

**Arts in Education at GUFS**  
PTA Workshop—1/24/11  
Notes

Introduction:

- Our vision for this workshop is that good ideas and greater motivation will be generated to support and enrich the excellent arts programs already in place.
- In the face of increasing budget constraints, how can we as a PTA help provide more, and more diverse, arts offerings in our school?
- How can we marshal the rich community resources Garrison holds?

Each panel member took 2-3 minutes at the beginning of the workshop to introduce themselves and share their vision for arts in education at GUFS.

1. **Bahiyah Gaines**—parent, professional dancer, with husband Jamel runs Creative Outlet, a Brooklyn-based dance company that also does art residencies in NYC schools. Bahiyah advocated more dance and more interdisciplinary arts efforts.
2. **Art Labriola**—parent, professional composer, teaches two electives at GUFS to 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders, Jazz Band and Music Theory. Art advocated using more technology with the arts, e.g., composition software programs. He also observed that a structured environment, e.g., a class or program with several sessions, is most effective.
3. **Karen Bresnan**—GUFS music teacher. Karen advocated more exposure to wider variety of arts—sometimes it just takes seeing something to experience a spark, to be willing to try new things.
4. **Mike Williams**—GUFS guidance counselor, professional actor, teaches acting classes and film at Jacob Burns Film Center in Pleasantville, NY. Mike advocated combining art and science, perhaps with film production. Students could write, produce, act, film, or edit, etc. depending on their interests.
5. **Goldee Greene**—former parent, actor, playwright, journalist, composer, lyricist, director, educator. Goldee advocated parents getting more involved in the classroom by partnering with teachers. We must foster lifelong learning, teambuilding, as well as introduce students to the variety of employment opportunities in the arts.

Workshop attendees included: Charles Matkin, Monica Mahoney, Gabrielle Sanchez, Rebecca DelMonte, Stefan Boubilil, Marilyn Walker, Erin Liu, Amanda Maguire, Gloria Colucci, Jessica VanDekker, Nancy Wareham-Gordon, Julie Heckert, Jamel Gaines, Emily Lansbury, Randi Davis

Discussion:

Many seeking extracurricular arts programs have to travel to Fishkill, Beacon, or Peekskill. Those moving into the community often don't know where to go. **Could we compile a list of local arts programs, classes, and teachers?**

Many GUFFS students pursue rigorous arts programs extracurricularly. We need to acknowledge, celebrate, and be inspired by their accomplishments. **Is the spring talent show enough?**

Many parents are not aware of the many arts initiatives already taking place at GUFFS, e.g., the plays Mr. Berger does with the middle schoolers. How can we better publicize, communicate, solicit help with, arts happenings at GUFFS? **Could we produce a newsletter similar to the “Goings on at Garrison” of years past but updated and more user-friendly?**

How can we encourage teachers to use more parents/community members in providing arts enrichment? **Could we compile a parent resource file that teachers could consult when needing help with arts initiatives?**

Money is always the issue. Quality programs require the professionalism and commitment of payment for services. There are a variety of levels to consider:

1. **Board of Education.** The Board of Ed has an Arts in Education Committee that meets monthly. This committee studies and evaluates arts initiatives that need Board funding and then makes recommendations to the Board.
2. **GCEF** (Garrison Children’s Education Fund. GCEF funds several arts electives for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders and each year funds arts assemblies and programs as approved and proposed by the school administration.
3. **PTA.** The PTA usually funds one or two arts assemblies a year. The PTA administers afterschool specials, sometimes in the arts, where instructors use our facilities and insurance and charge typically \$12/hr/child for 10-wk. sessions.
4. **Volunteers.** For over 20 years, Mrs. Copeland put on a K-8 musical production. Last year, Fran DiSarro did it. Fran cannot do the same this year but is willing, with help, to do an evening of dramatic readings. The last two years, Stacy Labriola has put on a student talent show. We need a new generation of volunteers.

**What arts enrichment do we need to offer, and how can we fund it?**