



Building Diversity in the Niagara Region

St. Catharines

Planning Team: Elizabeth Chitty

Co-Facilitators: Elizabeth Chitty

i. Participants

Elizabeth Chitty	St. Catharines' Arts Council
Jackie Labonte	
Angela Duntsch	
Wendy Sturgeon	Netoitutinakene Onkwehowe Native Art
Kyle Bishop	NAC
Bill Russ	Niagara Native Restorative Centre
Zainab Amadahy	CAO

ii. Workshop Outline

Weaving Tapestries St. Catharines Workshop

Building Diversity in the Niagara Region

St. Catharines Arts Council

November 17th 7pm-9pm

AGENDA

Opening Exercise

Story beginnings and the value of diverse interpretations

Introductions I

Who are we? What do we bring to the circle? What do we wish to take away?



Introductions II

Defining Terms

Workshop Discussion

- How relevant are you to your entire community?
- What are the diversity issues in your organization?
- What diversity and equity work has your organization been involved with?
- What yet needs to be done?
- What is stopping you from making change?

Next Steps

- What is your organization and community's commitment to changing your story?

iii. Highlights

This was the first of the Weaving Tapestries workshop.

We began this workshop with an embodied exercise that I later entitled the "Ritual/Story exercise. Participants moved from simple gestures: learning from me (as leader), mastering the gesture as a community and finding themselves in the midst of a ritual and finally arriving at a story.

In this instance the workshop participants were excited to experience this simple exercise as a way of grounding the experience of unity in diversity.



As a follow up we examined through presentation and discussion the history of the multiculturalism policy and how it impacts on and compares to diversity policies of today.

I ended with the Question: *How does the legacy of colonialism affect how we think about diversity?*

Excerpts and Notable Quotes:

“When the visitors came to Turtle Island the gifts were freely shared, they were claimed by the visitors, the stew is made a great stew by everything in it – [it is] a selfish child that takes home all the cars, [not] learning how to share.”

“One of the legacies is how these assumptions are embedded in the language, divisiveness fits things into containers, [has a] subtle influence on thinking systems. Even the framework, [if] you think about it in is muddled by colonialism.”

“The legacy of compartmentalization, we understand that the visitors have a unique gift to dissect and break things down, what is in the spaces between the genes is something Aboriginal people have always known about, each of those races has gifts and how we come to share those gifts, holocaust in the Americas, wonderful opportunity to learn to share, need to throw away the word multiculturalism”

“If we could follow our traditional world, the diversity is part of the practice; it’s the English language that confuses us; [a] two-tongued adversarial paradigm.”

“Values do inform our practices and behaviours, but that doesn’t mean that shared values would lead to the same thing. Values need to be shared but that doesn’t mean that the



cultural expression of those values would be the same. What I advocate is not a monoculture.”

“This land here is like a hospital, maybe part of the healing journey is what diversity is all about, **communicating with one another is how we will heal**, we haven’t understood one another. Perhaps the people have come here because they needed to come here for healing and they just don’t know it yet.”



i. Cultivating Partnerships & Dreaming Cultural Spaces

Muskoka/Midland/Parry Sound

Planning Team: Jack Contin, Erin Chapelle, Gayle Dempsey

Co-Facilitator: Jack Contin

i. Participants:

Erin Chapelle	Arts Council Muskoka
Anne Campbell	Georgian Bay Biosphere Reserve (GBBR)
Jen Morgan	Artist/Teacher
Chris Cardy	GBBR Biosphere
Allanah Douglas	Entwood Cottage Editions
Mary Lacroix	Muskoka Futures
Gayle Dempsey	Arts Council of Muskoka, Muskoka Lakes Music Festival, Muskoka Gallery
Teri Souter	Red Leaves Muskoka, Town of Huntsville
	Muskoka Heritage Place
	Muskoka Tourism
Gina Denne	Severn Bridge Art Pottery
Clarence Decaire	Bald Mohawk Head
Robin Tapley	Red Leaves
Pat Fairhead	Artist
Liz Hay	Community Member
Loreen	Community Member
Lyla Commandant	Wahta (Elder)
Doreen Schade	Wahta
Lynn McGuigan	Charles W Stockey Centre & Bobby Orr Hall of Fame



Kristie Smith
 Glenn Copeland
 Christopher Thorpe
 James Walton
 Frances Thomas
 Bob McTavish
 Cheryl Forth
 Francoise Nadon
 Ruth Allan
 Jan Lucy
 Anne clement
 Patricia Arney
 Krysia Bower
 Shirley Hay
 Marg Bartlett
 Bev Hanna
 Lu Robitaille
 Margo Gracey
 Barry Hartford

Parry Sound Station Gallery
 Musician/Storyteller
 Muskoka Futures
 Muskoka Futures
 Parry Sound Station Gallery
 Muskoka Lakes Music Festival
 FedNor
 FedNor
 Bala Guild
 Nipissing University
 Arts Council of Muskoka
 Township of Muskoka Lakes Council
 Arts Council of Muskoka (ACOM)
 Wahta First Nations
 Bala Guyild/Expressive Arts “Arts Does Matter”
 Huronia Foundation for the Arts
 Huronia Foundation for the Arts
 ACOM
 ACOM

ii. Outline

Community Arts Ontario & Arts Council of Muskoka & G’nadjiwon ki

Present

Cultivating Partnerships & Dreaming Cultural Spaces

Wednesday June 13th, 2007

Wahta



Lunch will be provided

Goals:

- Create space for healthy cultural exchanges within the region.
- Identify opportunities to develop or further meaningful connections.
- Reveal some of the barriers (personal, societal, historical, financial, environmental) to participation in the arts.
- Share resources and tools to assist the continued growth of artists and organizations who work to overcome the effects of colonialism.
- Draw out the elements that make up successful partnerships in the region.
- Transform the dream into realistic goals.

Questions to Consider as a community:

- What are the shared community values around dreaming inclusive spaces?
- How have you/your group transformed closed doors into open spaces? What do you need in order to continue?
- How can you share resources and tools to assist the continued growth of artists who work to overcome the effects of colonialism?
- How is your organization/community benefiting from transformational arts practices?
- What are your distinct communities? How can the notion of “indigeneity” inform all of your cultural spaces?
- What resources and models can you draw on in your own community to create and maintain healthy inclusive spaces?
- What specific tools can be developed to make the dream a reality?
- How can we position the region as an arts and culture destination?

Who Should Attend:

- Diverse Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Artists



- Cultural workers
- Youth representatives
- School Board Trustees/Administrators
- Educators
- Community members
- City Councillors
- Health Care Providers
- Social service administrators/employees
- Municipal Leaders & First Nations Educators and Administrators
- Funders & Potential Funders

Workshop Plan

Opening Address

Prayer and Call to Welcome (Aboriginal drum circle and ceremony)

Opening Address Aboriginal Elder: Cultivating and Dreaming

Common Understandings

Introductions: Who are we and what brings us into this common space?

Defining Shared Community Values

Defining Barriers to participation in the arts

Defining Community Needs

Facilitated by Diane and Jack

How Art Transforms Community Space (Participatory Exercise)***

How does community arts practice facilitate empowerment?



What are the examples in the community? (shared by participants—storytelling or demonstration)

Addressing spirituality and connection to a place—connection to the artists and the people that live in the community

Dreaming Cultural Space(s)

What is your dream?

Building Capacity

What are the models for passing on/enhancing skills?

How do we grow and use the resources that are at our fingertips?

How do we reach out and include those who need the skills?

Who does what? And how can we network?

From the Dream to Reality

Round Table Sharing of Best Practices

Inventory of skills in the room

Business Retention and Expansion

Cultural Mapping

Sharing of Best Practice

What do we have? What are the specific needs? Cultivating Specific Partnerships?

Conclusion: Look at How Art Transforms Community Space

***This session might be spread out throughout the workshop to give artists a voice beyond organizing (to be developed by Erin and Diane and anyone else who wants to feed in) and culminate in this conclusion



Closing Ceremony: Aboriginal Elder

iii. Highlights

We opened this workshop with a song composed and sung by Glenn Copeland:

Dear Friends
We Gather
To Make Our Purpose Clear
Let Us Embrace

This Dreaming Space *(could be a sound bite if you can use it)*
(maybe a picture of Glenn with the drum here)

We followed it with the All Nations Song sung by Shirley Hay.

In the first part of the workshop we heard from representatives from organisations across the region. It was the only workshop with representatives from four different communities. The main focus of this workshop was to network, share resources and learn from each other about the shared values and needs in each community. A new arts council was in the process of being founded so members of that group took the opportunity to learn from some of the more established arts councils.

In the *Dreaming Cultural Spaces* breakout group a question was asked that spring-boarded our discussion. Speaking of Nipissing, a university that has an arts training program...

How can we appeal to more people?



“Educational spaces—open up the possibilities for non-traditional spaces of learning—
i.e. make the community the classroom”

Barriers to participation: financial, traditional practice, time/availability, location, access,
rigidity/formality, titles/labels, interest-level

Fear: definitions of “excellence” external values placed on the work
Lack of partnerships, cultural, follow up, (wo) man-power

Possible Solutions: partnerships; redefining of values, labels etc... INCLUSION!!
Identifying what is “honourable” as opposed to professional; baby steps; understanding
the fear and erasing it; encouragement (especially in youth)

Art mentors buddy system to encourage youth

Patience; learning from the past—immediate, traditional, historical

The Networks and Partnerships breakout group facilitated by Jack Contin took a more
practical approach, coming up with a list of needs and next steps.

1. More meetings promoting your logo-branding
2. marketing (workshop)
3. supplies
4. funding—map—databases
5. skills inventory
6. create venues
7. cross promotion
8. bridging
9. mentorship programs

Future meetings of this group have been planned for Jan/Feb.