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William Penn Foundation study says Philly arts scene must cull dead wood to survive

Peter Crimmins
2/9/2015

Arts organizations in Philadelphia need to know how to grow.

They also need to know how to die, according to a new study.

Over the last few decades, the Philadelphia region's art sector has grown phenomenally both in terms of the number of organizations and physical growth of new buildings.

"Does Growth Equal Gain?" -- the new arts study commissioned by the William Penn Foundation -- suggests the region is oversaturated.

While the overall economy has improved since 2008, much of the arts sector is still underwater with many organizations operating in the red. The study, by the Boston-based research company TDC, says part of the problem is some leaders have not adjusted to new audiences with new ways of engaging with the arts.

More individuals are attending art-related events, but fewer are repeat visitors, the study said. Another problem is that some struggling organizations don't know when to call it quits. An insolvent dance company, for example, barely hanging on through a few small grants, can sap money from the overall sector.

"What we're looking at, at the William Penn Foundation, is how we can be smart about decisions we make, looking at an organization's ability to sustain over time," said executive director Laura Sparks.

"That could mean looking for a new model for the organization; that could mean right-sizing the organization; that could mean recognizing the organization has come to its natural end and finding ways to support those organizations to wind down in a responsible way," said Sparks.

Much of the foundation's giving to the arts sector is focused on developing new ways to engage audiences, Sparks said, in particular the "millennials" who might grow up to become major donors. Recently the William Penn Foundation stopped funding DanceUP and the Philadelphia Singers, effectively shutting them down.

On the other hand, the foundation has rewarded some organizations for embarking on ambitious, expensive models for drawing in new audiences, including FringeArts, Opera Philadelphia, and the experimental music presenter Ars Nova.

On Monday, William Penn Foundation representatives will meet with leaders of regional arts organizations to go over the study's findings. Expected to attend are leaders of small and midsized organizations, many of which operate without a dedicated development staff to chase individual
donors. As a result many are heavily dependent on single grants from large foundations, such as William Penn.

"That's one of the reasons people get so sensitive to the changes that happen in foundations," said Maud Lyon, president of the Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance. "I hope this report will generate good discussions amongst the leadership and boards of organizations about what they see their own future as being, and what they have to do to be sustainable."

Disclosure: The William Penn Foundation supports WHYY.
Bad review doesn't dim culture's star power

While Robert W. Patterson sees a malaise in Philadelphia, I see a city soaring - with a vibrant arts community central to that ascent. And so do the New York Times, Forbes, and the Washington Post ("Arts and culture not enough to sustain Philadelphia," Feb. 4).

According to findings by the Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance, the Kimmel Center and its eight resident companies annually generate an economic impact of $357 million, and taxes of $18 million, while returning $122.3 million to the community as household income.

For every dollar of support it has contributed to the Kimmel Center, the state has received nearly $2.15 in tax revenue, representing a $1.15 return. The arts are an economic engine in this city. Patterson suggests that instead of investing in the arts, we should adopt policies to create a local manufacturing and industrial economy in Philadelphia. But it's not one or the other. We need a comprehensive effort that continues to make Philadelphia a destination where people want to live and where companies with good jobs want to locate.

David P. Holveck, chairman, board of directors, Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts, Philadelphia

A lowbrow view of the arts' impact

Robert W. Patterson clearly has a misunderstanding of the region's cultural activities, whom we serve, and how culture contributes to a multidimensional economic development strategy ("Arts and culture not enough to sustain Philadelphia," Feb. 4). Far from highbrow, many of my arts colleagues serve some of the most disadvantaged populations. Organizations like ours work with school officials, juvenile justice programs, and community centers to illuminate the creative voice within our kids. This is important work.

We are lucky to have bipartisan, visionary leaders who support the cultural industry for its economic benefits. We are twice as lucky when they support culture because it makes life worth living.

Christopher R. Taylor, president, The Clay Studio, Philadelphia
Dance funding crisis, Part Two: Philly’s dance community asks, ‘What’s Next?’

Brandon Baker
2/6/2015

The State of Affairs: Past and Present

If there’s something the dance community surely needs more of – other than funding, of course – it is hope.

**While there is some good news to report on the dance front – attendance was up by 4 percent from 2009-12, according to the 2014 Portfolio,** and Philadelphia maintains one of the 10 largest ballet companies in the country (Pennsylvania Ballet) – it tends to come along with a heaping basket of bad news. For example, while ticket prices increased during that period of time, and, proportionally, dance companies earned more revenue from ticket sales than either music or theater, the prices didn’t quite keep up with inflation – meaning no one’s really making big money off ticket sales, unless you’re funding “The Nutcracker.” Subscription numbers are also way behind music and theater – there’s an 86,000-subscription gap between dance and theater in Philadelphia. And though there are as many dance organizations in the region as there are theater, the total budget they work with is less than half of theater’s, and their attendance numbers about a third.

Yes – surprise, surprise, dance is an underfunded and, debatably, underappreciated art form, even in Philadelphia.

But what’s most research-relevant to Dance/UP’s somewhat unusual scenario is a paragraph buried in a 2014 report on the Philadelphia arts and culture nonprofit sector using Cultural Data Project numbers (“Capitalization, Scale, and Investment: Does Growth Equal Gain?”), commissioned by – who else? – the William Penn Foundation:

“In summary, we found weakness to be the prevalent condition of financial health across the ecosystem, particularly for younger organizations, performing arts organizations, and those in growth mode. The ecosystem, therefore, remains poorly positioned to manage risk and implement change, and it continues to face the challenge of building adequate capitalization. What this means in practice is visionary leaders who are hampered from pursuing exciting directions because they do not have the working capital to secure a necessary contract. …”

It’s the predictable plight of an organization being lectured about not being sustainable enough, but not having the means to actually do anything about it. (See: the Performance Garage project.)

Other key findings of the study: Nonprofit arts organizations are chasing a shrinking pie of funders; nonprofit arts groups grew 64 percent from 1995 to 2008, meaning there’s more competition; large organizations are taking the biggest slices of the pie, with the very large organizations poised to take them now that the recession is over; foundations were the No. 1 provider of contributed funds for cultural nonprofits in Philadelphia by 2011; new attendees to performing arts shows aren’t
coming back for repeat shows; and no one has a clue whether a new generation of individual donors will actually take an interest in funding the arts.

Nor is Dance/UP’s own struggle as a cultural nonprofit – a service nonprofit, at that – one that’s an anomaly.

Ruth Birnberg, former executive director of Boston Dance Alliance (so, that city’s Dance/UP), told PhillyVoice.com that she made the decision to step down at the end of 2014 when she realized much more of her job was going to be devoted to diversifying fundraising than actual programming. She says she’s noticed foundations narrowing their focus areas since the recession hit (much as William Penn has seemingly shifted to education in recent years), but that they still shouldn’t discount arts service organizations like Dance/UP – if only to support the small companies they still claim to serve.

"By supporting dance service organizations, it’s a way to be reaching and having that impact without having to look through 30 or 40 grants for a few thousand dollars each," Birnberg says. “But those few thousand dollars make a huge difference, and by using us as an intermediary, we made a real impact.”

There’s also precedence for Philadelphia arts service organizations having to close up shop after struggles with funding. In the case of Theatre Alliance, which folded in 2012, it was up for grant renewal with the William Penn Foundation but decided against moving forward with the proposal at all.

“More and more, funders are looking for earned revenue sustainability,” Margie Salvante, former director of Theatre Alliance, told PhillyVoice.com. “Theatre Alliance, when I was leading it, we were working very hard to establish new programming so that we would get startup contributions for them, but in order to get those startup contributions, we needed to demonstrate an ability to turn it into earned revenue in a short period of time.”

The problem: “Our ability to earn revenue put us in direct competition with our members.”

So, the organization closed; only recently did Theatre Philadelphia emerge for the sole purpose of revitalizing the newly defunct Barrymore Awards.

Ironically, the example most in line with Dance/UP’s current situation is the last dance service organization that existed in Philadelphia, Dance Alliance.

“What happened to us, is – and you’re going to laugh at this – but we relied very heavily on the William Penn Foundation. They were incredibly generous for a long time, until they weren’t,” Susan Glazer, who was director of Dance Alliance until 2003, told PhillyVoice.com. “And what happened, was during the early ’00s – it’s a family foundation and they have the right to determine their own set of priorities -- they deprioritized us. We didn’t fit into their strategic plans.”

Her simple explanation for why a dance service organization has trouble getting funding is that it lacks the “glamour” of dance companies; its efforts are in supporting companies to do what they don’t have the time or resources to do, making success difficult to quantify and … well, lacking the sex appeal of an edgy, tangible art project.

The result: An endless cycle of births and deaths for service organizations like Dance/UP.

“I was sad to see Dance/UP lose all of its funding,” Glazer adds. “But you know, that’s just the nature of the ballgame.”

Looking to the Future

To the point: What’s next?
“We’ll keep working with the community to see which programs are most valued. … In the end, the community will have to come together to create their new version of a dance service organization, because if it won’t step up, no outside org will come in to force one to be created,” Amy Fitterer, executive director of Dance/USA, told PhillyVoice.com. She’s supported the local branch by being physically present during the crisis but admits she doesn’t have the funding to actually help. “Hopefully, something will emerge. But they get created, they rise, they collapse, and it starts all over. They do have a volatile life cycle.”

Lois Welk, meanwhile, says she’s just fine with staying “in a state of ambiguity,” as far as her plans for staying in or leaving Philadelphia are concerned. She’s currently sorting through the feedback from the community meetings and a batch of e-surveys issued earlier in January to decide how to farm out the organization’s programs to dance companies in the city. (Helen Haynes, chief cultural officer of the city of Philadelphia's arts and culture office, told PhillyVoice.com she has great interest in at least taking the dance-floor rental program – though it’s about the only help the city can provide.)

But the overall air of uncertainty is leaving some impatient.

Jay Oatis, a New York transplant and graduate from Temple University's Boyer School of Music and Dance, says the closure of Dance/UP – and possible exodus of Welk -- is just one more reason he’s eyeing auditions outside the region.

“I keep seeing all these f----g articles about how Philadelphia is a great place to live, and it’s on the brink of amazing – you know, 'BuzzFeed: 31 Reasons Why You Need to Move Here!' And there’s such a vibrant arts community here, but if stuff like this continues to happen, people are going to leave, they’re going to lose hope,” he told PhillyVoice.com. “I hope enough people are interested in and find the funding for something similar [to Dance/UP].”

“And,” he adds, “they need to find their next Lois Welk, if she doesn’t stay. Because when you lose her, you lose a lot.”

And that’s why this matters: If you lose the bloodstream of a community, what does it matter if an unbeating heart’s still there? It stifies the growth of a dance community that has been poised to gain momentum in recent years – especially with the cost of living in dance capitals like New York hitting the stratosphere, and FringeArts bringing dance to a mainstream audience. It’s like shoving gum in a flowing pipe; so, as much as Welk doesn’t want the conversation to be about saving her or Dance/UP, it kind of is.

“I think people may not come here so readily now,” Philadanco’s Joan Myers Brownsays. “People were moving out of New York because the expense was killing them – the opportunity to perform, the support systems here, they were coming here for that. But I’m not moving to Philly if I can’t get something out of it. Me, I’m just stuck here,” – she laughs – “It’s too late for me.”

But it’s not too late for people like Oatis, who have no ropes tying them here. If the resources aren’t here, they’ll find them somewhere else – in states like Alabama, even, where there might not be a city dance service organization, but there is a state one. (Another failed business model Welk tested, by the way.)

“Dance/UP closing might not have a huge impact on existing companies [like mine], but it will impact emerging artists and new artists moving into the city,” Eun Jung Choi, a dancer who moved her company here from New York in 2009, told PhillyVoice.com. “It’s really important to have a central place. New York, for example, is a mecca for dance, so there’s always a place for people to present and connect. But Philly is a small community – everyone knows each other, but there are tiny pockets throughout the neighborhoods. And because of Dance/UP, all of those pockets came to a central place to have conversation.”
She adds, audibly frustrated: “Now that Dance/UP is removed, I don’t know if that will happen.”

Risky Business

In a cavernous, dimly lit “Conversation Hall” at City Hall, Welk calls on her fleet of dancers to go back to their seats after another round of sticker-dot stamping. As she does so, my eye catches two people in front of me interacting and ignoring her pleas.

“Oh my gosh! We really should have met before!” says one older, curly-gray-haired woman, approaching a familiar face.

The young woman she’s speaking to, dressed in black and reacting with a piercing screech of acknowledgment, responds in kind – lighting up with excitement. Their hands fold together in an act of kindness and unity. They gab about their work for a few brief moments, exchange information and then nestle back into their seats – satisfied – as Welk continues to call for order over the microphone.

It’s not obvious – blink, and you’d miss it – but it’s the sort of connection folks like Jung Choi mean when they bemoan the loss of an organization that’s seemingly small and nonessential to someone writing a check. It’s a comfort in an industry hammered with reminders that it’s far from the top of the totem pole in the arts spectrum. Art, in general, comes with risk, but dance comes with a lot more of it.

“‘Risky Business,’ that’s what I called my latest production,” Myers Brown explains one afternoon as we stroll through the Kimmel Center. “It’s a double entendre, you see, because the work we do – throwing dancers around, catching, jumping – all that sliding we do, it’s highly risky.”

And then she tilts her head and looks at me with seriousness, ushering in the apparent moment of insight.

“But also the fact that you never know where you’ll get that next dollar.”
First Friday Interview: Maud Lyon of the Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance

Jess Herbine
2/6/2015

Philadelphia has long been recognized for its rich and diverse arts and cultural offerings. There is so much our city has to offer tourists and locals alike: From the prestigious theaters on the Avenue of the Arts, to the world-class cultural institutions on the Parkway; operas and symphonies, ballet and contemporary dance, story slams, cabarets, public library programming, historic sites and more. The Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance is fully dedicated to the vitality of this sector, supporting its economic growth and preserving diverse cultural activities to empower and unite our local community. 2015 will be an exciting year for the GPCA, as newly appointed President, Maud Lyon, settled into her position in January. We had the opportunity to ask Maud about her impressive background and plans to helm Philadelphia’s $3.3 billion arts and culture industry.

PPRG: Tell us a little bit about yourself: where did you grow up and go to school? Have you always been involved in the arts?

Maud Lyon: I grew up in Ithaca, NY, the daughter of a Cornell University professor. My BA is in history from Cornell, and I have an MA in Museum Administration from the Cooperstown Graduate Program, the nation’s oldest history museum program. My career has taken me to Iowa Living History Farms, working as a curator at the Louisiana State Museum in New Orleans, and to Detroit to lead the Detroit Historical Museum and organize the City of Detroit’s 300th birthday celebration in 2001. After that, I worked for the Detroit Symphony Orchestra and, with others, founded CultureSource, an arts support organization similar to the Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance. I’ve worked with cultural organizations of all kinds: music, theatre, museums, park conservancies, community arts organizations and more. I love the passion of people who work in arts and culture, and how dedicated they are to their mission and to their communities.

PPRG: What was the most challenging endeavor during your initiatives in furthering Detroit’s arts and culture industry?

Maud Lyon: From 2010-2014 our Strategic Alliances Initiative explored ways that diverse organizations can work together to increase capacity and collaborate to achieve their goals more efficiently. We had alliances in music education, theatre, financial management and volunteer recruitment, and a shared staffing effort for small performing arts organizations. We learned a lot about what it takes for organizations to form lasting partnerships, and also about how challenging it is to reduce costs in an industry that is already so heavily leveraged with creative in-kind and...
low-cost operations. Strategic Alliances also led to other initiatives, most notably IXITI.com, a marketing website that serves more than 270 arts providers today.

PPRG: What influenced your decision to step down from CultureSource and relocate to Philadelphia?

Maud Lyon: The Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance was our model when we founded CultureSource – I have admired the research, advocacy, and marketing programs of the Alliance for many years. The Alliance is the national leader in this work, and Philadelphia is an incredibly rich cultural community. Coming here to have the privilege of leading the Alliance was irresistible!

PPRG: Do you notice any major differences between Detroit and Philadelphia’s arts and culture scenes?

Maud Lyon: Detroit right now is in a magic moment as a community. The city is literally re-making its economy, with huge changes in the business community, young entrepreneurial efforts, high-tech neighborhoods that are transforming with new residents, and more collaborations between the suburbs and the city. Artists have flocked to Detroit because of the low cost of housing and the freedom to invent and to experiment. The lines between non-profit and for-profit organizations are blurry, with lots of unincorporated or emerging arts efforts. People are more concerned with doing cool things than they are with how things are structured.

I’ve only just started in Philadelphia and have a lot to learn, but a few things stand out to me. Here the cultural community is more mature, with many more organizations. The cultural community is also much more concentrated in the city, and especially along the Avenue of the Arts and Center City. Of course, here there is a major tourism industry, while in Detroit the arts and culture audience is overwhelmingly local. I love the depth of culture here. In addition to outstanding performing arts and visual arts, there are organizations championing history, science, horticulture, parks and arts education. I am also looking forward to exploring the many grassroots organizations that are small yet doing amazing, innovative work.

PPRG: Do you have any role models who inspire you to play an active role in community development?

Maud Lyon: I deeply admire the work of arts education leaders, because their work changes the lives of students and it also makes the community stronger and more united. I am also inspired by leaders who are changing the way arts and culture does business, engaging with the residents and visitors in new ways. My heroes from Detroit include Terry Blackhawk, founder of the InsideOut Literary Arts Project, which places poets in residencies in Detroit Public Schools; Rick Sperling, founder of Mosaic Youth Theatre; and Maury Okun, of Detroit Chamber Winds and Strings, which co-manages a dance company and a classical music festival with a shared staffing model. In larger organizations, my heroes are Anne Parsons, visionary President of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra; and the three-person team that has led the Detroit Institute of Arts through a series of major challenges, Executive Director Graham Beal, COO Annmarie Erickson, and their dedicated board chair, Gene Gargaro. Both the DSO and the DIA have reached out to the community in a variety of ways, and the result is dramatically increasing the community sense of ownership of these organizations. They are anchors of Midtown Detroit, but more than that, anchors of renewed regional pride and identity.

PPRG: What projects or initiatives do you plan to focus on in your first year in Philly?

Maud Lyon: The key goal is to explore what will help arts and culture to thrive, and to serve Greater Philadelphia well. That will take many forms. To begin, we are taking a fresh look at all of our Alliance programs, and convening many groups to listen and learn about the needs of different
disciplines, types and sizes of organizations. We’re also listening to the business and civic sectors, to understand the environment in which arts and culture operates and the needs of the larger community. Greater Philadelphia is changing, and we need to focus our work at the Alliance upon how to connect those opportunities to the incredible arts and culture assets that are here.

PPRG: How would you like to impact the city of Philadelphia and our arts and culture community during your time as President and CEO?

Maud Lyon: Within our sector, success will include increased collaboration and more unity in the way that arts and culture providers work together to meet community needs and to develop audiences. In the community, I want to nurture sources of support by finding better ways to demonstrate the value of arts and culture, and by understanding the needs of patrons and funders. The Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance works on a level that individual organizations cannot. We connect, convene, and enable both the organizations/individuals that make arts and culture happen, and the powerful leaders of the community who see arts and culture as a path to larger goals. The Alliance is a force for innovation and a key asset for our city and the region.

Best of luck to Maud as she celebrates her first month as a leader in Philadelphia! The Philadelphia Cultural Alliance is the organization behind popular programs and resources available to the public, including Funsavers, Phillyfunguide, STAMP, PhillySpaceFinder and GroundSwell. Get involved with them on Twitter and Facebook!
Letters - Feb. 6: Arts a key building block in new economy

Maud Lyon
2/6/2015

Robert W. Patterson shows an unfortunate lack of understanding of the depth and diversity of the city's arts and culture offerings, and their impact ("Arts and culture not enough to sustain Philadelphia," Feb. 4). As a recent transplant from Detroit - a city that understands better than any the challenges of a "hollowing out" of a city's industrial base and the power of arts and culture in a post-manufacturing boom - I am acutely aware of the power of arts and cultural assets to make a difference with education and community development.

The cultural sector is a proven engine of social, educational, and economic benefit. That's why most civic leaders - as opposed to one political pundit - recognize its value, and the importance of focusing on multiple issues, needs, and solutions, with arts and culture being an important part of the puzzle.

|Maud Lyon, president, Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance, Philadelphia, maudl@philaculture.org|
GroundSwell’s Forum Discusses Community Engagement in the Philadelphia Arts Community

Kristen Gillette
1/29/2015

Groundswell, the community engagement arm of the Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance, held a community engagement forum last Thursday, January 22, In honor of Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service.

The forum, meant to provide an open discussion on the tremendous impact that arts and culture is having in our communities, began with a brief speech from Maud Lyon, the new president of the Cultural Alliance. She spoke about how the best way to increase support for the arts is to share how they make a difference in communities.

“At the Alliance, we feel that best way to increase support is to share the story of our work. Your work,” said Lyon. “Research shows that people want to donate to organizations that are making a measurable impact on people and lives in communities, and that’s what we have to get better at as a sector at communicating to people."

Here’s an overview of four leaders who spoke at the forum about community engagement at their arts organizations in the city.

The intersection of mental health and the mural arts program

Arthur C. Evans, Jr, Ph.D, Philadelphia’s behavioral health commissioner, shared how the Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual disAbility Services works with the Mural Arts program.

One specific project Evans spoke about was the Bridging the Gap Mural, which brought together members of the West African immigrant and African American communities in Southwest Philadelphia to address the conflict in their community and co-create a visual representation of their relationship building efforts.

Evans also noted that the murals helped DBHIDS connect with a community that they wouldn’t have been able to do if it wasn’t for the art project. "We continue [the relationship] today, and we are working with that community around mental health issues, which are pretty significant, because if you remember many of the people who come from that part of the world are coming from war torn countries with significant amounts of trauma that goes untreated.

The struggle to engage parents and the community at Taller Puertorriqueno

Asdrey Irizarry, education director at Taller Puertorriqueno, spoke about two of the education programs she runs a Taller Puertorriqueno, the Youth Artist Program and Cultural Explorations Program. Taller’s YAP program provides students an opportunity to build a solid portfolio of work
for art college applications or other post-secondary pursuits. Irizarry mentioned that many students have went on to fine arts colleges and stayed in touch about what they’re doing. Cultural Explorations is for younger children, ages 5 to 14, for which engagement with parents through the program can be a struggle, noting that parents often see them them as daycare, although they’re working to engage parents as well as the surrounding community. “We’re getting the community more involved with us. They’re changing their perspective of who we are and what we are doing, so we have more people coming in to help us out,” she said.

Engaging People at PEC through Community Art

Cassandra Green, manager of community outreach and partnerships at PEC People’s Emergency Center, spoke about how it’s been tough engaging the community. For example, around the Lancaster Avenue Arts and Jazz Festival. They had 3,000 visitors last year, she said, “but it took a lot of marketing and PR and on the ground work to let people know that this is an event that is all inclusive.”

Another program Green spoke at length about was the Neighborhood Time Exchange: West Philadelphia Artist Residency. The program was created by by the founders of Broken City Lab, who will be curating the residency in collaboration with PEC, the Mural Arts Program, and the Office of Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy (OACCE).

For the program, a community gives artists studio space in which they can develop their work. In return for studio hours, artists will be expected to apply their art skills to neighborhood needs and revitalization efforts, such as the community message board Generocity.org covered last year.

Getting Students involved in Community Service

Mary Javian, director of professional development and community engagement at Curtis Institute of Music, founded Curtis’ first community engagement program while still a student. Now, community engagement is a required class at Curtis.

“They have to complete in a semester 15 hours in a community service program as part of their education,” Javian said, mentioning that students get to choose from a lot of different partnerships, including Mighty Writers, Asian Arts Initiative, schools, and hospitals.

They can also complete the Community Artists Program later on, which is a full year program where they’re given mentor and a budget to create a project of their own design.

“I personally feel that the arts needs to continue to work with social programs to create social and artistic value within the community,” she said.

Learn more about Groundswell at https://www.philaculture.org/groundswell
The Arts & Business Council of Greater Philadelphia and other arts and culture organizations recently presented the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development Transition Team with policy recommendations regarding the arts, culture and creative economy.

The report presented to Gov. Tom Wolf’s administration laid out a hospitality, destination, arts/culture and tourism plan.

“We are pleased to present this report to the Wolf Administration and look forward to assisting in the growth and promotion of the cultural economy in Pennsylvania,” said Karin Copeland, executive director of the Arts & Business Council.

“A strong and vibrant cultural sector produces a more knowledgeable, skilled and competitive workforce, safer neighborhoods and communities in which businesses and their employees want to live, play, invest and build.”

Pennsylvania’s cultural sector contributes $4.47 billion annually to Pennsylvania’s economy. The sector supports 81,000 full-time equivalent jobs, yields more than $1.8 billion in household income, and generates $201 million in state tax revenues and $159 million in local tax revenues.

According to the report, an estimated 170 million visitors travel to or within the commonwealth annually, with 62 million of them overnight visitors.

The report contained a number of policy recommendations such as including arts and culture as a priority industry in the Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program, to ensure that construction and capital improvements in arts and culture projects can continue to generate jobs and tourism; increasing the current 25 percent film tax credit to producers that spent at least 60 percent of their total budgets in Pennsylvania to more competitive with other states; establishing the visual and performing arts as core academic subjects in K-12 schools in Pennsylvania and neighborhood revitalization through the arts, culture and tourism.

**The recommendations were developed by a diverse set of arts, culture and creative economy representatives from across Pennsylvania. These individuals were convened in discussion by the Arts & Business Council of Greater Philadelphia, an affiliate of the Greater Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce, building on the work of a statewide coalition convened by Citizens for the Arts in Pennsylvania, the Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council and the Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance. More than 20 organizations and companies contributed to the overall policy discussion and to the report sent to the Wolf administration.**
Transformations: 50 things that will change Philadelphia

Dan Norton
1/23/2015

With so many projects and events taking root in the region, Greater Philadelphia is set to transform in 2015.

Pope Francis is coming, along with a flock of millennials. Camden is growing, and so is the new Comcast tower in Center City. By 2016, we'll have a brand new mayor and a popular bike share system.

These events could have a considerable impact on the region, inspiring one local expert to call 2015 "a milestone year" for Philadelphia.

"In the past 10 or 15 years, we've seen this shift from that less-than-positive way of thinking to a much more optimistic, much more can-do kind of spirit that is infectious and contagious and attractive," said Matt Cabrey, executive director of Select Greater Philadelphia. "We've done a good job in creating awareness about the benefits of living and working and establishing a business and growing a business and raising a family in the region. We need to continue that."

The PBJ editorial staff is proud to present 50 transformations that will reshape the region.

The Cultural Crisis:

Many of Philadelphia's cultural institutions are facing financial woes, including foreclosures and massive debts, due to lenders' refocusing their grant-giving following the Great Recession.

Why it's transformational: Cautious spending will change the cultural landscape, forcing institutions to re-evaluate their missions and the way they proceed with expansions or moves into new spaces. It can also change the way institutions are raising money, forgoing the idea of relying on one stream of revenue. Additionally, it also has the potential to change how the city appropriates its budget for the arts-and-culture sector in the future. More funds would mean more programs and expansions.

The players: Mayor Michael Nutter; Helen Haynes, chief cultural officer in the city's Office of Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy; Maud Lyon, president of the Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance; June O'Neil, manager of the Philadelphia Cultural Fund.
Positively Philadelphia: A Job Bank for Arts Professionals

Lauren Lipton
1/18/2015

If you’re looking for a job, here’s a reminder about an online site you might not know about.

“It’s an online job bank, and it’s the largest job bank in the region for arts jobs in the community,” says John McInerney, vice-president of marketing for the Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance (top photo). “Fifteen thousand people check the site up to ten times every month.”

McInerney says their web site can be a godsend for those who want to make a career in the arts.

“It’s really great,” he tells Positively Philadelphia. “I’ve known so many people who work in the arts community who got their job or heard about their job first from the job bank.”

And what kind of jobs are there?

“Anything from historians, curators, administrative positions, executive directors at the various museums and theaters — really anything that falls under arts and culture.”

The site includes fulltime, part-time, and volunteer positions. Here’s where you go: Philaculture.org.

“It’s a really great resource,” says McInerney.

And, for this week, that’s “Positively Philadelphia!”
Recap of our #MLKDayChat with @GroundSwell_PA

Kristen Gillette
1/18/2015

On Wednesday, January 14, @Groundswell_PA and @Generocity took turns asking questions around @MLKDayofService and year-round volunteering

Here’s what happened during our chat with Groundswell:
Mo Manklang
@MoManklang
MLK Day is a lot like #GivingTuesdayPHL to me - a day that promotes giving back, which hopefully translates to year-long efforts. #MLKDayChat
12:03 PM - 14 Jan 2015
6 RETWEETS 7 FAVORITES

GroundSwell
@GroundSwell_PA
How do you think the @mlkdayofservice exemplifies Dr. King's legacy? #MLKDayChat
12:30 PM - 14 Jan 2015
1 RETWEET 2 FAVORITES

Sharon Rice
@SharonRice
MLK Day is a great way to get start your active participation in social impact. #MLKDayChat @GroundSwell_PA @Generocity
12:08 PM - 14 Jan 2015
3 RETWEETS 4 FAVORITES

Brittie
@Beefinghtly
MLK gave his life for equality. The least we can do is give back & keep fighting for equality #MLKdaychat @generocity @GroundSwell_PA
12:54 PM - 14 Jan 2015
4 RETWEETS 4 FAVORITES

Steve Gudelunas
@sgudelunas
"OUR LIVES BEGIN TO END THE DAY WE BECOME SILENT ABOUT THINGS THAT MATTER."
@Generocity #MLKDayChat @GroundSwell_PA @Generocity
12:44 PM - 14 Jan 2015
4 RETWEETS 5 FAVORITES

Sharon Rice
@SharonRice
@Generocity volunteering is a way to connect with people w/o inserting an assumed solution to a problem with intricate layers. #MLKDayChat
12:26 PM - 14 Jan 2015
3 RETWEETS 2 FAVORITES

Generocity.org
@Generocity
Why do you participate in MLK Day of Service? Why is volunteering important to you? #MLKDayChat
12:20 PM - 14 Jan 2015
1 RETWEET 2 FAVORITES

GroundSwell
@GroundSwell_PA
Besides formal service projects, what are your favorite ways to get involved in your community the rest of the year? #MLKDayChat
12:40 PM - 14 Jan 2015
3 RETWEETS 2 FAVORITES
Join Generocity.org and GroundSwell for a Twitter Chat Around MLK Day of Service

Kristen Gillette  
1/15/2015

We’re partnering with the Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance’s Groundswell to hold a Twitter chat on Wednesday, January 14 at noon, a few days before Martin Luther King Day.

Martin Luther King Day is January 19. For 20 years, the day has been dedicated to service in Philadelphia. In fact, The Greater Philadelphia Martin Luther King Day of Service is the largest King Day event in the nation.

During the chat, we’ll be discussing opportunities to get involved on this day of service while taking a look back at some of the interesting and innovative projects that organizations have done in the past. For nonprofits and businesses, this will be an opportunity to talk about what you’re doing on this day as well as share your ideas with others.

Groundswell and Philly Fun Guide have partnered to publish a list of Day of Service opportunities, which is available on their website. The list includes opportunities for volunteering at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, Batram’s Garden, and more. You can find even more volunteering opportunities at http://www.mlkdayofservice.org/

We’ll both be asking questions using the hashtag #MLKDayChat, so make sure you follow @Groundswell_PA and @Generocity on Twitter!

Let us know you’ll be joining us by tweeting:

Join me for a @Generocity + @GroundSwell_PA MLK Day of Service Twitter chat on Jan. 14 at noon using #MLKDayChat! http://gnrcty.org/MLKDayChat
Report: Arts and culture contribute more to economy than thought

Brandon Baker
1/12/2015

According to a new report released Jan. 12 by the National Endowment for the Arts and the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, creative industries have a large impact on the national economy -- larger than you'd think.

As reported by the Associated Press, arts and culture funneled more than $698 billion into the U.S. economy in 2012 for about 4.32 percent of the country's goods and services. Carrying the bulk of the weight, the report says, are the film/video, broadcasting, publishing, retail sales, performing arts and advertising industries. A previous report released in 2013 cited the figure at $504 billion but did not account for architectural services, online ticket vendors and "entertainment originals" in book publishing, film and television.

But let's add some perspective, shall we?

Arts and culture have a $3.3 billion impact on the Greater Philadelphia economy, according to extensive in-person surveys conducted in 2011 by the Philadelphia Cultural Alliance and funded by the William Penn Foundation. That figure includes not just direct spending, such as money spent on tickets or to produce an event, but indirect spending as well -- so, other industries that are created or impacted by a night out to the theater (like the restaurant business).

"Certainly, that [$3.3 billion] was a much higher number than we anticipated when we did our surveys," John McInerney, vice president of marketing and communications for the Philadelphia Cultural Alliance, told PhillyVoice.com. "The local economy is around a trillion dollars, so it's, you know, it's 3 or 4 percent of spending in all of the region, so you have to take that into context."

Also necessary to put into context, he said, is the newly released report's definition of the arts.

"It's hard to get a sense [of how Philly's creative economy really compares]. ... It gets tricky when you start to include a lot of stuff that's farther and farther from the arts," he said.

One example might be advertising, with the debate, "Do we include all of advertising in our data, or just creative consultants?" There's no cut-and-dry answer.

"[The report] doesn't capture the informal creative economy, either," he said. "How about all of the independent music bands? But it's just four guys, you know? They have day jobs; it's difficult to measure accurately the real picture of the creative sector."

That said, the National Endowment for the Arts report (conducted in 2012) and the Survey of Public Participation in the Arts (conducted from 2002-2012) offered up some telling tidbits. The most interesting -- and relevant to what McInerney observes in his Philly work, he said -- are the high impact that location and transit access have on attendance numbers ("Arts development in Philly is basically following the El," he said), a higher interest in participation in the arts among women and the finding that patrons don't want to see a show by themselves, which is something
that programming -- in Philly and elsewhere -- may adapt to in the coming years. That is also something McInerney said his organization would like to research more.

The NEA and Department of Commerce's Bureau of Economic Analysis also report that, nationwide, 4.7 million people are employed by the production of arts and cultural goods. Compare that to Philly, and the number is about 65,000 -- which, McInerney emphasized, is a number that's in line with some of the region's biggest employers.

The Survey of Public Participation in the Arts also suggests slightly more than half (54 percent) of Americans have attended a live performing arts event since 2002. McInerney said that, based on on-file mailing lists, about two out of three households in the Philadelphia region have purchased tickets for an arts performance at some point.

For more information on Philadelphia's creative economy, see the Philadelphia Cultural Alliance's 2014 portfolio report, a local study of the creative economy released earlier this year that has data compiled from 2009-12.
Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance #GivingTuesday 2014 Story

STAMP
1/6/2015

GivingTuesday.org is gathering stories about #GivingTuesday 2014 experiences, so we thought we’d share ours!

For the second year in a row, we decided to fundraise on behalf of our innovative new teen program, STAMP: The Virginia and Harvey Kimmel Teen Program. STAMP stands for “Students at Museums in Philly” (a name chosen by our Teen Council), and now offers free admission to 15 city museums for Philly residents ages 14-19.

Last year, we asked donors to consider sponsoring a pass for a teen ($10 -> 1 teen 1 pass 12 museums). This year, our goal was to go even further for the 12,000+ teens who have signed up for the pass since STAMP’s October 2013 launch: We called on donors to sponsor teen participation in the types of activities that will further engage Philly students in STAMP programming and other arts and culture opportunities, like Teen Council meetings and our Spring 2015 STAMP on the Parkway event.

Our invitation to supporters was: “Invest in Philly teens. Invest in STAMP.” We chose this call to action because we believe that with STAMP, the pass is just the beginning. Through STAMP, teens not only have access to 15 of the best museums and attractions in Philadelphia, but also cultural happenings throughout the year, and information on internships and community service opportunities. We’ve watched for over a year now as thousands of teens have used STAMP to develop their passions and get involved in their neighborhoods, and we invited everyone in Philadelphia to help support these amazing kids.

At a time when the Philadelphia School District is in crisis and art, music and afterschool programs have been eliminated, programs like STAMP are more necessary than ever. STAMP gives teens the opportunity to experience arts and culture first-hand and explore their full potential. The program has also been extremely successful in reaching youth from Philadelphia neighborhoods with very low cultural participation, with over 75% coming from neighborhoods with little to no access to museum experiences. Furthermore, 58% of STAMP Passholders are African American or Latino, and 47% come from economically-disadvantaged households.

When #GivingTuesday 2014 was through, we were pleased to see that our message had reached far and wide to touch the hearts of generous Philadelphians. Through individual donations, prize money from Razoo, and our generous matching grants from Joanne Harmelin and a donor advised fund from The Philadelphia Foundation, we surpassed our fundraising goal of $15,000 for this year, with a final total of $15,846.
We are overwhelmed by the generosity of Philadelphians and the creative sector, and we can’t wait to see the impact we can have with all of this #GivingTuesday support!

For more information about STAMP, visit www.phillySTAMPpass.org. To learn more about the Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance, the region’s leading arts and cultural advocacy, research and marketing organization, check out www.philaculture.org.
Best Stories of 2014: Arts and Culture

Kristen Gillette
12/23/2014

The Greater Philadelphia region has a vibrant arts scene. Here are some of our favorite stories that represent how arts & culture has an impact on our region.

1. Corner Store (Takeout Stories) a Collaboration Between Artists and Asian Art Initiative's Youth Program | Generocity.org

Corner stores are a fact of life for much of Philadelphia - especially in the city’s food deserts, many of which are in North Philadelphia. Earlier in 2014, artists Keir Johnston and Ernel Martinez collaborated with Asian Arts Initiative to use the ubiquitous city corner store as a focal point to explore cross-cultural interactions among Philadelphia’s pan-ethnic black and Asian communities.

2. Local Art Teacher Chosen to Design 22nd and Market Memorial

Plans to build a memorial park at the site of the tragic collapse of the Salvation Army thrift store on June 5, 2013 are moving forward: the 22nd and Market Memorial Committee, formed soon after the collapse, chose local artist Barbara Fox in 2014 to design a memorial sculpture at the park. Learn more about the committee helping to create the park in this story.

3. Story Pop Up Brings the Life Experiences of Philly Seniors Into Neighborhoods

About five years ago, Benita Cooper started a storytelling group in the basement of the Philadelphia Senior Center. Now the program has evolved into what has become The Best Day of My Life So Far, a nationwide nonprofit (AARP has partnered with them) with hubs in retirement homes, senior centers and libraries from Seattle to Chicago to New Jersey.

4. Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance Releases 2014 Portfolio and Announces New President

In October, the Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance released its 2014 Portfolio, its largest analysis of the arts and culture sector to date. The Alliance also announced and introduced its new president, Maud Lyon, who will begin in early 2015.

5. Temple University's North Philadelphia Youth Advisory Council Receives $40,000 Grant from The Philadelphia Foundation

The North Philadelphia Youth Advisory Council, a program of Temple Contemporary, is comprised of five students from the North Philadelphia community surrounding Temple University. In fall of 2014, the program received a $40,000 grant from The Philadelphia Foundation’s Fund for Children’s Strategic Investment in Youth fund. According to Sarah Stearns, the director of the council, the grant will help her hire an assistant to help run the program.