

## **PART 3 – PROGRAM NARRATIVE**

### **Summary of Program Design**

Since 2000, Art for a Child's Safe America Foundation (ArtSafe) has provided successful arts-based anti-violence programming to more than 900 youth and adults incarcerated in Ohio correctional facilities. Over the past five years, ArtSafe has also provided Ohio with four creative publications (three books and one music CD) produced by the individuals going through our program. However, we realized these resources were not reaching youth-serving organizations wishing to incorporate an anti-violence and delinquency prevention component into their programming. In 2006, with funding from the Ohio Office of Criminal Justice Services, we published a Facilitators' Guide for our 2003 publication *InSide Looking Out*, which was created by the juvenile male offenders incarcerated at the Madison Correctional Institution. This Guide has been a great success in the short time it has been available and has received high praise from social workers and teachers.

ArtSafe has received initial funding to produce another Facilitators' Guide, this time for *A Caged Bird*, a publication of the art and writings created by the female juvenile inmates at the Ohio Reformatory for Women that received the Outstanding Minority Health Education Publication Award from the Ohio Commission on Minority Health in 2004. The Facilitators' Guide will also include new contributions from *A Caged Bird* authors. **We seek funding from the Women's Fund of Central Ohio to publish the Facilitators' Guide. We also seek funding to support our goal to identify and disseminate the book** to afterschool, faith-based, and other organizations serving at-risk girls in central Ohio.

**Who are the participants?** Twenty young women, ages 12-20, who are incarcerated in DYS or DRC facilities will directly participate in piloting the Guide's activities; four more young women will add new content to the Guide. We also anticipate, based on our initial research, that we can identify over 300 youth-serving organizations in the state of Ohio; roughly 30-40 will serve or focus exclusively on young women (ages 12-20) in the seven central Ohio counties. We estimate that at least 200 and potentially 400 girls may be reached through these afterschool, faith-based, and other programs using the Facilitators' Guide.

**What will the program do?** This program has two components: 1) to publish a *Facilitators' Guide to A Caged Bird*, pilot testing its activities with incarcerated young women, and 2) to identify organizations in

central Ohio serving at-risk girls and provide them with information to incorporate *A Caged Bird* successfully into their programs using the Facilitators' Guide.

**Where will the program operate?** The dissemination of the *Facilitators' Guide to A Caged Bird* to organizations serving girls in Franklin, Delaware, Union, Fairfield, Licking, Madison, and Pickaway counties will occur with funding from the Women's Fund. Our project's entire reach is statewide.

**.When will the program will occur and what is the timeline?** Work on the Facilitators' Guide has already begun, and the first draft of activities will be available in July to use in our scheduled programs at two Department of Youth Services (DYS) and Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections (DRC) sites. (We already have agreements for these programs.) After receiving feedback from the programs' participants and facilitators, we will revise and update the Guide manuscript for publication in September 2007. At that time, we will recruit a marketing consultant to assist us in locating organizations serving at-risk youth in Ohio; the consultant will identify and reach out to these organizations through June 2008.

**How will the program be implemented?** Work on the Guide by our educational writer has already begun. In September 2007 we will recruit a marketing consultant to identify organizations serving at-risk youth in and around the state of Ohio. With funding from the Women's Fund, approximately one-third of that person's time will be devoted to finding and working with organizations serving girls in central Ohio.

## **Social Change**

**Fund priorities.** Our project directly seeks social change for at-risk young women. We identify most strongly with the Women's Fund priority to advance the lives of girls and young women by providing opportunities to develop life skills. In our institutional and afterschool programs, young women take leadership roles in the development, planning, and production of art, especially in the creation of cooperative projects. The creators of *A Caged Bird* see their contributions helping other young women avoid incarceration and a life of violence. We seek to publish the Facilitators' Guide for these other young women, at risk of becoming court-involved or incarcerated, to see the creations of their peers—with similar backgrounds, walking similar paths—taken seriously and put into service for the community.

Arts-based programs are not about coddling or simply entertaining these young women. Art and writing projects require long hours of focus, perseverance, and critical thinking—skills of self-discipline

lacking in this population. These are practical skills for young women. Ohio Citizens for the Arts, for example, estimates that the economic impact of the arts in Ohio is in the billions of dollars annually. Architecture, broadcasting, recording, photography, books, and software products contribute 6% to our gross national product—more than the food, apparel, chemical, and refining industries combined. Graphic communication and problem-solving skills are in demand in the current economy. (Two young women graduates of ArtSafe programs who left prison are now, for example, studying arts-related fields in college.) The activities of the Facilitators' Guide directly promote literacy, critical thinking, and the application of psychosocial concepts to art, literature, and personal experience. Activities are also correlated to national educational standards for use by public and private school teachers and home-schoolers.

**Short- and long-term social change.** We believe—and we know from our experience—that other young people gain from the cautionary tales of their peers expressed in art and writing. Our initial responses to the facilitators' guide we published for *InSide Looking Out* are uniformly positive. One teacher using the publication noted, “[My kids] also enjoyed sharing [the book] with other students who are not in my classes.” In the short term, as a result of the dissemination of the Guide, more youth-serving organizations will know that these publications exist as tools for prevention programs. In the long term, young women reading *A Caged Bird* in the context of these youth-serving organizations will develop literacy skills; they will learn new, highly academic ways to explain and organize their experiences; and they will practice conscious expressions of empathy, social skills, and critical thinking in relation to the creations of their peers.

**As a result of this program**, issues of incarcerated young women will be viewed differently in the community: the young women will become published artists and writers rather than “criminals.” Youth-serving organizations and their leaders will gain insight into the experiences of these young women and will learn specific techniques to help their interventions. Disseminating the Facilitators' Guide and *A Caged Bird* will mean that the community itself is more engaged in issues of female delinquency because different community organizations with varying missions can use the same tools. Some Guide activities, for example, ask them to plan and create peer-, community-, or family-based art and writing projects. We also believe that young women in our programs and young women in organizations using the publications will behave differently. They will be

more likely, seeing that the words and creations of their peers are taken seriously, to engage in art and writing to express themselves and examine their experiences.

### **Evaluation and Pass It On Plan**

**Evaluation.** Our quantitative definition of success for our first component is the publication of 2,500 copies of the Facilitators' Guide in September 2007; for the second, it is that at least 250 Ohio organizations are identified and contacted, about 30 of those serving girls in central Ohio, and that 20% of all organizations (40% of those in central Ohio) use the book and Guide as a result of outreach by our marketing consultant. Although we have no way to evaluate other programs' use of the Guide and *A Caged Bird*, these goals will ensure that the publications reach a minimum of 200 young women in central Ohio. Qualitative measures for the project are the positive feedback from facilitators and program participants that pilot the Guide's activities (measured using post-program evaluations and surveys of "what worked" for facilitators piloting them). We will suggest to Guide users that they institute pre- and post-program evaluations, sharing results with us as aggregate data. We will help them do so based on our own pre- and post-program survey instruments.

It is nearly impossible to adequately track the real influence of *A Caged Bird* in the community, precisely because we know from our own programming that readers will informally pass the book on to family members and friends to read. The number of books ordered by youth-serving groups and schools is a proxy for estimating the scope of the book's influence, and we will track these orders and inquiries in our accounting system and through the internal reports generated by our marketing consultant.

**"Pass It On."** We regularly present the information about the Facilitators' Guide to education and social work meetings (recently we presented at the Ohio Council of Teachers of English Language Arts annual conference). We believe that the components of the program for which we are seeking funding from the Women's Fund create, in and of themselves, a formal "pass it on" plan. Beyond the 35 incarcerated young women who have attended our programs, the targeted dissemination of the Facilitators' Guide to central Ohio organizations serving girls has the effect of reaching ever-widening groups of women: young women in these programs, their family members and peers, the facilitators for youth-serving organizations, and their professional peers. As more Ohioans use these books, we exponentially increase the young women writers' and artists' community impact beyond the gated walls they work within.