would be to encourage an environment of dialogue and growth, stimulated from the ground up, and enabling community members to identify and solve problems in creative ways while also nurturing greater sense of community within such an isolated area.

The project will feature a dedicated WordPress site to promote the heritage and stories of the community and its people, as well as document the process of the arts and culture co-op. The site itself could serve as a digital history project, cataloguing photographs, video, stories, and interviews in order to provide perspective into the history and identity of the place. Each student in Denton Public High School, age 12 and up, would be tasked with completing one video recorded interview with a longtime member of the community, particularly individuals from multiple generations in the Central Montana area. These interviews would be archived within the digital history project.

*For the purpose of the Cultural Programming class, I will be planning the first step of this process, which will be collecting information and engaging the community. This process will involve specific projects on its own as well as significant planning in order to collect feedback about the community, its needs and interests. The information collection process will also serve as its own project, bringing the community together to engage in collective brainstorming and creative thinking about possibilities for summer projects. I will bring together community members, civic groups and public school students and teachers to collaboratively contribute their ideas, as well as participate in the final projects.*

## **Mission / Purpose**

The mission of the arts and culture co-op is to encourage dialogue and collaboration, find creative solutions to local problems, and help rejuvenate community culture through the development of specialized arts and culture projects resourced from the ground up.

## **Vision**

The town of Denton has the potential to be a vibrant cultural community, with opportunities to engage in arts and cultural activities, develop creativity and creative thinking skills, and work collectively and collaboratively to grow the community’s cultural assets. Youth will have more activities during summer months, and will be able to work alongside adults on creative projects that positively affect the community. The projects will cultivate greater support for arts and culture by providing opportunities for the community to participate in and observe cultural experiences. Activate awareness and dialogue about cultural activity in the community, paving the way for the development of a more active

cultural community and more support for the arts. With continued success the Cultivate project could expand to engage other communities within the Central Montana area.

## **Program Goals and Objectives**

- Help revitalize neglected areas of Denton, specifically along Main Street, providing vibrant public art and other projects that showcase the identity of the community and place. These projects will provide something that people will see when they drive through that tells them about the place. They will give relevance and meaning to the community and to those passing through, and help alleviate the “drive-through” nature of the town, as well as foster and record community identity, utilizing stories and personality of the place, community and its people.
  - Identify spaces and material resources within the community that have potential to be re-used or revitalized.
  - Stimulate community dialogue and ideas around how to use these spaces and what the projects could potentially look like or the meaning they might portray.
  - Collect community perspectives about the place in order to stimulate project ideas and content.
- Provide opportunities for community youth to participate in creative projects (specifically high school students) in the summer when there is little to do, supplementing the very limited arts education within the school. It will also serve to bring youth and adults together on creative projects that better the community.
  - Develop projects that benefit and interest both youth and adults
  - Incorporate projects that allow local knowledge holders to pass down skills, knowledge and heritage.
  - Encourage intergenerational collaboration by pairing kids with adults to work on projects and artworks
  - Provide opportunities for youth involvement in after-school and/or summertime arts projects
- Develop arts and culture awareness and support within the community. Cultivate dialogue about arts and culture, and how it could be further developed and utilized to increase quality of life in Denton.
  - Encourage community discussion around project goals, ideas and direction, rooted in community perspective and collected feedback. Organize methods of collecting and provoking community response.
  - Work to engage those in the community who are new to arts/cultural experiences

- Develop projects that allow for low entry level or diverse participants who may not have any art background. Create scaffolding for participation, allowing various ages and skill levels to be engaged.
  - Provide opportunities for evaluative feedback from the community after projects have been conducted.
  - Incorporate the community in every step of the planning process, maintaining complete transparency.
  - Establish a small project taskforce made up of those who have knowledge, skills and expertise related to a specific selected project.
- Provide opportunities for people to come together and work together, fostering civic pride and a greater sense of community. Help community members develop agency; the capacity to creatively solve local problems.
    - Encourage collaboration among diverse participants and stakeholders in every project as well as within all community discussions.
    - Work with the community to identify strengths, weaknesses, challenges, assets and ideas in regards to the place, and the potential solutions or projects that might be developed to celebrate the positives and help to overcome the challenges.

## II. Situational Analysis

### Environmental Scan Analysis

#### Economic Scan

The community within Denton (and Coffee Creek) has very few businesses but many of those in existence have been in operation for many years. The Denton post office has been in operation since 1888. There are currently about 20 businesses (including post offices and the school) in Denton including NGS (hardware store, agriculture chemical), bar, library and town hall, grocery store, gas station, trucking company, motel, bank, barber shop, greenhouse, meat shop, post office, Central Montana Railroad, LP Gas, Central Montana Co-op, farm equipment repair shop, seed plant, public school and an auto parts and repair shop.

The town was established when the railroad was extended to that area. The Central Montana Railroad is a unique part of the place. The community relies primarily on farming, ranching and the railroad as its primary industries, all closely connected to one another. There are many farms and ranches outside of the town that make up a large portion of the area's economy. Especially in recent years, tough economic times have put great stress on farming and the railroad industry in this area, and it is becoming increasingly difficult for the small businesses in the Denton area to sustain themselves as the population of the town dwindles. There is also competition between the

small Central Montana Railroad and the much larger Burlington Northern, which has been skirting around Central to offer discounts to farmers, decreasing already limited support and resources to the Central Montana Railroad. With Burlington Northern essentially monopolizing the railroads in Montana, the CMR becomes even more important to sustain. It is not only the lifeblood of the community but provides farmers an alternative shipping option for their grains (Johnson, 2009).

The frustration extends beyond the railroad into the community where businesses have had to cut back services and even the athletic programs in the school have had to consolidate with two other schools in order to maintain enough kids to even have teams. Even in 2009, enrollment in the school had fallen more than 30% over the last decade, to 102 students k-12 (Johnson, 2009). Just six years later this number has fallen to just 60 students.

### Demographic Scan

The 2013 population estimate was 252. As of 2010, the population of Denton, Montana was 255. There were 120 households and 64 families residing in the town. The racial makeup of the town was 99.2% white and 0.8% from two or more races. Hispanic and Latino were 2.0% of the population. 23.3% of the households had children under the age of 18. 45% were married couples living together, and 46.7% were non-families. 42.5% of all households were made up of individuals. The median age was 44.8 years. 22.7% of residents were under the age 18, 5.6% were between 18 and 24, 22% were from 25 to 44, 22.7% were from 45 to 64 and 27.1% were 65 or older. The gender makeup of the town was 51.8% male and 48.2% female (United States Census, 2010).

At the 2000 census, there were 301 people, 133 households, and 82 families residing in Denton. The racial makeup of the town was 99.34% white and 0.66% from two or more races, with Hispanic or Latino as 1% of the population. 24.6% of the town population was under the age of 18, 7.3% from 18 to 24, 2.6% from 25 to 44, 24.3% from 45 to 64 and 22.3% who were 65 and older (Census Viewer, 2000).

### Cultural Scan

The Denton and Coffee Creek communities have a history of diverse cultural activities that have faded in and out over time. The community has a long successful sports program in the school that provides activities for kids as well as events that generate strong support for the school and greater sense of community. Most of these activities have a cultural base, but do not directly relate to the arts. Sports are the primary form of recreation, leisure, entertainment and social activity.

A big part of the community is its swimming pool which provides an essential place for kids in the community to play during the summer months when school is not in session. The community came together just recently to raise over \$100,000 in support of building a new pool, an

incredible feat for such a small town. The pool park provides a venue for many cultural activities including games, gatherings and potlucks.

Organizations such as the Booster Club, which supports the school and its athletics programs, hosts dinners, auctions, games, giveaways, music and dancing. The Lions Club plays an active role in stimulating community development and projects for the betterment of the town. One of the liveliest events in the community is the annual Christmas Stroll which features food, crafts, horse and wagon rides, music and the auctioning of decorated Christmas trees. The softball tournaments that happen each summer also generates greater activity in the community and brings with it a street dance. Other reoccurring cultural events include Easter egg hunts, community picnics, the Clearview Seed Field Days (which provides lunch and a tour of the fields), an annual Harvesta dinner at one of the churches, senior citizen dinners, bingo at the bar, omoksee, the homecoming parade, Central Montana Prom, bridal showers, weddings, reunions and other community gatherings. Most recently the town of Denton came together to plan a Centennial Celebration to honor the town's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. One of the most expansive events in the history of Denton, the Centennial Celebration included a parade, tours of the school and town, history events, special publications, auctions, raffles, food carts, dancing at the town hall, dinners, and music by the Ringling Five.

While the community has developed some consistent cultural activity, it lacks arts programming and opportunities for creative projects. There is also a lack of designated spaces for art display and art making. Art has not consistently been a very important part of the community.

### **Audience Analysis**

The audience for the arts and culture co-op is diverse, including kids ages 12 and above as well as young adults in their twenties or thirties who may have stayed in Denton or moved back, families, and adults up to 60 years old. Because the potential audience pool in the community is so small, the hope is to involve as many people as possible, focusing on junior high and high school students, and adults up to age 60. In the school, elementary students up to age 12 are receiving more arts education because art is better integrated into their curriculum. Junior high students receive one art class and high school students do not have access to art. The music program no longer exists. Therefore, it makes the most sense to direct efforts to older students who have fewer opportunities to engage with the arts. Along with younger and middle aged adults in the community, junior high and high school students will be more capable of participating in the projects with adults. This intergenerational mix is an important component of the project.



## Programmatic SWOC Analysis of Product, Price, Place and Promotion

	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Challenges
<b>Price</b>	Little to no cost to the participant; materials can be easily donated or creatively resourced from the community	Little opportunity to rvmake self-sustainable income outside of specific projects directed towards fundraising; limited resources and funding	Supportive community of potential donors/contributors; potential for creative fundraising opportunities; interest in creative products/services	Limited donor pool; limited resources and opportunities for fundraising; not a very robust market for art
<b>Product</b>	Unique projects specific to community and place; generated by the community for the community; diversity in type of projects and participants; no other arts organizations or creative projects.	May not be approachable or agreeable to everyone in the community; too much diversity may result in mission drift; requires invested time and effort to organize and implement;	Many potential ideas to explore; several creative people and artists in the community; few other arts and cultural activities; many different materials and spaces available; lack of diverse activities after school and during the summer	May not find unanimous support everywhere in the community; arts projects may be challenging to some; lack of certain material resources
<b>Promotion</b>	Strong message that is directly tied to place, community and agriculture	May find difficulty communicating message to an audience with little arts knowledge or experience; brand needs to be developed; lack of financial resources to purchase ads or hire out design services	Small town is easy to reach out to; many cost effective ways to market brand identity and bring the community together; word of mouth marketing is extremely effective; strong messages can spread quickly if supported and communicated; entire community relies on few forms of media; lack of arts and culture programs	Possibility of misunderstanding or reinterpreting brand message; distance; fewer media/marketing outlets than urban places (no publications for instance)
<b>Place</b>	Very strong sense of community; people come together in a big way to support things that they care about; strong history and heritage; many creative people that live within and near the community	certain preconceptions about art and culture that may provide barriers to acceptance and understanding; little to no art in the school; lack of designated spaces for art and art making; many old and decaying buildings; little to do (equates to higher drinking among youth)	Many buildings and spaces in need of revitalization; many creative people in the community (there are some arts projects already happening but they are disconnected); need for more to do; need supplementary arts programming in the school; opportunities for more collaboration across the town; strong heritage of place but it is not really represented	Isolated place; does not get much outside traffic or visitors; not many recreation or tourist attractions; fewer people moving there that have families

### III. Strategies and Implementation

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#### **Develop program mission and vision**

Identify the mission, vision, goals and specific objectives of the project (see page 4). Use short term initiatives to maintain a long-term vision. Carefully craft a visual and written brand identity in order to communicate the idea of the project to potential stakeholders and the community. Make adjustments to accommodate valuable community feedback on the direction of the project.

#### **Establish strategic direction and partnerships**

Identify key stakeholders within the community. Assemble potential leadership committee and advisory council to guide project development and to garner public support. Meet individually with these most important stakeholders in order to introduce the project and discuss direction and potential strategies. Send them the final proposal as well as a visual presentation and one-page proposal handout to print for meetings. The project will be presented at both Lion Club and Town Council meetings. Follow up with key stakeholders to confirm their support and potential involvement in the leadership committee or advisory council. Seek out recommendations for these.

The leadership committee will serve as the guide for the program, and will be made up of motivated community members who support the mission, and who want to contribute in some way to making the program successful. Committee members should be individuals who are particularly passionate about the mission of the program, have the time and energy to commit to its success, are part of the Denton community, and who would be able to collectively contribute regularly to the strategic development of the program. Members will be recruited through communication with stakeholders and others in the community to identify those who might potentially be invested in the program, and willing to contribute to its development. The leadership committee is responsible for strategically planning the direction for the program, garnering support within the community, advocating for the program, as well as obtaining feedback and perspectives from the community, including organizing a series of forums to discuss community response and potential projects. Once collected, this information will be used to develop 1-3 specific projects to be implemented during the spring and summer of 2016. The leadership committee will facilitate community forums and other events, as well as encourage project

ideas and then help narrow those down to projects that can be completed with available human, material and financial resources.

Once the leadership committee has been confirmed, it will be essential to establish methods for communication, planning and operations. Communication through email and a project management website will be essential to ensure accessibility, consistency and inclusion.

An advisory council, made up of key stakeholders and influential community members invested in the project, should also be established. Council members will serve as potential advisors, providing insight and resources to the leadership committee as they develop strategic direction for the program. The council should also provide potential ties to resources and funding avenues, connecting important stakeholders within the community to the program.

Meetings with potential leadership committee and advisory council members should take place at the beginning of program development. These meetings will begin to establish interest in the program within the community and among key stakeholders and potential committee members.

Identify and connect with town leadership. These individuals may serve in an advisory role, providing expertise on community matters. They will provide insight into current and upcoming plans for the neighborhood, and determine how the project will fit in with civic plans and strategic direction. They must be kept connected throughout the process.

Key community stakeholders include:

- Jay Jay Krinshe, Superintendent, Denton Public School (met on 6/8/15) – potential Advisory Council
- Joel Barber, Mayor, Denton City Council (met on 6/8/15) – potential Advisory Council
- Jesika Frehse, Town Clerk (met on 6/8/15) – **potential Leadership Committee**
- Glen Todd, President, Lions Club (contacted but no meeting yet) – potential Advisory Council
- Larry Rice (very affluent in Denton community heritage) (met 6/8/15) – potential Advisory Council
- Richard Barber, Western Star Lodge (helped organize Centennial) (met 6/7/15) – potential Advisory Council.

Identify and involve community members, especially those who will have a vested interest in the program's mission and goals (listed below). These individuals will bring the voice of the community as well as a diverse range of skills. They will also activate and disperse the message of the project throughout the community. They are important for community stewardship, participation and growth. Some of them are candidates for the Leadership Committee. In order to engage wider audiences, the next step will be to host several small group meetings within the community (preferably hosted by potential leadership committee members) in order to introduce the project, answer questions and garner support. Use these forums as opportunities to seek out potential members for the Leadership Committee.

- Bart Pederson, Advisor, Denton Public School Student Council – potential Advisory Council
- Dolly Lee, active member of the Lions Club – potential Advisory Council
- Roger and Holly Campbell, active members of the Lions Club – potential Advisory Council
- Diane (and Greg) Econom, teacher, Denton Public School
- Sue Poser, teacher, Denton Public School
- Shari Grub, art teacher and librarian (Denton Public School) – potential Advisory Council
- Rod Boling, Rod and Gun Club
- Andy the Barber, Western Star Lodge
- Collin and Evan Todd – **potential Leadership Committee**
- Heather DeVries - **potential Leadership Committee**
- Ronnie and Betty Brinkman
- Scott and Angela Phelps - **potential Leadership Committee**
- Leonard and Kris Lowthian (community artist; creative thinker) - **potential Leadership Committee**
- Marlene Gerer (artist)
- Patty Nemec (arts/crafts)
- Linda Gluth (gardening/crafts) - **potential Leadership Committee**
- Crystal Winters (arts/crafts)
- Cassie Winters (arts/crafts)
- Kelly Bokma (arts/crafts)
- Lorie Weinheimer (arts/crafts)
- Lynn Donaldson (photographer / photo journalist)
- Bing Schmitt (Guitars of Montana)
- Ronnie Peck (local DJ)
- Lloyd Donaldson (plays guitar)



- Mackenzie Miller (great blog writer; lives in Great Falls)
- Students (Addie Donaldson, Julie Grubb, Austin Dempster)

Identify and connect with community stakeholders/partners. These groups and organizations may contribute in variety of ways, providing expertise, possible funding, resources and a physical presence.

- Four community churches
- Denton Lions Club
- Denton City Council
- Denton Public School Board (Rocky Stonehocker, Wayne Todd, Jeff Schaefer, Kathy Whitaker)
- Western Star Lodge
- Rod and Gun Club
- Denton Pool Board (Tammy Donaldson, Mandy Peck, Joel Barber, Heather DeVries)
- Central Montana Foundation
- Local businesses
  - Public Library & Town Hall
  - Glass Trucking
  - Andy's Barber Shop
  - Woodhall Distributing
  - Central Montana Rail
  - Denton Foods
  - Backroads Café
  - Buddy's Bar and Grill
  - Farmers State Bank
  - Denton Meats
  - Denton Swimming Pool
  - NGS Sales
  - Denton Hardware
  - Central Montana Co-op

Identify existing heritage/community resources that might provide important background information and context about the community, links to other resources, and updates on community news and activities.

- Publications: Homestead Fever, Field of Grass (Larry Rice), Roundup Newsletter (Central MT Foundation), State of the Arts (Montana Arts Council)
- Denton Public Library
- Denton Facebook Page

Research potential funding opportunities and partnerships. These resources might lie outside of the Denton area, expanding into Fergus County and Judith Basin County, throughout central Montana, the state and the region.

- Lions Club
- City Council / City of Denton
- Denton Public School

- Western Star Lodge
- Local businesses
- Community members and leaders
- Central Montana Foundation
- Lewistown Art Center
- Montana Arts Council
- Other stakeholders associated with Central Montana who may be willing to provide financial support once the program is established.

#### Engage the community, obtain patron input, and craft a collective vision

After having engaged with key stakeholders and partners, developed both an Advisory Council and Leadership Committee, the next step will be to share information about the project with the larger community by hosting two town meetings at different times. Feedback will be greater when the community is informed, but there must be a supportive structure (committee and council) established first. Identify entities with conflicting views and involve them in the collaborative process. Use these gathering as an opportunity to introduce the program, the Leadership Committee, the Advisory Council and to solicit questions and feedback. Also outline the purpose and process for collecting community perspectives, making it clear how people can participate, and demonstrating how those perspectives and ideas will be transformed into creative projects.

Establish trust and invest in common interests.

- Get to know all important stakeholders; know names and faces
- Meet individually with local community leaders and stakeholders (outlined above)
- Meetings should occur in public places; maintain presence in public spaces whenever possible
- Take part in community events and activities while in Denton
- Meet with community groups and the city council
- Be cautious of language; use language/terminology that is accessible; no jargon
- Be honest and approachable
- Be accepting of conflicting views, identifying reasons why those views might exist; encourage those with conflicting views to be a part of the collaborative process
- Take advantage of community resources (publications, library) and continue to research community heritage, history and culture
- Maintain an attitude of openness, welcoming all to the table

## Collect information and community perspectives

In order to create projects that are truly community driven, the leadership committee will have to elicit community response. Feedback from locals will give insight into aspects of the community that should be celebrated, revitalized, developed, supported, or improved. A community needs assessment should be conducted in order to better understand things strengths and weaknesses and how creative projects can provide solutions. Community members may also provide specific project ideas that better the community. Projects should always relate back to program goals:

- Revitalize neglected areas and add creative elements to the town
- Celebrate the people, community, and place
- Provide opportunities for young people to participate in creative projects
- Encourage collaboration between youth and adults
- Develop arts and culture awareness, dialogue and support
- Provide opportunities for people to come together and work together
- Foster civic pride, stewardship and a greater sense of community
- Help people develop agency to creatively solve local problems

The Leadership Committee must help the community better understand the past, present and future of Denton and the surrounding area. This means collecting information about community needs and assets, strengths and weaknesses. Information can also be collected online, from the Denton City Council, community leadership, Advisory Council, and from personal experience. These resources will collectively inform the direction and purpose of proposed creative projects, determining community needs and how projects can respond.

What kinds of information may be helpful to inform project ideas?

- Sense of physical place or geographies; understanding of places where people actually gather and spend time (an informal map of the area demonstrating real usage and informal places known to locals)
- Stories of culture and heritage; what it is like to live there; interviews
- Images of the community, town, place, people and activities
- Statistics about the town, county and area of central Montana
- Unique aspects of the community and place
- Challenges/problems/issues that the community faces
- Information about local heritage and history
- Local knowledge and perspective about the current state of the community; where it is now and where it is going

- Understanding of community values and local perspective; what is important to people living there
- A better idea of the makeup of the community (artists, entrepreneurs, farmers, creative thinkers); who could potentially take the lead or learn to lead a project?
- Ideas for cultural projects and those who might participate in them

What methods might be used to collect this information?

Reflective Wall - One of the methods for collecting information and stories about community identity and sense of place will be an on-going reflective wall on the main street of Denton near the café. The wall will elicit community response in regards to culture and identity in the community, and in the end will serve as a public art piece, adding vibrancy to the downtown area and providing a positive narrative of place and community.

Community Clothes Line – Hang out your dirty laundry! At a community forum participants will be encouraged to bring worn, white clothing that can be donated to a community improvement brainstorm during which participants respond to this question: What challenges does the community of Denton (and surrounding area) face now and in the future?

Voting System – (places where people congregate: bar, café) What do people collect that they would throw away? Bottle caps? Pop tabs? Can I make something? Come up with a voting system. Utilizing voting tokens that are left at the bar, café and grocery store, establish a voting system to encourage visitors to these businesses to respond to a specific question. This could potentially even be a way of narrowing down competing project ideas. Such a response question might include: How would you rate the arts as important to community vitality?

Social Media – Use social media to pose questions that encourage responses and to inform the community about program efforts. Focus especially on the Denton Facebook page as well as social media created for specifically for the arts and culture co-op. Most people in the community only use Facebook. Implement a hashtag (#CultivateCulture / #Cultivate / #CultivateCentralMT) that can be used to identify posts related to Cultivate projects or attached to any content related to the culture of Central Montana, further helping to define the values, challenges and culture of people living in this area.

Blog – Create a webpage to showcase the progress of the arts and culture co-op as well as serve as another venue for soliciting community response through questions, posts and comments. The link to the site can be utilized throughout all communications.



Surveys – Distribute surveys to the café, bar, grocery store, and post-offices that also ask specific questions about the community and place. Surveys can be left at these businesses and will be collected once every week.

Interviews – Conduct interviews to collect local perspective and local knowledge. Use the snowball method in order to interview the right individuals who have knowledge of local culture, community and place.

Community forums – Host community forums at the library, café, school and/or town hall (which has a rental fee) to engage the community with the process and to solicit feedback in a more collaborative manner. This might include a combination of voting systems, surveys, discussion, posters and journals.

Journals – Leave a communal journal at the library or café asking for visitors to contribute their responses either written or through some sort of visual.

Possible questions might include:

- What things do you identify as the culture of the Denton/central MT area?
- What is remarkable about this place? What makes it special?
- What do you define as culture? What is art?
- What are your favorite places in and near the community?
- What are your favorite past-times? Hobbies?
- What could be improved? What needs improvement?
- What are the negatives of living here? What is frustrating?
- What do you wish there was more of?
- How do you feel about this place?
- What are your favorite “spots” in town or outside of town?
- Why do you like living here? Why do you not like living here?
- What is challenging about living here? What is challenging about living in Denton or Central Montana?
- Where would you like to see public funds distributed?
- What challenges does the community have to overcome?
- What is most rewarding about living in this place?
- What problems do you see within the community? What is lacking?
- What needs to be resolved?
- What physical areas could be revitalized?
- What potential do you see in the community?
- What community projects have you thought about (no matter how crazy) that have never been realized?
- What do you remember most about growing up in this area?

- What is special about the landscape?
- What places in the community area do you actually spend time? (demonstrating a real, informal map of the place (based on real usage), rather than a normal geographic/urban map)
- What activities are offered here? What activities could be offered? What activities would you like to see offered?
- Do you have any community minded project that you might be interested in pursuing? Are you interested in a community project? If so, what?
- What do you feel is missing from the community?

### **Analyze collected information**

The continually collected information will be used to discover community grounded needs, thoughts, and ideas, as well as confirm or deny preconceptions of community identity and the thoughts/feelings of those who live there. Community responses should identify aspects of the place that are both positive and negative, areas of strength and areas for improvement. This might include the physical setting and environment, aspects of community culture, local heritage and folklore, or opportunities for learning and development. It should identify aspects of the culture, heritage and place of the Denton area that are most valued and possibly other aspects that are undervalued and provide opportunity for development. This information will then be collected, analyzed and used to inform the development of project ideas to enhance community culture and identity.

Questions to ask before and after reviewing the information collected:

- How will we review the data?
- What will we look for? What kinds of patterns do we see? What categories can be described? What do we notice?
- Do we have enough data? Do we have the right kind of information?
- How can we share this information?
- Did we learn anything new?

### **Communicate with the community**

Information about the program, forums and meetings, and eventual projects can be communicated through various outlets, which may include: community reader board; school mailing list; physical mailings; flyers distributed to local businesses; social media; sidewalk chalk; re-use the Montana Meth Project mural space to post (paint) information about Cultivate; outdoor chalkboard for the kids in the café park; wheat pasting; Lions Park (Lions Club might be able to help with this); develop a brand identity; table tents in Café

and Bar; painted banner outside of library or town hall (get some kids together to help with this); word of mouth; host an art workshop; community forums

## **Design and implement actual community projects**

Once information has been collected, organized and analyzed it should be physically available to the community as well as presented in a public meeting. The next step is to engage in discussion with the community, using those collected local perspectives to determine final outcomes for cultural projects based on common themes and suggestions. This would be similar to a think tank or brainstorming session in which small groups are created in order to determine possible projects. This collective project development process would happen in the winter or spring.

Anticipated projects might include such ideas as:

- After school art workshops
- Collaborative art projects (youth pairing up with adults to create works)
- Hunting stories (display featuring memorable stories from the community)
- How do you play? (focusing on the recreation of Central Montana)
- Paintings and drawings of places around/near town
- Found-metal sculpture park (or sculptures placed throughout downtown)
- Wheat-pasting grain silos
- Ceramic tiles on side of the post office (created by school kids to provide their own perspective on living in Denton)
- Resource room / learning hub in the library
- Bicycle Shed (to promote bicycle use in town)
- Community garden / tree planting / produce swap
- Intergenerational interviews (each student ages 12+ conducts one interview in the community as part of the digital history project)
- Digital history project (digitizing photos, video, stories, interviews about the place)
- *Indisposable* (give disposable cameras to kids in the school ages 8+ and allow them to take photos of whatever they wish; install the photographs in local businesses.
- Public art projects reclaiming unused/neglected buildings
- Yarn bombing; textile project (collaborative knit/crochet project?)
- *Local Perspectives* portrait project (portraits of local residents installed downtown)
- Mobile heritage museum

Depending on scale and resources, one to three projects would be selected for the year, most likely to be implemented in the late spring and early summer. Projects should be

narrowed down to those most favored by the community as well as those with highest impact and most practical use of available resources.

In order to plan and implement each project, the leadership committee will work to establish project teams with community members who are interested in being a part of a specific project. Project teams will work with the leadership committee to establish project operations and timelines with the community. They will also work to involve as much of the community as possible. Budgets will be planned for each project and available resources identified and allocated where needed. Implementation strategies that involve community resources should be explicitly stated. The leadership committee will work closely with all project teams to record process, generate media materials for communications and conduct evaluation throughout the project.

*Attached is an example budget for three possible projects.*

### **Evaluate program and projects**

Evaluation should be implemented as part of the process from the very beginning, as a way of gauging success as the program progresses. This entails continual critical analysis, allowing the program to continue to improve. Evaluation could be implemented as part of the community feedback process, also asking community members to provide their thoughts on the program itself. Surveys should be administered to every person who participated in projects as well as stakeholders and committee members. Interviews should be conducted with project participants and community members to gauge impact. Public discussions should be hosted after project completions in order to gather community response as well as discuss possible changes. All evaluation will be taken into consideration to make adjustments, decide on the future of the program as well as to demonstrate results which can be distributed to stakeholders, the community, and recorded online.

*I am creating a detailed evaluation plan for the Arts Program Theory course.*



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**Cultivate: Central MT Arts and Culture Co-op  
Organization and Project Budget**

<u>Revenue</u>	<u>Organization</u>	<u>Project 1 (public art)</u>	<u>Project 2 (portraits)</u>	<u>Project 3 (digital)</u>
Grants	0	(Lions Club) 300	(Rod & Gun Club) 300	0
Contracts	0	0	0	0
United Way	0	0	0	0
Contributions (define)	0	(paint, hardware) 160	(printing, vinyl title) 170	0
Membership	0	0	0	0
Individuals	200	0	0	30
Fees for services	0	0	0	0
Sales	0	0	0	0
Fundraisers and events	100	0	0	0
Endowment	0	0	0	0
Interest income	0	0	0	0
Miscellaneous	0	0	0	0
<b>Total cash revenue</b>	<b>\$300</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$30</b>
<b>Total in-kind revenue</b>		<b>\$160</b>	<b>\$170</b>	<b>\$0</b>
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$300</b>	<b>\$160</b>	<b>\$170</b>	<b>\$30</b>
<u>Expenses</u>	<u>Organization</u>	<u>Project 1 (public art)</u>	<u>Project 2 (portraits)</u>	<u>Project 3 (digital)</u>
Staff salary and benefits				
Project Director	300	0	0	0
Occupancy (rent and utilities)	0	0	0	0
Insurance	0	0	0	0
Legal, accounting	0	0	0	0
Equipment	0	0	0	0
Supplies	0	420	20	0
Printing and copying	0	100	300	0
Telecommunications	0	0	0	0
Travel and meetings	0	0	0	0
Marketing and advertising	0	0	0	0
Staff training/development	0	0	0	0
Contract services	0	150	150	0
Other	0	0	0	(web domain) 30
Other	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0
General administration ("X" %)	0	0	0	0
<b>Total cash expenses</b>	<b>\$300</b>	<b>\$670</b>	<b>\$470</b>	<b>\$30</b>
<b>In-kind</b>				
Paint and hardware	0	160	0	0
Printing and vinyl	0	0	170	0
<b>Total in-kind expenses</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$160</b>	<b>\$170</b>	<b>\$0</b>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$300</b>	<b>\$830</b>	<b>\$640</b>	<b>\$30</b>
<b>Revenue over Expenses</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>-\$670</b>	<b>-\$470</b>	<b>\$0</b>

Budget template retrieved from Nonprofit Works: <http://www.nonprofitworks.com/downloads/>