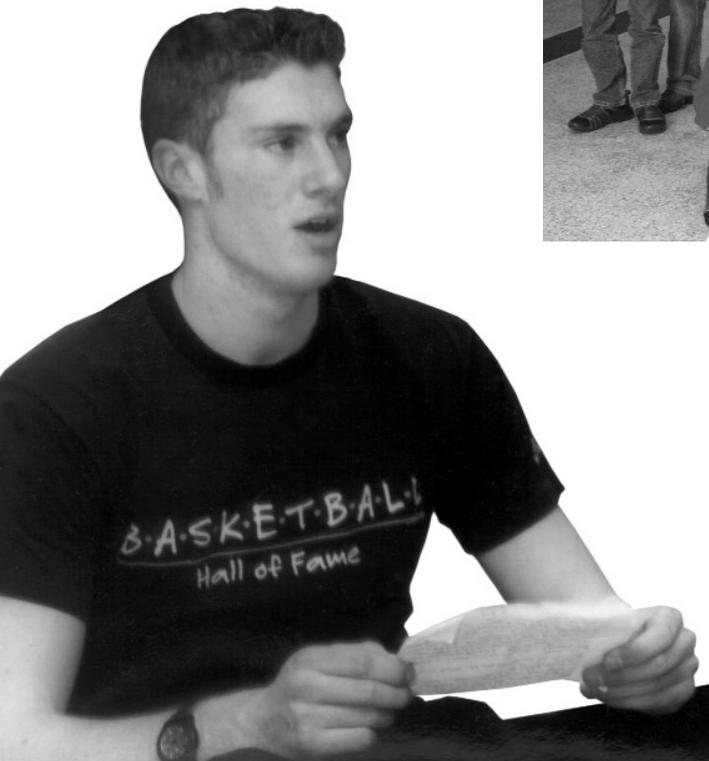


The Program

At the invitation of a high school teacher and school administrator, an experienced theater or dance educator joins the class. For two weeks the artist-in-residence works with the students during class time to create a short drama or movement performance. The performance can be based on either the students' own social issues or on a topic in their curriculum. It is the collaborative, creative process that achieves the result. At the end, the students from the participating classes gather to perform for each other to reflect together on the impact of the experience.



Not Just For...

Everyone in the class participates... not just the joiners, not just the "artsy." In fact, this program is deliberately targeted at non-arts, academic classes to give every student an opportunity to work creatively. Every student has a voice in decisions, in the creative process and in the performance.



"This program lets everyone, students and teachers alike, see individuals struggle with what to do next. We watched each other 'think on our feet.'"

Teacher

Which Schools and Classes Have Done It?

Since the project's debut in 2000, all nineteen high schools in Maine's Penobscot and Piscataquis Counties, seven high schools in Aroostook County and two schools in Franklin County have participated. The program has gone into English classes, social studies classes, even foreign language, math and science classes.

The Impact

Results of a pre- and post-project survey, designed and collated with the help of the University of Maine School of Education and Human Development, show that the project has a significant positive impact on classroom climate. Students' respect for each other and their estimation of their own and others' contribution to the class improve markedly. The project has a same positive impact on student attitudes toward theater and dance.

"I respect kids I didn't respect before. We are a different class now."



An Opportunity for the Whole Community

Student performances are open to the public. Additional performances can also be scheduled in the evening, giving everyone in the community the opportunity to see the students' work and to discuss the issues which the performances raise. This connection with the community-at-large and the positive feedback to the students from community members is integral to the program.

How Can I Find Out More?

For more information about
Building Community Through the Arts
contact: Susan Potters,
Executive Director

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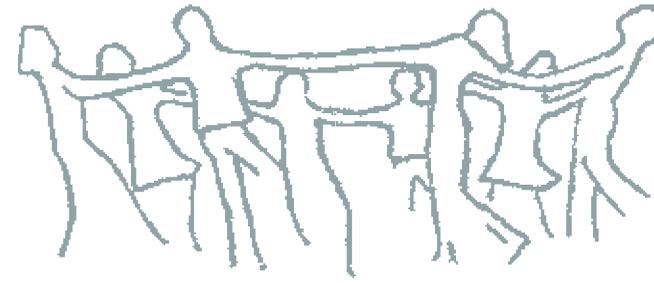
Building Community

through the
Arts

Connecting students to each other
and their communities



**MAINE ALLIANCE
FOR ARTS EDUCATION**



tragedy at Columbine High School. Negative social climate involves all students, the popular and successful as well as those on the academic and social margins.

Negative social climate in our schools — the collective term for behaviors such as peer rejection, ostracism, verbal abuse, bullying — is a problem which educators have been working to address since the

**“Our class opened up, and no one was scared
to do something because the whole class
was doing it.”**

The Strategy

Guided group creation has been effective in building group awareness and mutual trust among at-risk and inner-city youth. Building Community Through the Arts brings the same creative experience to a cross-section of students in Maine high school classrooms.

