

Project summary: Distribution of art supply kits, video resources, and related educational materials to Wake County school-aged youth.

1. Wake Arts Inclusion Project requests \$10,000 to produce and distribute art materials to supplement school-aged youth artistic opportunities in light of virtual education due to Covid-19. Since beginning this initiative in August of 2020, the Wake Arts Inclusion Project has already begun to craft and distribute art materials to the Wake County School System, with words of outstanding praise from educators and students alike.

Working alongside Megan Bostic, our program director, and Wake County teachers, we have been developing art material kits that are age-appropriate and inclusive of all ability levels. The Wake Arts Inclusion Project has also worked to craft age-specific art videos to share with classroom teachers across Wake county. The Wark Arts Inclusion Project embraces inclusion, diversity, equity, and access. We recognize our responsibility to be an open, welcoming, and anti-racist organization where students, artists, staff, trustees, and volunteers of all backgrounds collaboratively learn, work, and serve. We at WAIP believe in the power of art to radically remove racially based stereotypes, and its ability to create a conversation surrounding DEI at all age and ability levels. By addressing each age group on their specific level, we can connect more holistically the ideas behind DEI within parameters that each child will understand.

Each individualized art supply kit contains materials ranging from colored pencils, textiles, paper, scissors, glue, and mixed media manipulatives. Adapting each kit to best meet the needs of each individual, kits are available with left-hand scissors, larger pencils for easier grip, and specialized gripping features to increase small motor manipulation.

In the 2019-2020 school year, the average daily enrollment of Wake County school was 161,907 students with 20,050 special education students enrolled. While providing one art kit may seem like a small task, when multiplied by 161,907, the scale and funds required to accomplish such a task are brought into perspective.

The Covid-19 pandemic has shifted many school opportunities from in-person to virtual offerings, and with this shift, we have seen the loss of artistic endeavors for school aged youth. Cut funds, virtual platforms, and overworked educators have led to the shift in focus from the incorporation of art into the classroom, to a greater emphasis on core requirements and test subjects. We as a collective artistic community know the detrimental effects of a non-artistic academic approach. Loss of interest, plummeting grades, and an overall decrease in mental health have been proven to increase when art is taken from education. The virtual education system is placing an increased financial strain on parents to provide artistic endeavors for their students during this time.

The Wake Arts Inclusion Project Covid-19 student initiative should receive state support because of the overwhelming demonstrable community benefits. The program falls in line with the North Carolina Arts Council's dedication to promoting arts with the youth of the state.

Caitlin Duncan Writing Assignment E.

2. Betsy Ludwig, the Executive Director of Arts Access, Wake Arts Inclusion Project will be spearheading efforts. Betsy is a white female who has served as the Executive director since 2014. She has dedicated her career to arts advocacy and ensuring that art is equally available for everyone in the community, regardless of race, gender, or ability. Before serving as Executive Director, she had 20 years of experience in group home, day program, hospital, public school, and non-profit settings, serving as a social working, therapeutic recreation specialist, and program administrator. Wearing many hats has allowed Betsy to truly know the vast array of art benefits in multiple settings. Betsy has a bachelor's degree in social work from Salem College and a master's degree in therapeutic recreation from UNC-Chapel Hill. Having Betsy led the initiative ensures that all art supplies are not only age-appropriate but not discriminatory towards ability level. We at the Wake Arts Inclusion Project value DEI through many lenses, and value the expertise that Betsy brings to the table.

Megan Bostic, the Program Manager of Arts Access, Wake Arts Inclusion Project will serve as the school coordinator for the initiative. Megan is a white female and over the past ten years, Megan has worked in visual arts, arts education, community outreach, and the nonprofit sector. After joining Arts Access in 2017, Megan implemented the Wake Arts Inclusion Project as a pilot project to assist art teachers to more effectively work with students with disabilities. Megan holds a Masters of Art and Design from NC State University and BFAs in both Art Education and Studio Art from East Carolina University. Megan will serve as the school coordinator and assist with communication between principles and art teachers at the public school level. Establishing this first connection is vital to the success of the initiative, and we believe that Megan is the perfect fit for this position.

Tamar Harris Warren, the Programs and Audio Description Coordinator for Arts Access, Wake Arts Inclusion Project, will serve as the arts manager for the project. Tamar is a black female who is overseeing the financial and distribution efforts. Tamar will ensure that the financial and administrative tasks required to maintain a successful art kit distribution process are upheld. Tamar has over thirteen years of arts management experience, with extensive organizational and events manager experience. Tamar received her Masters of Arts Degree in Museum Studies from Johns Hopkins University and her Bachelor of Arts Degree from Meredith College. Before joining Arts Access, Tamar served in a variety of positions within the Triangle arts museums and galleries.

3. A major component of our community outreach efforts is the distribution of art supply kits to the school-aged youth of Wake County School systems. Each kit will contain age-appropriate manipulatives, with increased focus materials that are adaptable for the inclusion of all ability levels. Spearheaded by Betsy Ludwig, each art kit will be packaged using Covid-19 precautions and will be left to quarantine for 2 weeks before distribution dates. Distribution and school collaboration will be led by Megan Bostic. Megan will work with each school's upper-level staff to establish a count of how many students are in each grade level and note

Caitlin Duncan Writing Assignment E.

children with disabilities. Art kits will then be dropped off at each school. Finally, each school will distribute the kits to each child through scheduled pickup days and/or mailing options.

The art kits are a vital community outreach effort, because of the increased need for hands-on opportunities for school-aged youth now in virtual education. The Wake Arts Inclusion Project recognizes the need for screen breaks and believes the kits will allow students to release and fully immerse themselves into their art. The Wake County Public school system serves a variety of races, socioeconomic statuses, and cultural backgrounds, making the inclusion of all school-aged children more vital than ever. The funds requested would ensure that no child is left behind in the new art classroom that is in their own homes.

In addition to the art kit efforts, the Wake Arts Inclusion Project is also developing age-specific art videos to share with classroom teachers across Wake county. These videos explore art through the lense of DEI, by providing a comprehensive study of artists from various backgrounds and exploring a plethora of media interpretations in response to the current racial strain of today's culture. In today's climate of racial and political turmoil, we must train our youth to use art to begin the hard conversations, and to use it to express their views and opinions. Art is a tool that can be manipulated to speak so much louder than our voices, and we at the Wake Arts Inclusion Project believe that today's youth can change the narrative with their art.

The art videos will serve as both community outreach and educational opportunity. Spearheaded by Tamar Harris Warren, the videos will address DEI as an opportunity for education and growth. By examining the art of the past, these videos will help us to understand the various strains artists are faced with depending upon their race and diversity. Approaching art through a lense of DEI will increase our educational outreach to the community by providing a deeper engagement with the art material kits provided. A series of videos will feature local artists from the area, as well as partner with local art teachers in Wake County to promote the overall success of the program. By bringing in local artists, we hope to foster a greater conversation about DEI within our community between both school-aged youth and parents alike. Seeking to partner with local art teachers in Wake County, we will foster greater collaboration with them for upcoming years and begin a working relationship that will far outlast the Covid-19 pandemic.

4. Our videos and art kits will be designed to fully engaged with all school-aged youth in Wake County, with an increased focus on communities of color and children with disabilities. Wake County School system had a total of 161,907 average daily members during the 2019-2020 school year. The school system encompasses 191 total schools, with 116 elementary schools, 37 middle schools, 29 high schools, 6 alternative schools, and 3 (K-8, 6-12). With 50,843 students qualifying for Free and Reduced Lunch, Wake County Schools need the supplemental art kits more than ever. With the increased financial strain placed on many parents due to the Covid-19 pandemic, art supplies are often going to be very low on the family budget. Reaching students who are in lower socioeconomic statuses with opportunities for art amplifies the value of inclusion that the Wake Arts Inclusion Project strives to uphold.

Caitlin Duncan Writing Assignment E.

In 2018, Wake County's population was 59.4% white, 19.5% Black or African American, 7.13% Asian, 4.62% Hispanic, and 4.04% Other. With our efforts, we hope to engage all of the school-aged youth encompassing all of these demographics. By including the DEI art videos in the project we hope to further engage communities of color in our efforts. By partnering with local artists of color in our video series, we hope to begin a greater conversation within our community regarding DEI in the arts in Wake County. We hope that not only students will engage in conversation, but that parents who may be working at home will also be intrigued by the work being done. To create a space for feedback and response, the Wake Arts Inclusion Project will develop an online form for parents, teachers, and students to complete assessing the success of the initiative.

We also hope to engage students with disabilities in our project. By providing individualized art material kits, we hope that each student will feel confident in their art creating abilities. As the Wake Arts Inclusion Project, providing art to all people of all ability levels is a core value of our team. We recognize art as a fundamental right of all people and seek to provide increased opportunities for students with disabilities.

We seek to serve every student enrolled in the Wake County School system with an art supply kit and link to video learning opportunities. A requirement of 161,907 that we believe we must strive for 100% distribution level. Seeking to draw new audience members to the Wake Arts Inclusion Project, we will also raise awareness of our future endeavors within the community. By providing each student with an art kit, we believe we will increase arts within Wake County and remind students and parents alike of the benefits of an arts education.