

PORCH LIGHT: PLACING ART

AT THE HEART OF
COMMUNITY WELLNESS



City of Philadelphia
MuralArtsProgram

CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
DBHIDS
DEPARTMENT of BEHAVIORAL HEALTH
and INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY SERVICES

Program Overview

The Porch Light Program situates art and human connection at the heart of recovery, resilience, and healing throughout Philadelphia. Through partnerships with behavioral health agencies and social service agencies, The Porch Light Program works closely with communities to uplift public art as an expression of community resilience and a vehicle of personal and community healing.



Photo by Mustafah Abdulaziz

What are our goals?

In collaboration with DBHIDS, The Porch Light Program strives to:

Improve Personal/Individual Health

- Increase feelings of empowerment, self-efficacy, and hope for the future
- Increase feelings of social support
- Reduce personal and social stigma
- Decrease social isolation
- Increase participation in cultural and artistic activities
- Develop skills supporting resilience and adaptation
- Increase feelings of neighborhood safety and connectedness
- Decrease feelings of demoralization

Improve Community Health

- Increase awareness around mental health and overall wellness
- Increase attention to the determinants of health
- Increase awareness of the contribution of the arts to community life
- Increase awareness of mental health as an important part of wellness
- Increase access to and engagement in behavioral health services
- Improve the physical environment
- Improve social conditions
- Increase community cohesion
- Reduce violence and crime.
- Increase commercial & business activity

What is our process?

Engage

Each project begins with an initial engagement of individuals, communities, and partner organizations. Engagement can take many forms including drawing, collaging, painting, writing, poetry, spoken word, even weaving. All activities serve the purpose of creating a space for dialogue, expression, and reflection.

Collaborate

At its core, each project is rooted in a rich process of collaboration. Participants, community members, partners, and civic and project leaders collaborate and share their stories, ideas, desires, fears, perspectives, culture, identity, history, and voice in an effort to create a common vision.

Generate

Participatory public art does more than beautify a public space. Participatory public art has the power to generate social change. Art rooted in meaningful engagement and collaboration has the power to generate hope, awareness, connection, understanding, resilience, strength, positivity, and much more.

Logic Model for the Porch Light Program

Problem:

Our passive treatment system does not adequately focus on prevention and health promotion nor does it effectively incorporate psychological wellness into overall health. Additionally, many persons in recovery from mental illness, addiction and/or traumas experience personal and social stigma; lack positive opportunities for community integration; and inhabit low resource neighborhoods characterized by economic, physical, and social disadvantage.

Resources:

- City of Philadelphia Mural Arts Program & Mural Arts Advocates
- City of Philadelphia Department of Behavioral Health & Intellectual disAbility Services (DBH/IDS), & other City Departments
- Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
- Thomas Scattergood Foundation
- Independence Foundation
- Philadelphia Foundation
- William Penn Foundation
- The Patricia Kind Family Foundation
- Behavioral health murals partner provider agencies
- Drexel University
- Yale University School of Medicine
- Persons in recovery from mental illness or addiction
- Family & community members
- Local service providers & volunteers
- Media relations & support

Objective:

- Shift the treatment paradigm to focus on health promotion and psychological wellness for everyone. Additionally, create opportunities for persons in recovery from mental illness, addiction, and/or trauma to collaborate with artists and other community members in the creation of public art in order to reduce personal and social stigma; develop skills to enhance adaptation; promote community integration; and improve the physical and social health of the community.

Activities*

INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

- Obtain input from diverse community stakeholders about the design and concept for the mural and related public art
- Create individual and group opportunities for expression of the mural concept and its reflection of the community
- Hands-on experience with painting and other media
- Hands-on experience with use of personal and visual language to express a concept for the mural
- Production of public art such as murals, sculpture, spoken word, and writing
- Conduct mural tours and visits to other sites to provide inspiration, exposure, and models for mural making
- Landscaping and greening in the area surrounding the mural

COMMUNITY LEVEL

- Implement Community Engagement Events:
- Opportunities to attend health resource fairs and health awareness activities
 - Elicit feedback about the mural concept design and implementation
 - Engage community members in discussion of mural theme and issues related to health and wellness
 - Offer opportunities to participate in the creation of murals
 - Celebrate the work being done through a dedication ceremony that is used to build community
- Develop a Community Advisory Board:
- Solicit involvement of neighborhood and citywide community advisory board members to support and sustain the projects
- Conduct a Public Education Campaign:
- Use various media, including photos, film making, and a website blog, to document and disseminate program activities and impact

Outputs*

INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

- Number of community stakeholders involved
- Length of involvement (days) in program
- Number of workshops attended
- Type of activities involved in (painting and other media, personal and visual language)
- Number of public art completed (murals, sculpture, spoken word, and writing)
- Number of guest artists involved
- Number of visits by guest artists
- Number of mural tours and visits to other sites
- Square feet of space around mural that are landscaped or greened

COMMUNITY LEVEL

- Local Community Engaged
 - Number of Community Engagement Events
 - Attendance of agency staff and community members at community engagement events
 - Number of people providing feedback for mural concept design and implementation
 - Number of opportunities to participate in the creation of murals
 - Attendance of diverse stakeholders at dedication ceremony
- Community Advisory Board Developed
 - Number of meetings
 - Attendance of members at community advisory board
- Public Education Campaign Completed
 - Social marketing (e.g., photo documentation, film making, website blog)
 - Media presence in traditional and new media

Outcomes

Improved Personal/Individual Health

- Increased feelings of empowerment, self-efficacy, and hope for the future
- Increased feelings of social support
- Reduced personal and social stigma
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- Increased participation in cultural and artistic activities
- Development of skills supporting resilience and adaptation
- Increased feelings of neighborhood safety and connectedness
- Decreased feelings of demoralization

Improved Community Health

- Increased awareness around mental health and overall wellness
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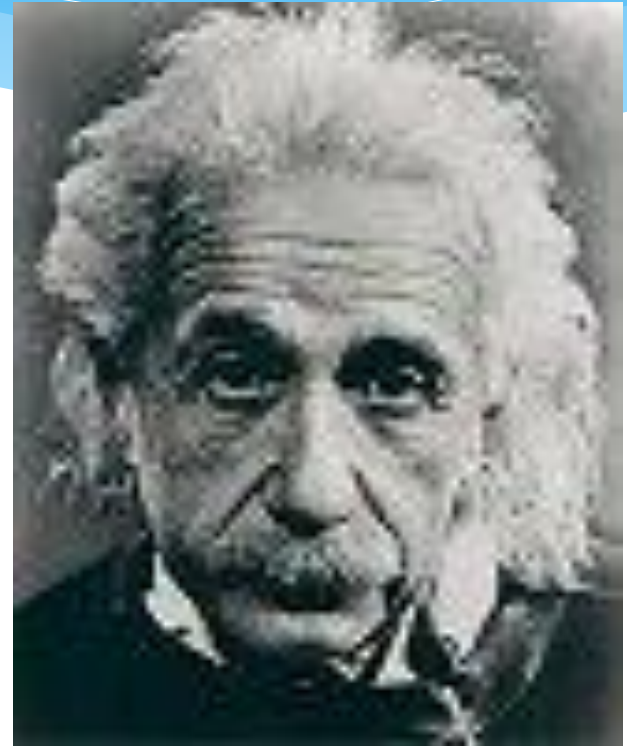
When Art and Science collide!

The Philadelphia Community Health Project

(a.k.a. Porch Light Initiative Evaluation)

"Not everything that can
be counted counts, and
not everything that
counts can be
counted."

--Albert Einstein



Evaluation Description

The Porch Light Initiative is more than a ground-breaking alternative therapeutic model aimed at improving individual and community health through human connection and art - it is a pioneering research study.

The Yale School of Medicine is currently conducting a community-based participatory research study on the Porch Light Initiative to assess the impact the program has on individual and community-level outcome measures.

The rigorous evaluation design is new to the field of public art and includes the following methods: the careful tracking of program activities, the use of comparison sites, community surveys, systematic observations of mural sites, pre/post/and follow-up interviews, and case studies.

Early Qualitative Findings

“Ben” (from S.T.O.P.)

“Mural arts opens the mind up to what staying clean is about, you know the beauty of life and how you can reach out to others. Staying clean means you can conquer anything. When you’re clean you can reach your goals and achieve your destiny.”

“In mural arts we have everyone coming together to help each other. Other people help me and I try to help others here. And to send a message that we can get everything together and make this a batter city. At least we can try. We might not be able to, it is hard to do. I used to give up on Philly, but we can try to make it a better place.”

“Vicki” (from Project H.O.M.E.)

“The first time I went was because they had food. I didn’t want to cook, so I went to check it out and eat. When I was done eating I just left. Someone, maybe Nina (the spoken word artist), tell me, you don’t have to eat and run, but I did. The second time I was going to do the same, just eat. But then she started in on that poem and I just got stuck in my seat by the poetry and all. Real inspirational. And I been going since.”

“The [the artists] inspire me. They can always give me hope, get me involved in something, just anything they got going. They keep me busy.”

“I thought, oh my god, this is me putting up a mural. Never would have thought that about me before. And here I am.”

Study Results timeline

- Summer 2013 – Preliminary individual interview, community surveys, and community observation results will be available
- Summer 2014 – Final results will be made public