

Year of Chicago Theater Inclusion Committee Overview

Inclusion Committee Goals

- Create a supportive and creative culture for dialogue around equity and inclusion in Chicago theatre.
- Increase geographic equity in theatre programming throughout the City.
- Provide direct and specific resources to meet the needs of the theatres, companies and artists of color, LGBTQ, women, and people with disabilities.
- Engage diverse audiences including youth.

Programming

- a. Cultural Asset Survey that documents the spaces, places and people that support and sustain theatre on the south and west sides. The process and map itself will serve as convener, resource guide, and story-teller.
- b. Create professional development program specifically for minority playwrights. At the conclusion host readings at the Cultural Center and invite theatre leaders as well as the general public.
- c. Working in partnership with the Mayor's Office of Economic Development, support new *Neighborhood Stages*, building the sustainability of theatre spaces on the south and west sides. This includes partnerships with Chicago Park District and Chicago Public schools to identify spaces that can be used.
- d. Support Theatre Programs in all 77 community areas as part of the Night out in the Parks.
- e. Grant Programs-provide direct support to fund theatre and audience engagement programs in underserved areas and communities.
- f. Youth focused mentorship programs to connect and expose youth to career opportunities (including itech and production, set design, ect.) in theatre.
- g. Access programs to support youth attendance at theatre programs/productions this year.

Inclusion Agenda-Meeting notes

December 18, 2018

Attendance

Co-Chairs Erin Harkey and Tyrone Phillips

DCASE

Mariam Thiam

Kerry Sheehan

John Rich

Committee Members in Attendance

Jamal Howard Emerald City Theatre

Dominique Boyd-University of Chicago, Logan Center for the Arts

Emily Hooper Lansana-University of Chicago, Logan Center for the Arts

Kemati Porter-ETA Creative Arts

Marcus Robinson-Collaboration Theater

Jimalita Tillman-Harold Washington Cultural Center

Boaz McGee-Harold Washington Cultural Center

Felicia Holman-Links Hall

Evan Hatfield-Steppenwolf/CCAC

Nikki Patin-University of Chicago Arts and Public Life

Mary Kate Barley Jenkins-Adventure State Chicago

Hillary Pearson-Chicago Cultural Accessibility Consortium

Ellen Willett-Production Manager

Co-Chairs/DCASE Update

Tyrone provided an update on the Playwriting Series currently in progress for development in partnership with DCASE Professional Development department. The cohort will meet in the fall and spring and timing either weekday or weekend and curriculum is still being finalized. One cohort will meet at the Chicago Cultural Center and the other will meet at the University of Chicago Arts and Public Life as part of the Definition Theater residency.

General ask of the committee to identify Professional Development and theater programs that may already be in existence. Highlight of the City of Chicago's Neighborhood Opportunity Fund a program that can support small space grants. DCASE is in the early stages of developing a cultural asset map of theater programs on the south and west side of the city and exploring ways to tell their stories. Developing a comprehensive resource guide including a listing of technicians, actors, lighting and sound. Update provided on the February 4th Year of Chicago Theater Celebration Kick-Off. A mailing list will be shared to shared with the group to make sure as many people are captured as possible and notified of the event and added to the master list.

Direct ask to the committee is identifying partners interested in developing a project or program as it relates to issues of access and inequity throughout the year. A goal of the project or program is not to be a program that adds additional work but an interactive elevated conversation.

Harold Washington Cultural Center: Exploration of the idea to develop theater for 13-18 and 18-24 year olds to express trauma and celebrate joy.

Arts and Public Life extended the opportunity to host a conversation around the gap of theater and tech careers for people color. Emphasized the value of exploring young people to be exposed to viable career paths.

Chicago Cultural Sensibility Consortium Lead conversation to work with DCASE to do program specifically on DEI in April 2019. Prioritizing the understanding of how accessibility plays a role with any program happening and should be included. Evan Hatfield from Steppenwolf CCSC echoed the importance of a tier for a variety of different audiences defining the population on basic services.

Discussion on an effort will be made to highlight what theater programming is happening in the city. Opening options for people to host and bring a diverse collective of people to a round table to create a platform to activate the resource with information of what is available to the external committee. Adventure Stage is open to hosting space and engaging all kinds of audience, conversation is to hear about what is missing in representation in theater.

Discussion on leveraging Chicago Theater Week to highlight local and international performances and explore marketing in non-traditional ways:

- Explore options to connect theater programming for social service providers.
- Potential partnership with For Colored Girls play at Court Theater in partnership with the Logan Center for the Arts Rights of Passage Program.
- Discussion of non traditional ideas to promote theater including connection with the Auto Show.
- Chicago Ideas Week is a great model to see for partnerships and how we engage people in a variety of topics relatable to theater. Other events for connection are the TedEx conference and James Beard Restaurant week.

Discussion on the cultural research and framework with asset mapping that will be developed in 2019 to identify resources in a format of storytelling for the sector. Felicia Holman spoke of Honey Pot Performance Collective's process with cultural asset mapping with their Chicago Black Social and Cultural Map project.

The development of a Theater Crawl to develop audience from one venue to another with each theater presenting short works on stage. DCASE could potentially sponsor transportation for this event.

Home Theater Festival identified as a model of programming for engagement. Potential connections with the Puppet Film Festival, Blair Thomas, and connection with Art Leaders of Color. Jamila Woods partnership with Red Bull highlighted as a model of partnership of 4D presentation with live streaming.

Importance of documentation is highlighted as a goal among the committee to build trust with artists in the community. Duane Powell series spoken of as a model of archival presentation.

Area of action identified to develop broader career options in arts outside of performance including production, stage management. Exploring methods of developing youth of color to transition to these careers. Committee discussed stand out marketing and tech artists of color in the field. Developing a resource of these individuals that can be share with the committee.

Committee explored resources currently available at their venues that are an available resource including:

Adventure Stage School Matinee

Emerald City Theater School Matinee Program which includes a free book with the performance.

Collaboraction has a theater series made by youth for youth and currently accepting submissions through February 1st.

Logan Center Critics Program as potential opportunity to connect with for amplification.

DCASE is working with the Marketing team to explore brand asset mapping with posters, banners, digital boards on buses and would like the committee to identify areas in the city for displays.

The next committee meeting date will be determined.