

7-14-2000

Crime Prevention: The power of art

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Recommended Citation

Rainone, Sarah, "Crime Prevention: The power of art" (2000). *Broad Street Studio*. Book 9.
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2000



THE PROVIDENCE PROJECT

JULY 14-20, 2000 • RHODE ISLAND'S LARGEST WEEKLY • FOUR SECTIONS



PHOTOS BY RICHARD McCAFFREY

ART LOVERS: *Geoff Griffin, Jensen, and Kaines.*

CRIME PREVENTION

The power of art

A young rapper might have skills, but be unaware of the history of hip-hop music. A young graffiti artist could get respect for his or her work while the concepts of lighting, shading and perspective remain a mystery. A young photographer might offer a unique perspective, but be unsure how to market his or her work. And without good teachers, the next KRS-One, Picasso, or Ansel Adams might fall prey to temptations of the street.

In a society that favors punishment over prevention, some youths who have been in trouble with the law have little hope for a career as a poet, painter, actor or photographer. But the state Training School, Rhode Island's juvenile prison, has many transitional efforts, including an art program that has helped teens make good choices and even landed some at the Rhode Island School of Design, says transitional coordinator Stephen Morrison.

As part of such efforts, the Training School and AS220, the nonprofit alternative arts space in Providence, are establishing a Broad Street Community Studio to help youths develop their skills in visual and performing arts. The Training School

will provide classroom space and salaries, and AS220 is looking for artists willing to spend three afternoons a week working with students. The studio program will be open to students who have taken an introductory art class at the Training School, according to studio director and program coordinator Joelle Jensen.

Jensen researched transitional efforts around the country before developing a three-month program in which students will explore different mediums of art and ways to market their creations. At the end of the program, students will present their portfolios. AS220 hopes to offer mentoring, internships and job placement services for youths who successfully complete the program. And Tides Family Services, a nonprofit social agency, will help to monitor the students.

The pairing of AS220 and the Training School was something of a natural since poets Demian Yettaw and Kareem Kaines and Bert Crenca, AS220's artistic director, have taught poetry and drawing at the school. "When kids come out of the training school, they either come back to the community with the same limited choices and limited opportunities, or people intervene," Crenca says. "We will use art as a vehicle to intervene."

— Sarah Rainone

POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY

An education away from the books

...men and Infants Hospital
...ikes at St. Vincent's Hospi-
...er, Massachusetts, Nyack
...ack, New York, and Stan-
...center in Palo Alto, Califor-
...officials didn't return calls
...ent, but they appear to be
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