

**Re:active Magazine**

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**Project Description**

**Mission statement**

Re:active is a nonprofit arts education program which uses communicative arts training and the publication of expressive magazines as the vehicles for introducing at-risk youth in Los Angeles to the power of the creative process for both personal transformation and social change.

Based in Echo Park, Re:active's mission is to give voice to L.A. youth aged 15-21 through a collaborative creative process with professional artists, writers, and designers. The artistic voice is developed and strengthened by treating it with the respect that something strong, beautiful, and worthwhile deserves, while creating a compelling alternative to the pitfalls of apathy, addiction and violence that plague our communities.

Many segments of the population are under-served and under-represented by the media; these include young people, people of color, and low-income communities. Re:active not only develops the voice of the individual participants but helps expand the voice of under-represented groups, as well. Young people who engage in the creative process are less likely to engage in violent, criminal, or other anti-social behavior.

They are more likely to graduate from high school, continue in higher education, and maintain a job.

Productive individuals strengthen their communities and often become civic leaders.

Re:active operates under the belief that creative development is linked to academic and personal achievement, and that personal achievement is linked to community building. What benefits one person in a community, benefits the whole.

## Project outcome objectives

- Develop and expand participants' creative and civic voices thereby reducing feelings of powerlessness by fostering their ability to see themselves as effective agents of social change.
- Provide highly marketable job-skills training and career direction for the expressive communication of 15-25 youths per year.
- To increase the amount of places young people feel safe using their creative voices in the community in the unsupervised hours after school.
- Expand the students' sense of their own potential through mentorship, career advisement and scholarship assistance.

## Strategies and methods to implement objectives

- **Communicative arts & writing workshops (at the center)**

Re:active will give students the tools to communicate their interests and points of view using design and the creative process as a catalyst. This will develop critical thinking skills and problem solving methods that contribute to technological competence, enhancing the ability to make constructive choices, fostering an appreciation for cultural and ethnic diversity, and helping develop literacy, as well as convergent and divergent thinking skills.

The Re:active workshops cycle every six months culminating in the publication of a wholly student-produced 'zine. Each six-month series is split into three seven-week sessions.

The first class session deals primarily with community, conflict resolution and communication theory. Having established the parameters within which we will operate, the theme we are working with and the ways that we will communicate with each other. The second section, deals more closely with the art-making, writing, editing and communication selection. The third section will be a hands-on production environment with the students given specific tasks that they can perform and learn from, computer tutorials and meetings with the designer, editor, content providers and other contributors.

Students that complete the first six-month series will then be eligible to assist in the development and production of the annual professional magazine where they will continue to develop the concepts introduced in producing the student 'zine and be introduced to new skills and responsibilities as they become ready for them.

- **Publications**

Because we believe that the quality of student work is greatly enhanced when they are allowed to share it with an authentic audience, we are committed to publishing student works. We use professional editors and designers in our publishing efforts to allow the student 's best work to shine through.

The publishing process will provide students an unparalleled opportunity to participate in a collaborative process, helping them to understand invaluable concepts such as team building, leadership, respect for themselves and others, and directed cooperation toward a concrete goal while providing a strong foundation for their academic, professional, and personal lives. The final publication will also provide a framework for apprenticeship and mentoring and expose the students to the day-to-day workings of a job in the commercial, expressive arts. Whether their contribution to the publication is in the form of creative submissions, typing, writing, editing, setting up circulation, clerical work, answering the phones or maintaining the website, the practical skills gained will prepare them as they transition into the next phase of their young adult lives. They will be better prepared to meet the challenges of adult life creatively.

Monthly local 'zine - In a smaller monthly 'zine, we self-publish student works in house using a tape binding machine. We let students know that we are interested in what they think by respecting and encouraging their work and by guiding them through the rewarding process of publication, we make it abundantly clear that their ideas are valued. We sell these publications at the center (and local establishments) to help offset a portion of the costs of production and of our programs in general.

Re:Magazine (the larger effort) - the semi-annual magazine is a professional publication that includes student work as well as professional writing, photography and design. It serves as the integration point for the two voices (student and professional) and a way to see their efforts reach a much larger audience. This

will also provide students a way of understanding and helping in the distribution and marketing process.

Re: magazine also establishes the direction of editorial content for the art and writing programs.

A fundamental component of re:active is the re-working process that shapes student material for presentation to a larger audience. Students share their work in a supportive and constructive environment through rough-drafts and sketches all the way through production. They will receive feedback from peers and professional staff and volunteers who will ultimately refine the communication and design for an outside audience. The publishing component gives direction to the discussion and provides an opportunity for students to receive feedback on their work. The students' confidence in self-expression and ability to solve and present visual and language problems will increase with each presentation. The publication is the final piece of the puzzle by which we create confident readers, writers, speakers and artists in our community.

- **WorkSpace/ Re:Active Computer Lab**

The Re:active office/workspace serves as a safe meeting place for workshops and one from which staff can perform administrative duties and devise new strategic initiatives. The safety we speak of also has an internal, psychological component as we spend much of our time creating trust in each other in the workshops. The space has the added benefit of attracting community interest and support and serving as a way to bring in new volunteers and students. The re:active computer lab has been created to allow workshop participants and alumni to use the lab to complete homework (high school and college), research further educational opportunities, pursue employment, receive basic computer/internet training as well as develop and manage the re:active website. The website, [www.re-active.info](http://www.re-active.info) is designed to exhibit student work and create interest in our community.

- **Scholarship Assistance/Job Placement/Career Counseling**

We are committed to not only placing our youths in jobs with local creative enterprises, and helping them to develop portfolios that will allow them access to higher education but also to counseling and encouraging them as they learn the self-discipline and patience necessary to excel.

Re:active is currently administering a generous grant from the President's Fund at the Art Center College of Design to allow two of our first students to enroll in the Saturday High Program at Art Center to encourage their respective dreams of being an animator and an illustrator. They will be enrolled concurrently with our program, which demonstrates the advantage of a partnership opportunity that enhances our capacity building for the students as well as adding to the other institutions reputation in the community.

### Proposed Time Line

#### First Six-month Workshop:

##### Session One:

June 17  
 June 24  
 July 1  
 Holiday break  
 July 8  
 July 15  
 July 22

##### Session Two:

August 5  
 August 12  
 August 19  
 August 26  
 September 2  
 September 9  
 September 16

##### Session Three:

September 30  
 October 7  
 October 14  
 October 21  
 October 28  
 November 4  
 November 18

First 'zine published the first week of December

#### Second Six-month Workshop:

##### Session One:

January 6  
 January 13  
 January 20  
 January 27  
 February 3  
 February 10  
 February 17

##### Session Two:

March 3  
 March 10  
 March 17  
 March 24  
 March 31  
 April 7  
 April 14

##### Session Three:

April 28  
 May 5  
 May 12  
 May 19  
 May 26  
 June 2  
 June 9

Second 'zine published the second week of June  
 First professional magazine delivered to printer at the same time.

\* these dates are tentative

\*\* the professional magazine workshop sessions are still to be determined

## 2. Work done to research, design and deliver the services of the project.

During the past year, we have established contact with many local organizations and defined our project objectives. In addition, I have volunteered on a regular basis with DreamYard/L.A. for nearly a year. I co-facilitate a weekly poetry class in Camp Miller Probation Camp, attend weekly Seeking Peace workshops, serve as an informal mentor for participants, and am developing a visual curriculum for the program. My work with Dreamyard/L.A. been a catalyst to the development of the Re:active program.

In addition to our close relationship with Dreamyard/L.A, we have established and maintain contact with 826 Valencia, an established communicative & literary arts program in San Francisco. They have offered me their support by providing contacts with the media, legal assistance recommendations, and continued mentorship of the program. 826 Valencia has an established distribution network which will be useful for Re:active publications. 826 Valencia has provided insight and practical help during our development through observation, access to their written materials and grant proposals, and continued phone support.

Similar organizations that are doing work with Re:Active's target population are the Beat Within, Casa Del Pueblo, Centro Del Pueblo, the Echo Park Film Center, L.A. Bridges program, Dreamyard/ LA, the heArt Project, Homeboy Industries, Independent Media Center, Kill Radio, L.A. Youth newspaper, Self-Help Graphics, Young Media Partners, Youth Media, the Western Justice Center and Writegirl. We have initiated contact or developed relationships with all of these organizations. All have aspects that cross over Re:active but none is reproducing the work we will do. Through extensive networking with others in related enterprises, civic and unofficial community leaders or contacts in curriculum development and business funding, I have been given much needed assistance. I will continue to utilize these organizations' and individuals' hard-won experience as we begin to implement our project objectives.

### 3. Impact on targeted population and/or community at large within two years.

Re:active impacts on three inter-related levels: the individual, the group, and the community.

**Individual:** By 2006, 30 to 40 youth will have participated in Re:active. Ideally, 100 percent of these participants will be employed in a field where the skills they have developed at Re:active are utilized, pursuing higher education, or continuing their high school educations.

Re:active encourages an ongoing relationship with students that have participated in the workshop program and anticipate that 25 to 50 percent of participants will continue to work with Re:active in some capacity, whether assisting with or facilitating workshops, working as informal mentors, participating in continuing workshops, or contributing to the magazines. By 2006, at least two graduates will have been offered Re:active staff positions on a part- or full-time basis.

**Group:** By the end of 2006, Re:active will publish four student 'zines and two professional magazines. The 'zines will have a limited circulation of about 200 and a circulation of about 2,000 for the professional magazine. The professional magazine will be making strides toward becoming self-funded.

The organization will be working toward non-profit status and will have at least two full-time staff people and two part-time staff people once sufficiently funded. There will be numerous active volunteers, ranging from one-session workshop leaders to fundraisers and grant writers.

**Community:** Re:active participants will actively further the expression of the information learned at Re:active in their peer groups and families. Participants are encouraged to solicit new students and volunteers through informal networking. Graduates will have a positive influence on their peers, families, and communities. They will all use the skills they have learned to address problems within their communities and personal lives.

### 4. Start-up Budget

see attached

## Community

### 5. Vision for the community

This project is being introduced to the Echo Park community and will serve outlying areas, as well, including as the Pico-Union District, Silverlake, East Hollywood, Downtown, East L.A., and Highland Park. The location was chosen for a number of reasons. The Echo Park and surrounding communities are in need of cultural institutions to benefit the neighborhood community as well as individual participants. There are numerous neighborhood residents whose schedules and wide array of creative experience lend themselves to serving as volunteers in an expressive arts environment. We wish to capitalize on the creative talent that lives in the area.

Local government is supportive of arts programs and will support implementation of this program. The continued presence of the Re:active arts space will help to foster other micro-enterprises in the Echo Park community, contribute toward the arts-friendly atmosphere of the neighborhood, and inspire arts and cultural tourism. Being a safe place within the community will continue to be a priority for Re:active. We envision a thriving community of productive and creative artists being engaged in helping youth because of the introduction of a means to do so. The new library going up next door provides another built-in partnering opportunity for after-school activity.

### 6+ 7. Key Community Connections

An attached list provides a comprehensive listing of community contacts that we have initiated. Some key contacts follow.

Eric Garcetti, the city councilman for district thirteen, has provided great contacts for potential board members, encouragement, and support. He considers himself a friend of the program and maintains e-mail with us on a regular basis.

Designmatters is the humanitarian/community outreach component of Art Center College of Design. They have been very encouraging and have suggested a few strong ways to partner with our organization,

including using Re:active as the basis for a documentary film class to generate a short piece for inclusion in fundraising materials and gaining much needed visibility in the community, facilitating an article in the Art Center Alumni magazine ( appealing to a highly influential community intensely interested in what new graduates are involved with) putting us in touch with their wide circle of contacts , as well as having the secondary result of ensuring that I have access to the most relevant and up-to-date design curriculum contacts by continued involvement with the college. They are a part of the Advisory Board.

Richard Koshalek is the president of the Art Center College of Design. He is the former director of the Museum of Contemporary Art. He is an important backer of Re:active and has provided pre-development money in the form of a president's grant. The grant was provided to further the project and to provide a scholarship for two Re:active participant to enter the Art Center's Saturday High Program. His continued support is of immeasurable value.

MOCA and LAMCA: We have established initial contact with MOCA and LACMA (at an Art Matters seminar through the Cultural Affairs Department) and will continue that relationship to find the most beneficial form of partnership to both parties.

The Western Justice Center in Pasadena: The interim director Najeeba Syeed-Miller has expressed a strong interest in seeking mutual grants that could set us up for including a curriculum based on conflict-resolution principles. Their cross ethnic, conflict resolution work with the age group is going to be extremely helpful in curriculum development as well as employee training.

Echo Park Film Center: This dynamic organization has been highly support of Re:active, going so far as to provide us an initial workshop space. Their credibility in the Echo Park neighborhood is well established. In addition to providing a micro-cinema where local artists can have their films screened, they teach classes to local youth in much the same vein as those Re:active proposes. It is a perfect partnership.

Dreamyard/L.A.: My continued involvement with Dreamyard will be an invaluable resource for their experience and integrity in dealing with the often-strange waters of the nonprofit world. They have provided strong support of Re:active since the beginning.

Tyler Waxman: director of clinical adolescent psychology at Children's Hospital Los Angeles: Mr. Waxman has committed to being our first board member. He supports the program wholeheartedly. His support will be crucial in connections to the youth community and with educators in the area.

## Staff

Michael Etter, Program/Creative Director, is a graphic designer and teacher. A graduate of the Art Center College of Design, Pasadena (B.F.A. Design, 2003), California State University at Fullerton (B.A. Communications, 1993), he also holds a TESL Certificate from the University of California, Irvine. He has taught English both here and abroad, and was the Special Education Speech and Language Specialist for the Compton Unified School District in 1996. He is a published author of an artist's book recently included in the catalogue of the Getty Research Institute, and one of the members of the art direction team for Fishwrap magazine, a student-run, award-winning literary design magazine published through the Art Center College of Design. He volunteers regularly with Dreamyard, L.A. ( a local arts intervention program) and co-facilitates a poetry workshop with their director, Chris Henrikson at Camp Miller probation camp.

Kristin Mehus-Roe, Publications Editor, is a writer and editor with over ten years experience in publishing. She is the former managing editor of the academic journals, Comparative Political Studies and Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly, and has worked as an editor and writer for a number of newspapers, magazines, and books.

Jerome Curchod, design consultant, is a graphic designer and art director. He has been involved with numerous lifestyle magazines and publications over the past 15 years, in the US and abroad, including RayGun, huH, Bikini, Lotus, Femina and The Purple Book. He also teaches Editorial Graphics and Typography at Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, CA.