

**Cultural Council of Palm Beach County**

**Artists' Needs Assessment Report**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

March 1, 2012

## PREFACE

The Workforce Development for Artists is a research and analysis effort by the Palm Beach County Cultural Council (PBCCC) in order to identify needs of professional Artists in Palm Beach County. This Special Report evaluating Artist data is compiled by the volunteer members of Leadership Palm Beach County's Class of 2012 Cultural Council Project Team (Project Team) in order to serve as a basis for recommendations of services and resources that the PBCCC may establish to support Palm Beach County Artists to cultivate and advance their business skills, build and enhance Artist networking and peer-to-peer opportunities and overall support the professional Artist community in Palm Beach County. The Project Team wishes to thank the PBCCC, Leadership Palm Beach County, the members of the cultural community who assisted in these efforts, and especially, the professional Artists who took part in the research activities. We further acknowledge the contributions of J.P. Morgan who provided funding for the Workforce Development for Artists, and the following community partners who assisted with the Artist conversations: Art and Culture Group, Inc., Artists of Palm Beach County, Boynton Beach Art in Public Places Program, Duncan Theatre, Palm Beach County Art in Public Places, LULA-Lake Worth Arts and Leadership Palm Beach County.

## SUMMARY

This Artists' Needs Assessment Report stems from the Palm Beach County Cultural Council's move to new PBCCC owned headquarters in February 2012, and the opportunities that this expansion will provide for the PBCCC to offer needed services to Artists. While PBCCC has actively supported Artists since the late 1970s, its principal focus to date has been the development of arts organizations rather than the needs of individual Artists. The Artists' Conversations and Survey which serve as the basis for this report are designed to answer the question:

***What is the specific role the Cultural Council could play to make Palm Beach County more Artist-friendly to both enrich its cultural vitality and economically advance Artists as part of the county's creative economy?***

The methodology underlying this report consists of two components: (1) an online survey to collect demographic data and the needs assessments questions as outlined and provided by the PBCCC, and (2) a series of four Artists conversations held with local Artists at sites throughout Palm Beach County.

A total of 238 professional Artists responded to the Survey. The survey shows Artist demographics consisting of gender, age, ethnicity, education, length of residency, art mediums, time investment, information sources, and funding sources. Among its findings, the survey revealed that three of the top reported needs of Artists in Palm Beach County are: (1) more exhibit space, (2) development of an Artists' community – a virtual or actual way for Artists to share resources, ideas, etc., and (3) marketing resources.

The Artist conversations focused on five main topic areas where small groups of Artists could develop and expand on ideas related to (1) professional development and training, (2) financial and work support mechanisms, (3) access to equipment and workspaces, (4) Artist convening, networking and presentation space, and (5) reaching new audiences and customers. The small group break-outs were led by a pair of facilitators, one from the arts community, and one from the business community (Leadership Palm Beach County). Interestingly, a number of Artists remarked on this - both as an example of how business and the arts can work together, and an appreciation of the input from "non-Artists."

Certain themes appeared in various topic areas of the conversations. For example, it is clear that Artists are interested in networking and joining groups and organizations that can help them communicate more effectively with other Artists. They are specifically interested in a database that would provide specific information about upcoming events in which they could participate, including outside of Palm Beach County. An example of something that works in other places, was the often mentioned "Artists as Entrepreneurs" program, which is prevalent in Broward County. Artists expressed support for the creation of a similar local program which teaches Artists to be more entrepreneurial.

In the conclusion which follows this report, the Project Team provides a number of recommendations regarding the PBCCC's current and future role as it expands service to Artists in Palm Beach County, including in summary:

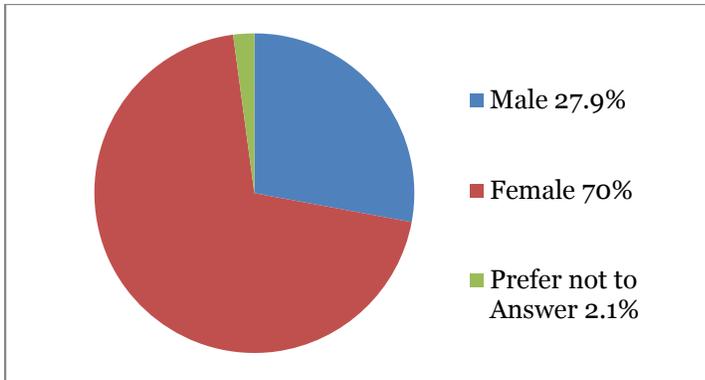
- (1) Creation of a comprehensive list of Palm Beach County-based public and private organizations and businesses that serve local Artists.
- (2) Develop a central information clearinghouse for Artists.
- (3) Foster community among Artists by promoting their engagement with each other and with the community at large.
- (4) Promote strategic partnerships between Artists and key non-Artist communities.
- (5) Increase local training opportunities.
- (6) Empower Artists to advocate on their own behalf.
- (7) Create an Artist advisory committee within the PBCCC to help give direction for Artists' services undertaken by the Council.
- (8) Complete a follow-up survey of the Artist community to measure the success of activities enacted.
- (9) Review findings of this report with Artists in order to develop additional recommendations to further support Artist community within Palm Beach County.

## THE SURVEY

PBCCC fielded an online survey between October 25 and November 27, 2011, to build an Artist data base and to collect demographic data on local Artists as well as insight into Artists needs in Palm Beach County. Professional Artists were invited to take the survey through mass emails, word of mouth and through the PBCCC web site. In addition, Artists who attended one of four Artist conversations held in locations throughout Palm Beach County were encouraged to complete the survey at these events as well. In total, 238 Artists responded to the survey. The survey consisted of 15 questions, five questions dealt with demographics, five question dealt with Artist information and resources, four collected basic data. One question was open ended and asked for comments from Artists. By conducting this survey as an informal, web-based poll using non-probably sampling to choose participants, the PBCCC was able to develop a large sample of professional Artists. Although we believe the results to be meaningful, it is important to know that this survey is not intended to be a scientifically valid research study.

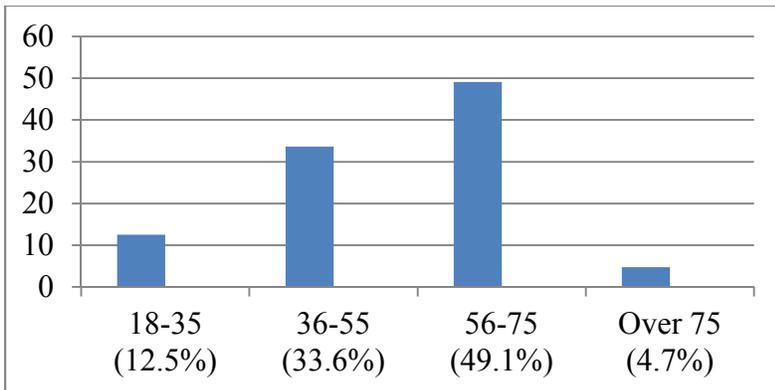
### Artist Demographics

#### Gender



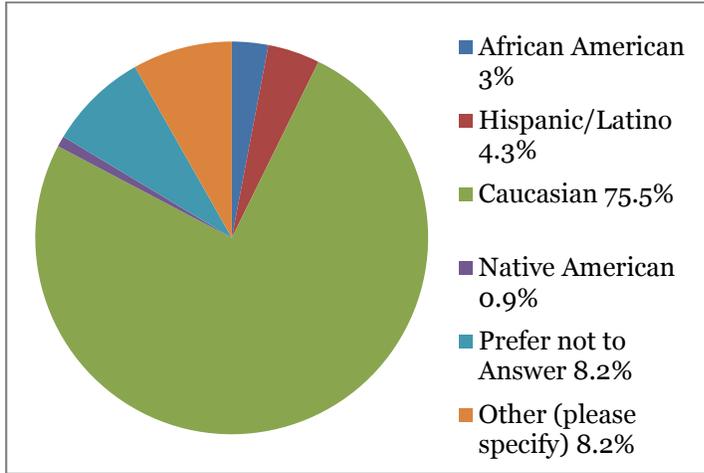
According to Palm Beach County demographics (census.gov) 51.6% of the population in Palm Beach County was female in 2010, compared to 70% of survey respondents.

#### Age



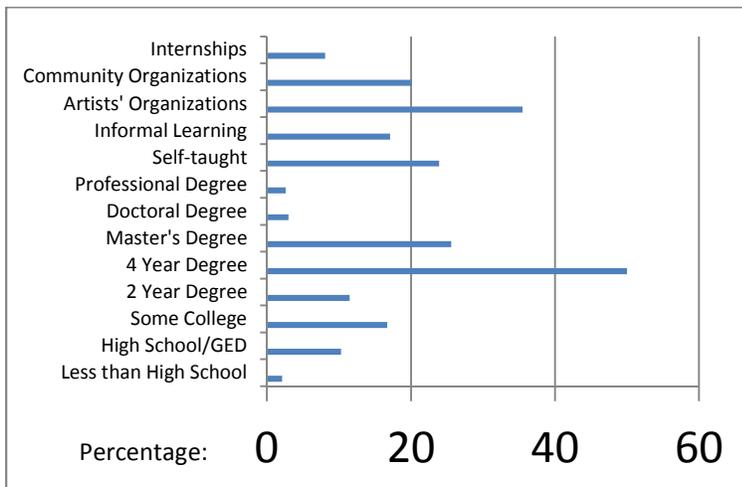
According to Palm Beach County demographics (census.gov) in 2010, 20.4% of the population in Palm Beach County was under the age of 18 and 21.6% was 65 years old or more.

## Ethnicity



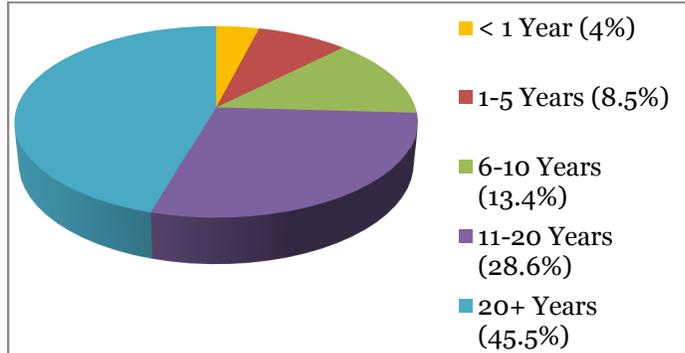
According to Palm Beach County demographics (census.gov) in 2010:  
 17.3% of the population was African American  
 19% Hispanic/Latino  
 60% Caucasian and  
 .5% Native American

## Education



According to Palm Beach County demographics (census.gov) in 2010, 86.6% of the population in Palm Beach County held at least a high school diploma; 31.3% had a bachelor's degree or higher

## Length of Residency

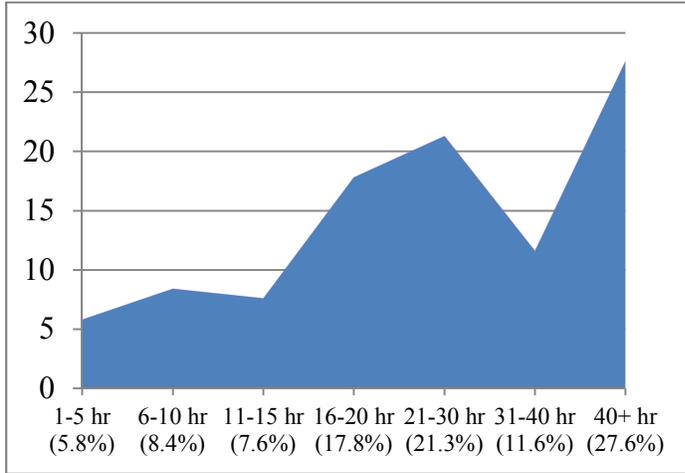


## Artist Information

### Art Mediums (response count)

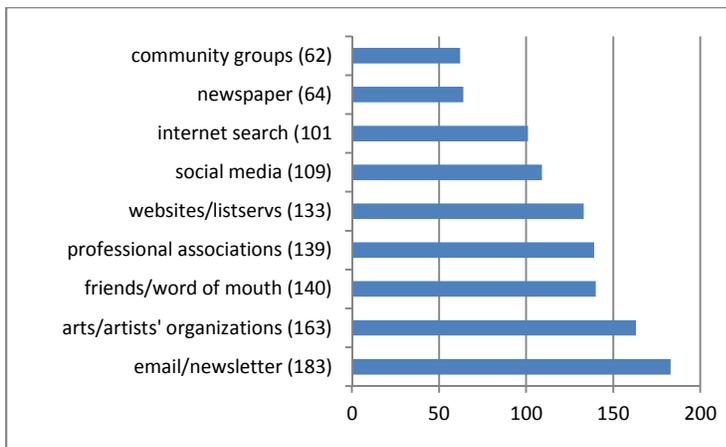
1. Painting (124)
2. Mixed Media (99)
3. Drawing (77)
4. Visual (64)
5. Sculpture (60)
6. Paper (43)
7. Public Art (38)
8. Metal (25)
9. Wood (20)
10. Photography (74)
11. Graphics (40)
12. Clay (38)
13. Graphic Design (35)
14. Landscape (25)
15. Poetry (20)
16. Contemporary (18)
17. EcoArt (18)
18. Non-Fiction (17)
19. Audio (16)
20. Folk / Traditional Crafts (16)
21. Musical Theatre (14)
22. Interior (14)
23. Glass (13)
24. Fiction (13)
25. Theatre for Young Audiences (13)
26. General (10)
27. Modern (9)
28. Solo/Recital (9)
29. Voice (9)
30. Puppet (8)
31. Industrial (8)
32. Oral Traditions (story telling) (8)
33. Film (7)
34. Ballet (7)
35. Ethnic (7)
36. Jazz (7)
37. Folk Life / Traditional Arts (6)
38. Folk / Traditional Music (5)
39. Band (5)
40. Chamber (5)
41. Architecture (5)
42. Orchestral (5)
43. Folk / Traditional Dance (4)
44. Choral (4)
45. Popular (2)
46. Opera (2)

## Time Investment

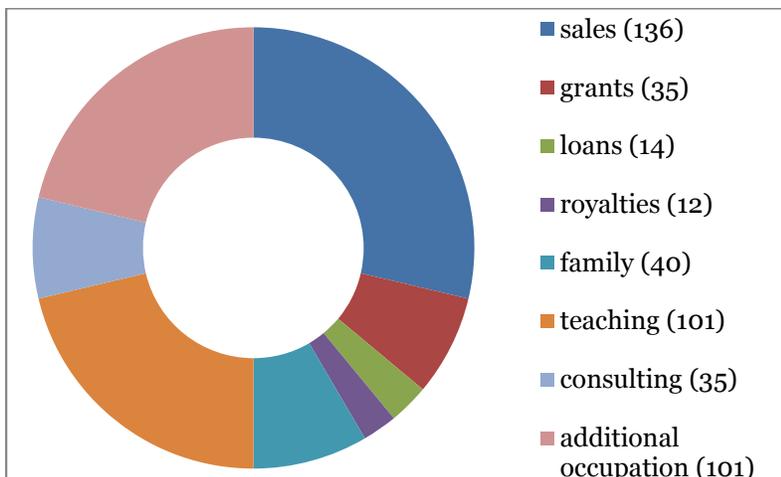


According to the survey responses, 61% of the Artists invest only part time in their art, whereas 39% invest full time (30+ hours).

## Information Sources



## Funding Sources



## Resources Needed (response count)

1. Public events that promote local Artists (138)
2. Exhibition opportunities (128)
3. Marketing yourself (126)
4. Exhibition space (123)
5. Grant funding (106)
6. Events that bring Artists together (102)
7. Affordable health insurance (73)
8. Affordable housing (73)
9. Artist work space (72)
10. Artists districts (70)
11. Advocacy in public policy and arts issues (54)
12. Business skills advice (44)
13. Access to equipment (43)
14. Legal advice (36)
15. Performance space (27)\*
16. Advice on technology (30)
17. Rehearsal space (20)\*

\* The number of survey respondents who identified themselves as performing Artist was low. Therefore the low number of responses for performance space and rehearsal space as “resources needed” may not accurately correlate to the real and pressing need for these resources among performing Artists.

## Artist Comments

A total of 91 of the 238 survey respondents (38 percent) took the additional time to answer the survey’s sole open-ended question, which simply asked survey takers to “include any additional comments/concerns you may have”. Responses ranged from simple “thank you” to comments on personal issues or describing the Artist’s own work. However, the overwhelming number of comments dealt with three issues: (1) the need for retail or exhibit space to showcase the work of Artists, (2) the need for the development of an “Artists’ community” in Palm Beach County, and (3) the need for assistance with marketing and promotion.

## Frequency of Open Ended Responses Table

<b>Need:</b>	<b>Responses:</b>
Retail/Exhibit Space	19
Artist Community	18
Marketing/Promotion	15
Work Space	9
Funding	8
Business/Professional Assistance	7
Access to Supplies	3
Other (various)	9

The comments regarding developing an Artists' community included the simple idea of Artists communicating more, sharing ideas and resources and using each other as mentors and to assist in professional development. In particular, some Artists commented specifically about the need for both a real and a virtual Artists' community, while others alluded to one or other concepts in their narrative response. Below is a sampling of comments related to the top three responses, exhibit space, marketing and developing a local Artist community.

***“Would love to see the Cultural Council open up new space to exhibitions and Artist talks showcasing all Artistic disciplines.”***

***“We need more venues to display the artwork that we’ve already produced.”***

***“Emerging and unknown Artists have great difficulty gaining access to galleries and opportunities to exhibit their work....”***

***“I long to increase my gallery exposure and presence....”***

***“An Artist wall would be nice, where visual Artist can hang their works for public viewing....”***

***“... more event or exhibitions for “emerging” or new Artists would be helpful....I wish there was a resource of Artists that would like to be mentors to new Artists. Finding Artists that are willing to share their knowledge has been difficult. I’ve turned to Facebook and have connected to Artists around the country, but I would like something more local. I would also like a local type Craigslist to go to....”***

***“Artists in Palm Beach County need a virtual and real resource center....The on-line resource networking center could include areas for Artists to buy, sell and trade materials and supplies AND spaces and equipment for: working, exhibiting, rehearsing and performing....The real resource space could be like the SWA resource depot<sup>\*1</sup>, but bigger and more specific for Artists and Artist supplies and equipment....”***

***“There are no opportunities for young working Artists to socialize or advance in professional development.”***

***“We have a long way to go in bringing forth a strong and recognizable Artist community. There is a great potential to establish higher quality of life, creative momentum and economic impact with our county by integrating local Artist and Artist’s work into the everyday business, programming and events that take place here.”***

***“...unlike other communities where I lived...there seems to be a closedness and competitiveness among Artists and local Artists, rather than being showcased....Artists are not considered local treasures. That’s a shame.”***

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<sup>1</sup> Resource Depot is a clearinghouse through which businesses donate unwanted by-products for educators and community organizations. It was created through a collaboration between Solid Waste Authority of Palm Beach County and Children’s Services Council.

*“Needs to be an umbrella group where all the arts groups are under to unify us.”*

*“Really need help learning how to market myself and brand my services.”*

After the top three responses, the second grouping of responses were related to the issues of (1) the need for affordable work space, (2) availability and access to funding, and (3) the need for business and professional support. Receiving comments from one or just a few respondents were issues such as the need for access to supplies and affordable health insurance.

*“I would like to see more support of Artists in our communities through Artist loft-style work spaces...”*

*“It’d be beneficial to have...a cluster of working professional art studios....”*

*“...available grants also appear to be few and far between.”*

*“Financing is perhaps the most serious problem facing the visual Artist. After the cost of production, there is often little to budget toward the marketing....”*

*“...need advice and financial help on marketing and grant writing, entrepreneurial training....”*

*“The lack of technical support and professional guidance continue to interfere with my growth as a professional Artist.”*

A number of specific comments were aimed at the PBCCC or the Artist conversations. Examples include the following:

*“...asking us what services should be provided is a little like asking starving children what the ideal meal would be. We’ve never seen Artist services in Palm Beach County and not enough of us have lived where they are provided.”*

*“Artist involvement in a structural/advisory position within Palm Beach County Cultural Council would be a huge and positive step forward....For example, an Artist advisory board made up of working Artist of multiple disciplines would give the cultural council board direct access to the local Artist community.”*

*“[Connecting to your local, talented and professional Artists] IS the biggest area that the PBC Cultural Council has lacked.”*

*“Encouraging the council to be pro art rather than pro patron, and the patrons will follow more readily.”*

## ARTIST CONVERSATIONS

The Artist Conversations were held on four weeknights in November 2011 in distinct geographic centers throughout Palm Beach County. Professional Artists throughout the county were invited to attend via direct response email, web site promotions and other publicity. Participation at the events ranged from a handful of Artists to many.

<b>Location</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Venue</b>	<b>No. of Participants</b>
Palm Beach Gardens	Nov. 2, 2011	Gardens Branch Library	21
Boca Raton	Nov. 3, 2011	Office Depot Headquarters	21
West Palm Beach	Nov. 16, 2011	The Palm Beach Post	62
Belle Glade	Nov. 17, 2011	Dolly Hand Cultural Center	4
<b>Total</b>			<b>108</b>

The purpose of the conversations is to learn from Artists about those things they need in order to work more productively, advance their Artistic practice and business and in turn benefit the community in which they live and work. The conversations gathered only qualitative information, and no effort was made to obtain quantitative data or demographics from participants or to compare the participants to those Artists who participated in the survey process.

The agenda for each event was identical. PBCCC President and CEO Rena Blades, welcomed those attending and gave an introduction of the process. To give a cohesive structure to the sessions, the discussions began and ended with questions to be discussed by the entire group of Artists. These questions had to do with the interaction of Artist within the community. At the conclusion of this first group question the Artists were separated into five small groups which were each presented with a separate set of questions on a specific topic. Each of the topics was led by two volunteer facilitators, one from the Artist community and one from the business community. The five topics included: (1) Professional Development and Training, (2) Financial and Work Support Mechanisms, (3) Artist Access to Art-Making Equipment and Workspaces, (4) Artist Convening, Networking, and Presentation Space, and (5) Reaching New Audience, Markets and Customers. At the conclusion of the topic conversations the groups came together for a wrap up by Rena Blades. Each wrap up was concluded by the final group discussion question about who should lead the efforts discussed and how would the Artists participate in the process.

## CONCLUSION

The 2011/2012 Artists' Needs Assessment initiated by the Palm Beach County Cultural Council through its Workforce Development for Artist project clearly reflects the leadership role the Council plays in helping Palm Beach County reach its potential of being the "Cultural Capital" of Florida not only as it relates to its arts and cultural organizations, but also as a place where Artists live, work and thrive. While Palm Beach County's cultural arena has a lot to offer, including a substantial number of Artists living and working here, through the survey and conversation tools it was revealed that many Artist participants have similar needs across Artistic genres, and are often not familiar with the various resources available to local Artists which may fulfill some of the needs Artists perceive as deficient. It also became clear that coordination was

lacking among organizations that currently serve Artists, as well as among independently initiated Artist efforts. Therefore, the project team proposes the following recommendations for the Cultural Council's consideration:

1. Inventory and compile a comprehensive list of Palm Beach County-based public and private organizations and businesses that serve local Artists. A number of these organizations were mentioned in the survey and conversations. To assist the Council's efforts to support and expand existing Artist services and activities, while minimizing duplicative efforts, it is recommended that the inventory effort capture profile information for each organization/business such as its target audience, if it's member based and, if so, its annual membership fee, number of members/participants, types of programs/services, etc. It is also recommended that based on inventory results the Council increase its coordination role among organizations and businesses serving local Artists.

2. Develop and make available on-line to Artists a central information system or database that serves as a clearinghouse for information Artists need, such as listing of events and meetings; exhibition, performance and work spaces; educational and training opportunities; resources for materials; funding opportunities, and promotion and marketing resources.

3. Foster community among Artists by promoting their engagement with one another and with the community at large. Such activities as monthly in-person networking meetings, and particularly, a virtual space for Artists to connect and share and exchange information in a collaborative "social work-space" environment.

4. Promote partnerships between Artists, the media, businesses, organizations, educational institutions and governmental entities, allowing for increased conversation, awareness and integration of common objectives.

5. Facilitate and offer local training and skill development opportunities to advance Artists of all disciplines.

6. Empower Artists to advocate on behalf of "Artist issues" and integrate these efforts into the work the Council already does locally, statewide and nationally.

7. Create an Artists' advisory committee to provide input to the Cultural Council from the Artists' perspective and to help give direction to Artists' services undertaken by the Council. Consider having the Committee's Chair sit on the Council's Board of Director's as an "Artist" member of the board.

8. Complete a follow-up survey of the Artist community in three to five years, both to measure the success of any activities implemented and to reach out to a more representative sample of the Artists in Palm Beach County, for example performing and literary Artists.

9. Review the findings of this report with Artists and their constituents in order to develop additional recommendations to further support Palm Beach County’s Artist community.

In conclusion, Artists throughout Palm Beach County want to be connected to one another as a vibrant “community of Artists” which can manifest itself, as a starting point, through the recommendations above. The Cultural Council is ideally poised through its services, partnerships and, of course, new facilities, to help Artists to fully realize such a community in Palm Beach County. All of the citizens of Palm Beach County will benefit from the cultural and economic impacts.

## **EPILOGUE**

At the conclusion of the final Artist Conversation event held in Belle Glade one of the Artist attendees shared the following poem which she wrote during the conversation. We hope that her enthusiasm for the process is universally shared by the Artists who took the time to attend the conversations and participate in the surveys, and that the Palm Beach County Cultural Council can use this report, its new facility and its resources to further inspire and serve the professional Artist community in Palm Beach County.

### **The Artist’s View**

We’ve come together  
Just a few  
To share what we call  
“The Artist’s View”

The discussions we held  
Were quite unique  
Informative, intriguing  
Really neat

My Artist’s sense  
Have been awakened  
The cogs of my brain  
Are truly shaken

My fellow Artist’s  
It’s time for me  
To enhance my abilities  
Soon all will see

Thank you all  
For helping me  
See what potential  
All true Artists can be

*--Benita D. Hamilton*