

# **imagineARTS**

## Executive Summary

imagineARTS is a non-profit art education organization. Our mission is to make art accessible to underserved Baltimore City Public School students. We do this by directly involving them in public art initiatives with local artists and art educators through a free project-based summer arts program.

Our program provides inner-city children, rising into grades 6 through 9, with crucial early exposure to fine arts. This is something to which many city public school students have little access, as they are required to take few art credits (including both fine art and music) in order to graduate. By linking students with professional artists and providing opportunities to create public art in their own neighborhoods, imagineARTS does much more than merely make up for what these students may miss at school.

Baltimore is a thriving arts metropolis, and even though the vibrancy of the City's arts community is not always reflected in the public school curriculum, there are several summer camps and schools devoted to bringing art to children in the city. Sadly, many of these programs and organizations have restrictions in place that limit their ability to reach every inner-city youth. Many kids can't attend classes or camps because they are cost prohibitive, and programs with competitive admissions processes discourage many students from applying. Additionally, few of these programs offer students an opportunity to work closely with professionals on public art that is visible to the community.

imagineARTS' program is a series of four Summer Project Sessions that takes place over the course of eight weeks, running from late June through the middle of August. Project Sessions take place at both The Motor House studio and various rotating project sites throughout the city. ImagineARTS partners with schools to reach new students in different neighborhoods each summer, and project sites are selected based on their proximity to participating schools. Once enrolled in the program, each student participates in a project lasting from two to four weeks.

The imagineARTS team is a triumvirate structure of volunteers, rotating resident artists (Artist Mentors), and working art teachers and/or student teachers (Education Coordinators). Artists apply to the mentorship program by submitting proposals for collaborative public art works. Once projects are selected, they are further developed and executed with the help of imagineARTS organizers and Education Coordinators. Examples of projects can include interior/exterior murals, sculptures, and installation arts. To facilitate the need for Education Coordinators, imagineARTS partners with the Maryland Institute College of Art to recruit young art educators in need of practical teaching experience during the summer months.

Every day begins with skill-building workshops at the imagineARTS studio, followed by on-site project work. imagineARTS' program exposes inexperienced students to a professionalized fine arts environment, and then teaches them how to apply learned techniques in a collaborative setting.

imagineARTS' success lies not only in terms of the number of applying or returning participants: we've done our job when students leave the program with an intensified desire to engage in creative expression and share that process with others. Our hope is that imagineARTS students emerge with a deeper sense of pride and involvement with their neighborhoods and continue to use art as a tool for reinforcing a sense of community.