Rethinking Community Building: Leveraging Expertise Through Interdisciplinary Programming

Janice Walker, Aná Moran, Rica Bryan, Amy Sharp

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Community Access expands opportunities for people living with mental health concerns to recover from trauma and discrimination through affordable housing, training, advocacy and healing-focused services. We are built upon the simple truth that people are experts in their own lives.

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Community Access Values

Human Rights
We challenge and lead the mental health system towards greater rights-based policies and practices.

Peer Expertise
We are dedicated to a workforce where at least 51% of our employees identify as having a personal experience using mental health services.

Self Determination
We defend the right of all individuals to create lives of their own choosing.

Harm Reduction
We embrace policies and practices that promote dignity, wellbeing and access to health care.

Healing and Recovery
We seek out and promote culturally relevant, trauma-informed and research-based opportunities for individual and community wellness.

Steven S. Coachman

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Community Access Programs

- **Housing**
  - ➤ **Over 1,100 units**
  - ➤ **20 sites across 3 boroughs**
- **Advocacy**
- **Education/Peer Training**
- **Crisis Services**
- **Integrated Treatment and Recovery Services**
- **Self-direction**
- **Art Collective**
- **Health & Wellness**
  - ➤ **Urban Ag**
  - ➤ **Bicycling**
  - ➤ **Food Service**

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Agenda

- **Interdisciplinary Programming**
- **Activity –** *How do we define "community?"*
- **Strategies for Community Building**
- **Activity -** *Resource Mapping*
- **Strategies to Leverage Expertise**
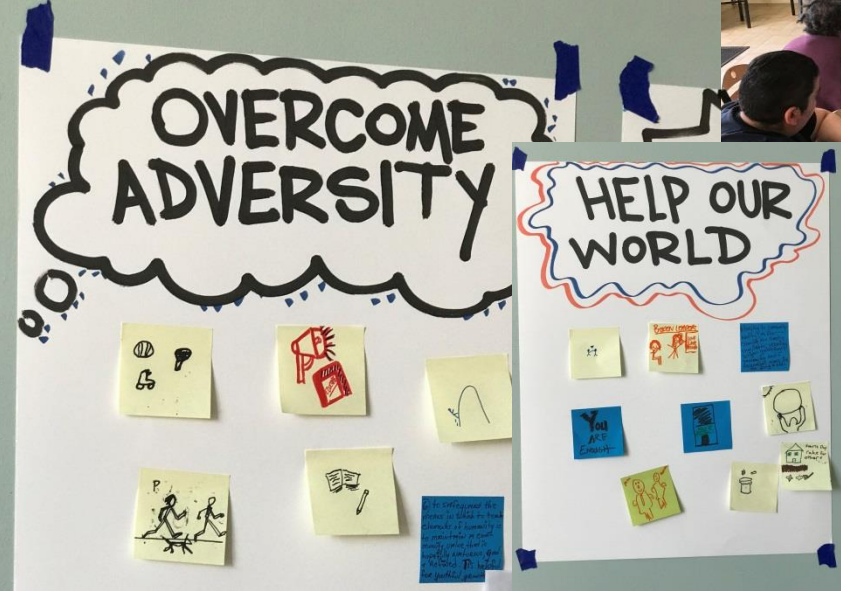- **Questions**

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Interdisciplinary Programming
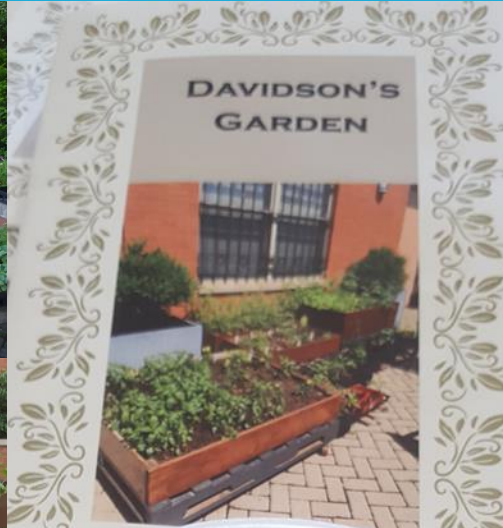
Interdisciplinary Programming

Interdisciplinary Programming

How do we define "community?"

- **Locus** – a sense of place
- **Sharing** - common interests and perspectives
- **Joint action** – cohesion and identity
- **Social ties** – foundation of community
- **Diversity** – social complexity

The more complex the goal, the more **dense and robust** the community needs to be. The more complex the goal the **higher the trust** within the community needs to be.

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Strategies for Community Building

Core

- **Personalize**
- **Identify interests/skills**
- **Present quality**
- **Facilitate vs. teach**
- **Build rapport**
- **Be flexible**
- **Follow-up**
- **Maintain consistency**
- **Offer vs. require**
- **Stay accountable**
- **Engage with food**
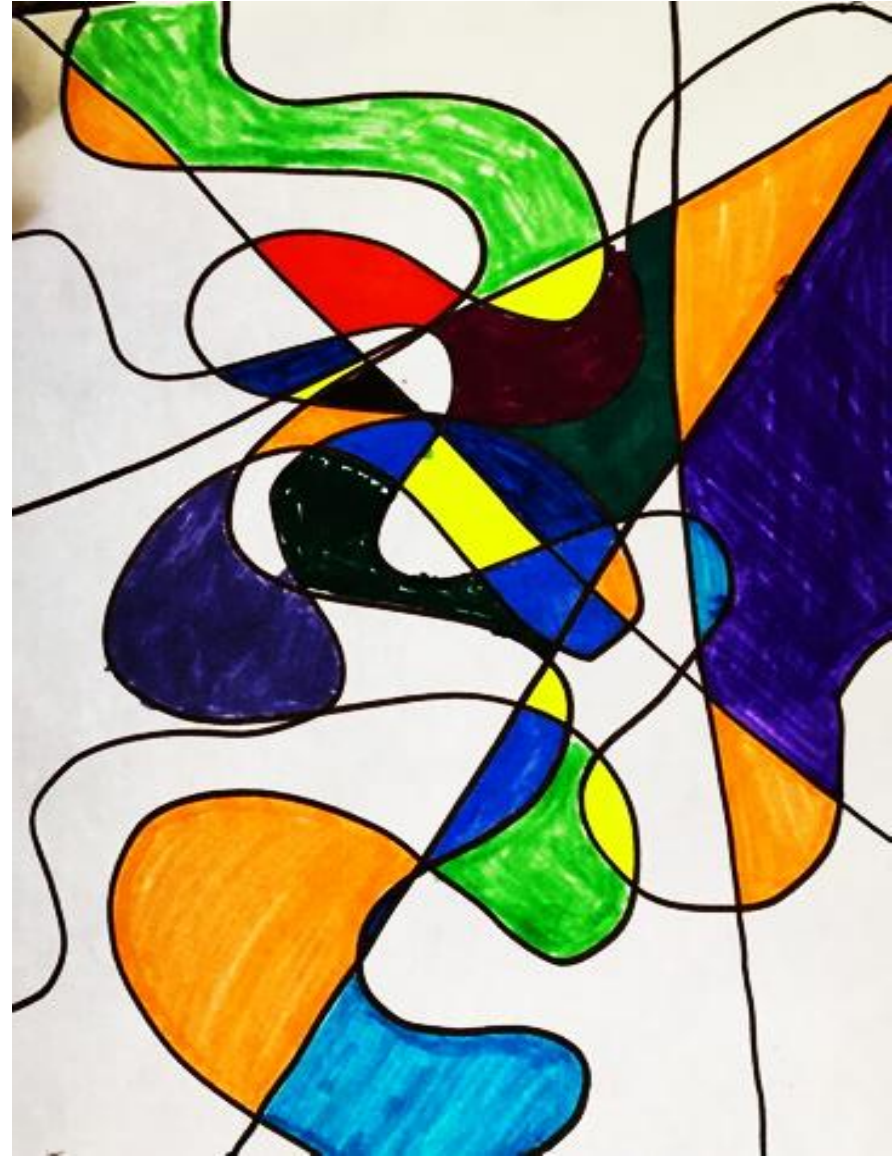
Strategies for Community Building

Peripheral

- **Hold to agency principles**
- **Identify needs & assets**
- **Build rapport with:**
  - ➢ **Local businesses**
  - ➢ **Community board**
  - ➢ **Elected officials**
- **Follow-up**
- **Accountability**

Asset Mapping (Reciprocal Relationships)
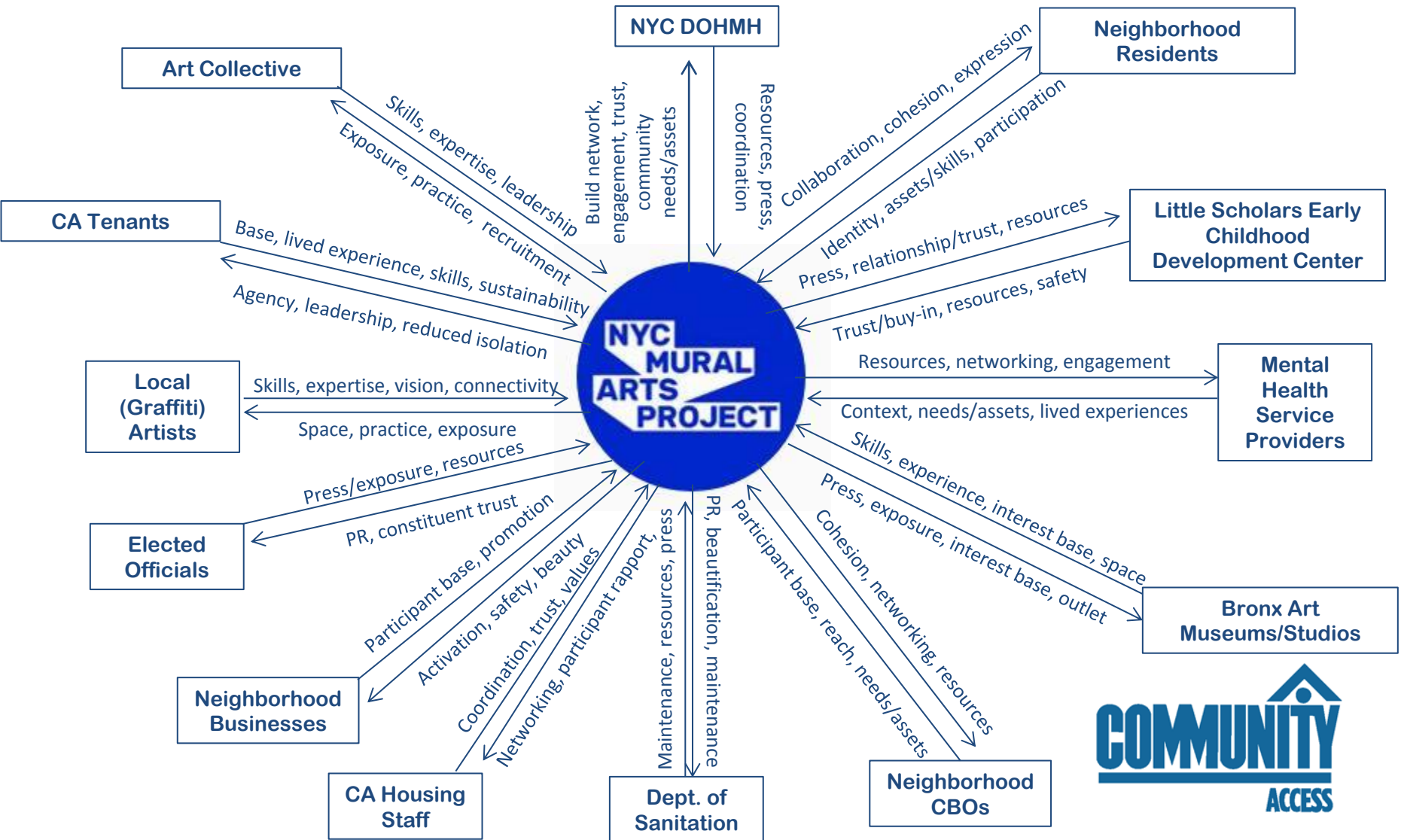

Central hub: **NYC MURAL ARTS PROJECT**

- **NYC DOHMH** — Build network, engagement, trust, community needs/assets ↔ Resources, press, coordination
- **Neighborhood Residents** — Collaboration, cohesion, expression ↔ Identity, assets/skills, participation
- **Art Collective** — Skills, expertise, leadership ↔ Exposure, practice, recruitment
- **Little Scholars Early Childhood Development Center** — Press, relationship/trust, resources ↔ Trust/buy-in, resources, safety
- **CA Tenants** — Base, lived experience, skills, sustainability ↔ Agency, leadership, reduced isolation
- **Mental Health Service Providers** — Resources, networking, engagement ↔ Context, needs/assets, lived experiences
- **Local (Graffiti) Artists** — Skills, expertise, vision, connectivity ↔ Space, practice, exposure
- **Bronx Art Museums/Studios** — Skills, experience, interest base, space ↔ Press, exposure, interest base, outlet
- **Elected Officials** — Press/exposure, resources ↔ PR, constituent trust
- **Neighborhood CBOs** — Cohesion, networking, resources ↔ Participant base, reach, needs/assets
- **Neighborhood Businesses** — Participant base, promotion ↔ Activation, safety, beauty
- **CA Housing Staff** — Coordination, trust, values ↔ Networking, participant rapport
- **Dept. of Sanitation** — Maintenance, resources, press ↔ PR, beautification, maintenance

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Strategies to Leverage Expertise

- **Affirm lived experience**
- **Honor the whole person**
- **Identify interests, expertise, skills**
- **Customize (person-centered, site-specific)**
- **Train the trainer (popular education)**
- **Create platform for leadership**
- **Peer-to-peer**
- **Staff flexibility**
- **Document and celebrate the work**

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Questions?

Contacts

Janice Walker, Program Director Davidson Avenue
jwalker@communityaccess.org
Ana Moran, Community Food Coordinator
amoran@communityaccess.org
Rica Bryan, Health and Wellness Coordinator
ebryan@communityaccess.org
Amy Sharp, Art Collective Director
asharp@communityaccess.org