

2008

# MuralArtsProgram

## Evaluation of *Cops & Kids*: Executive Summary



Completed by:  
Capacity for Change, LLC  
[www.capacityforchange.com](http://www.capacityforchange.com)

## About Mural Arts Program

### ***Description and History***

The Philadelphia Mural Arts Program (MAP) started in 1984 as a component of the Anti-Graffiti Network (PAGN), a city-wide initiative to eradicate destructive graffiti and address neighborhood blight. In 1996, the City of Philadelphia recognized MAP as a program distinct from the Anti-Graffiti Network. MAP has produced over 2,700 murals throughout Philadelphia—more murals than any other city in the world. These murals have become a cherished part of the civic landscape and a great source of pride and motivation to the millions of residents and visitors who encounter them each year. Currently, MAP is involved in mural-making and art education throughout the city of Philadelphia. With professional artists serving as educators and role models, MAP's art education programs serve more than 3,000 youth each year.

### ***Overview of the Cops & Kids Program***

In July 2006, MAP launched *Cops & Kids*, a unique initiative created to improve relations between police officers and underserved and at-risk youth. Prior to the Winter 2008 session, which was the focus of the evaluation, two major *Cops & Kids* projects were completed in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> Police Districts. The Winter 2008 session of *Cops & Kids* included a five-week series of dialogues during which youth and police participants (from the 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> Police District) came together to interact, challenge stereotypes, and collaborate on the design of a mural that would reflect the rapport that developed between them. The participants shared their design ideas with others through two community meetings and worked with a professional muralist to finalize the design. On July 2, 2008, a Community Paint Day was held at the 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> Police District Building to paint the mural on the building and in its entrance, creating a permanent work of public art.

*"I tell my friends that aren't good with the law to get into the program so they can have a better opinion. I was ignorant before. Used to be that once a cop was smart with me, I'd be smart with them, but now I know just to stay cool."*

- *Cops & Kids Youth Participant, Winter 2008*

Prior to the evaluation project, MAP had not settled on finite and clear goals for the *Cops & Kids* program. After exploring the strategic intent of the program, the program goals and objectives of the program were defined as follows (for the purpose of the evaluation and perhaps beyond).

The goals of *Cops & Kids* include to:

- Improve relations between police officers and underserved and at-risk youth in Philadelphia
- Provide opportunities for community engagement through the arts that enhance civic dialogue, build community and inspire the imagination

The objectives of *Cops & Kids* include to:

- Facilitate a five-week dialogue between police officers and youth that challenges and explores commonly held stereotypes
- Nurture constructive relationships between police officers and youth by engaging them in a joint project to design and produce a public work of art
- Create murals and other works of public art that contribute to community building

## Cops & Kids Evaluation Findings

*“I’m not getting into trouble anymore. I used to, but that program and others at Mural Arts keep me occupied. I got into the programs because I got in trouble in school. But Mural Arts helped me get back in school and I’m sticking with it now. Now that I’ve been in Cops & Kids, I wouldn’t get smart or get loud with a police officer on the street. I was like that before. I would get in their face, but now I wouldn’t because I know it wouldn’t get me anywhere except into trouble and I don’t want that.”*

- Cops & Kids Youth Participant, Winter 2008

The results of the evaluation project demonstrate that *Cops & Kids* is **highly successful**. Specifically, *Cops & Kids*:

- Improves relations between cops and kids
- Offers cops and kids an extremely enjoyable and constructive experience
- Offers dynamic community engagement opportunities
- Is supported by an organization that exhibits effective management strategies
- Employs a wide range of best practices in the field
- Is positioned for expansion or replication with targeted investments in planning, training, communications, and evaluation

### Knowledge Learned by Participants: *What was learned?*

- **Ratings across six measures.** On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 = excellent and 1 = poor, below are the average ratings by participants on the following measures:

How was this program as a chance to...	Youth Average Score (n = 14)	Police Average Score (n = 10)
Have conversations about things that matter to me	4.3	4.4
Learn about other people	3.4	4.4
Learn about art	3.3	3.7
<b>Learn skills I can use in my life</b>	<b>4.6</b>	<b>4.7</b>
Learn about my community	3.9	4.0
Contribute to my community	3.9	4.1

- **How the program improved understanding.** In a post-program survey, youth and police were asked how the program would affect their understanding of each other and future interactions.

Question	Youth Responses (n = 14)	Police Responses (n = 10)
Will your experience in this program make you feel more comfortable with police/youth?	69% - Yes 31% - Maybe	90% - Yes 10% - No
Did this program improve your understanding of police officers/youth?	71% - Yes 29% - Yes, a little	50% - Yes 50% - Yes, a little
Did this program improve your understanding of how to handle an encounter with a police officer/youth while you are on-duty?	79% - Yes, a great deal 14% - Yes, a little 7% - Not really	40% - Yes, a great deal 50% - Yes, a little 10% - N/A

- In a post-program interview, 100% of youth interviewed (6 total) said they were happy they participated in the program; when asked why they feel that way, 5 of the 6 said it was because of what they learned:
  - “Because I learned more about cops and kids.”
  - “Because “It gave me a better understanding of cops.”
  - “Learned a lot about cops, how they get along and how to approach them if they approach you.”
  - “I learned a lot and it was fun.”

**Attitudes Changed by the Program: *What changed?***

- 100% of youth interviewed (6 total) reported in interviews that the program allowed them to learn about police officers, and the program changed how they think about police:
  - “I learned all cops are not the same.” (2)
  - “It changed my respect for cops in a positive way.”
  - “Changed how I think about cops. Some people hate cops but they never meet them.”
  - “I know cops better now.”
  - “I’m not getting into trouble anymore.”

*“Theoretically speaking it has changed me – I would be more receptive to their [youth] thoughts. I haven’t had a negative encounter but I have had encounters where rather than lock someone up for truancy, I’ll offer them a ride to school and talk to them.”*

- *Cops & Kids Police Participant, Winter 2008*

- 100% of police interviewed (3 total) reported that the program improved their understanding of youth, including their own children:
  - “It really opened me up to dealing with the kids and the issues. It made me think hard about all the things they have to deal with.”
  - “I learned that kids are a product of their environment and are taught that cops are not their friends. With a little push, the kids learned that we are human, too.”
  - “It improved my relationship with my own kids...I can see things from their point of view and can help them out better.”

- In post-program evaluations, some police commented that they learned how much harder things are for today's teens and had gained a greater understanding after hearing things from a teen's perspective.
- In the post-program interview of youth, 83% reported a change in attitude, which point to improved safety, improved behavior, and more positive attitudes about police:
  - "This will help me keep myself safe."
  - "It made me take life more serious."
  - "It taught me how to stay out of trouble. I won't do anything bad anymore probably."
  - "I'm not getting into trouble anymore. I used to, but that program and others at Mural Arts keep me occupied. I got into the programs because I got in trouble in school. But Mural Arts helped me get back in school and I'm sticking with it now. Now that I've been in Cops & Kids, I wouldn't get smart or get loud with a police officer on the street. I was like that before. I would get in their face, but now I wouldn't because I know it wouldn't get me anywhere except into trouble and I don't want that."
  - "I know about how cops feel now. Before I thought they were all bad. I gave them all F's when I was asked to give them grades on everything [during the first session]. I wouldn't give them low grades now—I'd give some A's, and I guess maybe some a D or C—those are the ones I'm not used to."

### **Communications Between Police Officers and Youth: *Did they improve?***

- 79% of youth surveyed stated that the program greatly improved their understanding of how to handle and encounter with a police officer. Four out of 7 people who gave an explanation commented that the program developed mutual respect between the kids and cops.
- 100% of police surveyed said the program improved their knowledge of youth and improved their understanding of how to handle an encounter with youth while on duty.
- When police officers were asked if the program had any effect on encounters with youth, all three that were interviewed responded that the program had a positive effect:
  - "...it has opened up doors for communication."
  - "Theoretically speaking it has changed me – I would be more receptive to their thoughts. I haven't had a negative encounter but I have had encounters where rather than lock someone up for truancy, I'll offer them a ride to school and talk to them."
  - "I am able to come down to their level more and can help them out better than before. I have a better understanding of where they are coming from."

### **Contributions to Building Community: *What contributions were made?***

Community, for the purpose of the *Cops & Kids* program, is defined as the neighborhood that will receive the mural, the participants involved in the program, and people involved with MAP.

- 100% of youth and 100% of police participants said they were interested in continuing with *Cops & Kids*, indicating the establishment of a commitment to the program and the community created by the program

- The Community Paint Day on July 2, 2008 attracted 225 attendees (80 youth, 25 police, 120 adults), in addition to corporate sponsors and community resource providers, and resulted in the completion of a new mural on the Police District building, offering a community building experience and producing a permanent improvement to the community
- Program participants made presentations at two community meetings to solicit input about the mural design

### Participant Experiences

Overall program ratings by participants were **extremely positive**, as reflected in post-program survey responses. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 = excellent and 1 = poor:

Question	Youth Average Score	Police Average Score
How was the program overall?	4.57	4.8

Questions about the favorite part, least favorite part, and interest in continuing with *Cops & Kids* and Mural Arts Program revealed **consistently positive opinions** of the program and organization:

Question	Youth Responses (n = 14)	Police Responses (n = 10)
What was your favorite part of the program?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Money – 14%</li> <li>• Activities – 36%</li> <li>• Everything – 29%</li> <li>• Talking to cops – 21%</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activities – 10%</li> <li>• Talking to youth/ interactions – 80%</li> <li>• Learning how society has black men prime for failure – 10%</li> </ul>
What was your least favorite part of the program?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nothing – 71%</li> <li>• Travel distance – 7%</li> <li>• First day – 7%</li> <li>• N/A – 15%</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nothing – 20%</li> <li>• Not more time – 10%</li> <li>• Negative interaction with other participant – 20%</li> <li>• Computer test – 10%</li> <li>• Not having officers of different ethnic backgrounds – 10%</li> <li>• Learning about racism – how blacks are charged differently than a white person (note: this was a frustration with the system in general, not the program) – 10%</li> <li>• N/A – 20%</li> </ul>
Would you like to continue with Cops & Kids?	Yes - 100%	Yes – 100%
Would you like to continue working with Mural Arts Program?	Yes – 79%	Yes – 100%

## Why *Cops & Kids* Works

The evaluation process provided evidence that *Cops & Kids* is having a tremendously positive impact on participants and the community. The core program elements that MAP has achieved and should retain in the program since they are direct contributors to success include:

- Using art to engage youth and to foster interactions between youth and police
- Fostering a collaborative service delivery model between artists, social service providers, teachers, agency staff, youth and families
- Engaging in broad-based community outreach, participant recruitment, and relationship-building with other organizations, police districts, and community leaders
- Involving the community in the project
- Providing a safe haven for youth
- Offering an age-appropriate curriculum with appropriate activities and dynamic teaching tactics
- Including a culminating public performance or exhibition in an effort to build participants' self-esteem through public recognition (e.g., mural paint day or spoken word performance)
- Maintaining a collaborative, creative, flexible and challenging work environment in which program staff have the autonomy and leeway to develop and implement program approaches

Cover: One wall of the mural design from the *Cops & Kids* Winter 2008 session. Muralist: Cesar Viveros.