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Inside Out: History of AS220 in collaboration with the Rhode Island Training School

In 1998 Rhode Island Training School (RITS) Principal, Dr. Arlene Chorney, went in search of Demian Yattaw and other qualified arts professionals to provide programming to RITS residents. Earlier that year the Training School found its music program under attack and treated as expendable. Demian was hired to teach after school poetry and film workshops to residents of the RITS. His enthusiasm led to the launch of a movement to thoroughly integrate the arts into the curricula of the RITS.

Most importantly Demian saw the value the arts could have in a youth's development and transition out of incarceration and into the community. He rallied support among the administration and staff of the RITS to publish the collection of poems and also establish partnerships with various agencies. At this time James Dealy of the Department, Children, Youth, and Families introduced Demian to AS220 Artistic Director Umberto Crenca. As a result, AS220 aligned itself with the arts movement and helped orchestrate the event that forever changed the climate at the Rhode Island Training School. On November 12, 1998 the RITS hosted *Impact* night. The Steering Committee invited over 100 members of the community into the facility to experience the artistic development of its residents. The event was crowned with overwhelming support that eventually led to the creation of two poetry anthologies. Superintendent Warren Hurlbut, with the help of an interactive review board and process, courageously allowed the printing of over 300 poems and allowed for the voices of Rhode Island's incarcerated youth to be heard.

AS220 was 15 years old when it began its relationship with the RITS. In the past AS220 had been sought out by DCYF as a community partner, but *Impact* night helped to solidify its alliance with the RITS. It was these events that established AS220's continuous and ever-evolving presence in the RITS. This includes a grant opportunity offered by the Rhode Island State Council of the Arts (RISCA), the support of Vincent Marzullo with the Corporation for National and Community Service, and the formation of AS220 Broad Street Studio.

There are many people who have contributed in various important ways to the evolution of AS220's programming. This installation documents their contribution and the numerous artistic efforts by the RITS residents. Explore the multi-media experience and living history of this great collaboration. There is much to be learned, read, seen, and heard.