

**CREATING COLLEGE-COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS:
REPORT ON THE ARTS IN NORTHFIELD**

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Revised April, 2009**

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Introduction: Overview, Methods and Limitations

“Home to a number of institutions, galleries, venues and studios for a wide range of artistic mediums, Northfield is poised on the brink of regional recognition as one of Minnesota’s most vibrant ‘Art Towns.’”

-Ross Currier, Executive Director of the Northfield Downtown Development Corporation

This report communicates the findings on the current state of the arts sector in Northfield, Minnesota. Northfield is a town in southeastern Minnesota with a population of close to 20,000 people, including approximately 5,000 college students (City of Northfield 2009). First, a brief overview of the state and national level economic situation of the arts places Northfield in its broader context. The report goes on to detail the assets and needs of the Northfield arts community, as well as the present and prospective local effects of the economic downturn. Additionally, it discusses potential research projects in which Carleton College could partner with individuals and organizations in the arts sector in ways that would simultaneously address community needs and be beneficial learning experiences for students and faculty. Appended are tables of the data sources used in this study, a complete inventory of research project ideas, and a list of contact information for interviewees and others known to be involved in the arts sector.

Research on the Northfield arts sector was conducted in February and March of 2009. It included interviews with eight individuals who are involved in the arts in Northfield in a variety of ways, including as working artists and representatives from several arts-related organizations. Interviewees were asked about their roles in the Northfield arts sector, as well as those of the organizations with which they work. Perceptions of the current state of the sector in Northfield and future project ideas were discussed, as well. In addition, one focus group was conducted with five Northfield artists and two other individuals involved in the arts. The focus group highlighted the needs of individual artists, economic concerns within the arts, and ideas for

collaborative projects. In order to get a deeper understanding of the arts sector in Northfield, a meeting of the Arts and Culture Commission was attended, and visits were made to the Key (home of the Northfield Union of Youth) and several local arts galleries. Finally, background research on the state and national economic situation, as well as previous Northfield arts community research, supplemented the original research carried out for this project.

Despite attempts to make this study as representative as possible given the available time and resources, its limitations must be acknowledged. Within the arts in Northfield, there is an abundance of involved individuals and organizations, all of whom have their own unique, and sometimes conflicting, perspectives. Thus, it was not possible to fully represent the entire arts community. Although activity within all arts disciplines goes on in Northfield, we decided to focus predominantly on visual arts, with limited information gathered on performing arts and music, as well. Efforts were made to incorporate the voices of the central arts organizations in town and a range of artists' perspectives. However, since we began the project with very limited arts community connections, the study may over-represent organizations and people who already have ties to Carleton.

Broader Economic Context

“The contemporary art market...is a vulnerable organism, traditionally hit early and hard by economic malaise. That’s what’s happening now.... The boom that was is no more” (Cotter 2009:1). As this foreboding quote indicates, artists and art organizations across the nation are already experiencing financial difficulties, and anticipate encountering more challenges in light of the continuing economic downturn. Organizations have to cut budgets and potentially staff, while individual artists face a tougher market.

On the national level, however, there is hope that the recently passed stimulus bill will help alleviate some of the economic hardships within the arts sector. The plan includes a one-time allocation of \$50 million to the arts, intended to prevent layoffs and restore arts programming. Money will be distributed by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) in increments of \$25,000 and \$50,000 according to existing protocol. Forty percent will go to state and regional arts agencies while 60 percent will be available to individual organizations and working artists through direct grants. In Minnesota, the prospect of tapping into some of this stimulus money seems promising. Although the allocation will be spread throughout the country, typically the state ranks high in the amount of NEA funding it receives. For example, this year thirty-one individuals and organizations have already received a total of \$768,000 from the NEA (Preston 2009:1).

Still, there is great need for increased arts funding in Minnesota, as evidenced by the fact that some artists and organizations are already making cutbacks. For example, this year the McKnight Foundation, the leading funder of arts organizations in Minnesota, cut its support from \$10 million to \$8.6 million because of a decrease in its endowment of about 30 percent (Selix 2009:1). Other prominent organizations such as the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, the Walker Art Center, and the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra have cut staff and/or budgets as well (Abbe 2009:1).

In addition to national resources, artists are waiting to see what state funding will be available, which is hard to determine at the moment. On the one hand, in order to lower costs, Governor Tim Pawlenty has proposed making significant cuts in the arts. For example, he has suggested reducing arts funding by half as well as eliminating the State Arts Board by 2011 (Minnesota Citizens for the Arts 2009). Without a state board, it would be difficult to ensure that

money intended for the arts is actually given to the arts and gets equitably distributed. The governor also recommended getting rid of the Perpich Center for Arts Education, an organization that currently serves students, teachers, artists, schools, and arts organizations throughout the state (Perpich Center for Arts Education 2009). All of these proposed changes indicate that the arts sector could lose significant support in Minnesota.

On the other hand, however, Minnesota voters recently passed the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment. A slight sales tax increase will fund a number of different state efforts. Specifically, 19.5% of the money raised will support arts access and education, as well as preserving Minnesota's culture and history (Minnesota Citizens for the Arts). Because the amendment asserts that this money is meant to supplement and not replace traditional arts funding, the arts sector in Minnesota should see a considerable increase in available funds. For the first two years this policy will be in effect, fiscal years 2010 and 2011, estimates of the amount that will go to the arts are \$48 million and \$54.5 million, respectively (Minnesota Citizens for the Arts 2009). Although actual numbers may be lower due to consumers spending less during the recession, this should still have a significant impact on the arts.

Some other non-monetary resources available in Minnesota come from groups dedicated to supporting the arts in the state. For example, the Minnesota Citizens for the Arts sent out information to arts organizations on how to prepare for effects of the economic downturn. Similarly, the Minnesota Council of Non-Profits has advised organizations to look to foundations for funding rather than grants. Disseminating such advisory information could be extremely useful as Minnesota's arts sector faces the challenges ahead (Mosey 2009).

Assets of the Arts Sector in Northfield

In order to understand how the economic downturn will affect Northfield in particular, one must first consider what already exists. Right now, the Northfield arts sector includes an interesting mix of assets and needs. Overall, Northfield enjoys a very active arts community. A great number of both professional and hobby artists involved in music, dance, theater, and literary and visual arts live and/or work in town. In addition to individual artists, there are multiple non-profit organizations such as the Northfield Arts Guild and the Canon Valley Youth Orchestra. The town also has for-profit arts businesses and galleries like The Sketchy Artist (an art supply store), the ArtOnWater gallery, Grezzo Gallery, and ArtOrg (which has a gallery and offers classes). In addition, various annual festivals attract a substantial local audience. Two popular events are ArtSwirl, a celebration of all arts disciplines, and Shakespeare in the Park, an outdoor theater festival held each summer.

Two other significant arts resources are the colleges, Carleton and St. Olaf. The colleges frequently bring professional artists to town. They also offer free admission to art exhibits, theater productions, and musical performances on a regular basis. Additionally, some facility spaces are available for outside performances and exhibitions. Students and their families are a part of the consumer base for the Northfield arts market, as well.

In town, multiple groups are working to increase collaboration between different organizations and artists. For example, the city Arts and Culture Commission is dedicated to working with various organizations on many projects, such as joining with the Northfield Public Library, the Northfield Arts Guild, and the public schools to create public art projects. They are also working with the Historical Preservation Commission and the Northfield Historical Society

to develop plaques marking significant historical and cultural buildings and sites. Other collaborative work is being done to market Northfield as an Arts Town (Spensley 2009).

Additionally, the Arts, Recreation and Culture Committee of the Northfield Downtown Development Corporation (NDDC) is attempting to make Northfield a more marketable “Arts Town” that would attract a broader audience. Finally, a group of individuals and organizations downtown has formed the RiverWalk Arts Quarter Initiative committee, which recently received a grant of up to \$15,000 from the Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation to fund arts enhancements downtown. The group is now working with the entire community to determine what specific projects to pursue (Kjerland 2009).

One of Northfield’s greatest strengths is how much the community supports the arts. In general, artists expressed the feeling that people here are passionate about the arts and some are even willing to make donations. One telling example of community support is how people responded when, following a budgetary shortfall, the school board proposed cutting the high school music program and orchestra. An outcry from parents of students and from Northfield residents prevented this from occurring (Spensley 2009). Recently, the city government has shown increased support for the arts. For example, three years ago it created the Arts and Culture Commission in response to a suggestion in ArtsPlan06, a community proposal outlining a vision for the future of the arts in Northfield.

People of all ages have opportunities to both observe and engage in various forms of art. Charter schools with an emphasis on the arts are available to students from middle through high school. Additionally, children can take classes or get involved with The Key, a student-run organization that offers free visual arts, music and literary activities to middle and high school youth. Programs also exist for older community members. The Northfield Arts Guild, for

example, offers classes for people of all ages on-site, as well as at a senior center in town. Learning and performance opportunities in all disciplines exist for adults with different experience levels, as well.

A number of resources help publicize the numerous arts activities and opportunities that exist in Northfield. For example, the *Northfield Entertainment Guide* is a monthly publication of information about arts, music, food and general entertainment events in town. Northfield.org provides a listing of upcoming events online, as well. Another helpful source is *Northfield News*, a local paper that also contains some of this information in addition to other arts-related articles.

Finally, Northfield's location is another major asset to the arts sector. The town's proximity to the Twin Cities may help facilitate further expansion of the Northfield arts sector in a few ways. First of all, working artists who want to live in a smaller town could work in Northfield but still go to Minneapolis or St. Paul to sell work or perform at larger venues. In addition, people can easily come down from the cities for festivals, performances, or gallery shows in Northfield. Some possibilities also exist for well-known artists living in the metropolitan area to show their work in local galleries. ArtOrg has already explored some of these opportunities and has expressed an interest in bringing more Twin Cities artists here.

Needs of the Arts Sector in Northfield

While the arts sector in Northfield obviously has many valuable assets and strengths, a variety of needs – of artists, organizations, and the sector as a whole – were voiced by interviewees and focus group participants. One of the issues frequently mentioned was the need for increased collaboration among artists, arts organizations and the town's two colleges. The efforts to organize the arts in Northfield, described above, are making headway in bringing more artists and organizations together. Nonetheless, it is still very much a work in progress. There is

need for greater collaboration among arts organizations to avoid duplicating programming and to work on projects that will be beneficial to multiple groups or the arts community as a whole. However, this may prove difficult since there have been some tensions among organizations in the past, and every party in the Northfield arts sector has its own perspectives and goals towards which it would like to work. Another problem raised is that in the past there has been much more talk than action. While people having many ideas can be very helpful, more collaboration could ensure that ideas actually translate into action.

There is also substantial work to be done in terms of organizing artists. Individuals interviewed for this project perceived that there is a huge variety of people doing art in Northfield, including members of different age groups as well as people of diverse ethnic and class backgrounds. However, since there is no comprehensive listing of people engaging in art, it is difficult to know with certainty who all is involved. Additionally, if there were more collaboration among artists and arts organizations, work could more easily be done to address artists' needs.

Individual artists also have a variety of other specific needs. Because most are self-employed and have fairly limited income, there is a significant need for affordable health care and housing opportunities (National Endowment for the Arts 2008). Supplies are also an expensive upfront cost, and there is no current formal system in place for artists to make bulk purchases together. Some artists mentioned that running a business to sell their artwork is burdensomely time-consuming; since they often lack the necessary technical expertise in different areas (like accounting, technology, and law), it takes away time they could be using to actually practice their crafts. Adequate facility space – both for working and putting on shows –

is another pressing need for artists. While the colleges have good facilities, they are rarely available during the academic year, which is extremely limiting.

Almost all individuals consulted in this research overwhelmingly expressed the need to reach a broader audience within and beyond Northfield. Some have questioned whether the arts market in Northfield is already saturated. Currently, the arts sector tends to reach the older, White, well-educated, middle- and upper-class populations. Some people involved in the arts sector believe that families need to be more thoroughly engaged in the arts, but this is difficult since they have limited available time and disposable income. Others have expressed the view that Northfield does not have a large enough population to support all the varied arts production and activities that occurs. Consequently, the arts sector needs to bring in outside audiences to broaden its consumer base. This would require better publicity of the community's assets, which some arts disciplines, such as visual and literary, could particularly use.

Funding seems to be the most vital need in the arts sector in Northfield, shared by artists and organizations alike. Overall, there is a lack of well-paid work opportunities for professional artists and income-generating programs for arts organizations. Some interviewees perceived that the current Northfield audience is well-informed about art but not willing to pay for it. It has been suggested that the colleges and restaurants in town may reinforce this; since they offer so many arts experiences for free, that is what people come to expect. As a result, it is hard to charge admission to arts events and encourage consumers to purchase art. One interviewee mentioned that it would be particularly difficult to try to make a living as a professional musician in Northfield since there are so many high-quality free events, and people are not accustomed to paying cover charges to hear live music (Boxrud 2009).

The Economic Situation of the Arts in Northfield

Given that funding is almost always an issue for the arts, it is important to examine the current and prospective effects of the economic situation on the arts sector in Northfield.

Individual artists and arts organizations expressed a variety of perspectives on how the downturn is affecting, and will continue to affect, the arts.

Some artists and organizations report that they are already experiencing increasingly difficult financial situations. In general, organizations have been seeing demand for scholarships rise over the past few years, but recently those demands seem to be increasing more drastically than ever. For example, in February of 2009, the Northfield Arts Guild received three times the amount of scholarship requests it had in the previous month (Mosey 2009). Some organizations have already been making changes in response to tightened pocketbooks, both in the form of postponing and nixing plans. Due to financial concerns, the library expansion project is likely to be pushed back at least one or two years (Johnson and Young 2009). Overall, funding sustainability is becoming a greater concern for arts organizations as grants are being decreased and discontinued.

Individual artists also reported experiencing increased financial troubles. One serious problem is the challenge of purchasing supplies on budgets made tighter by the economic situation. Some artists and gallery owners mentioned that people have been less likely to buy art lately. Perhaps because art is a discretionary purchase, people are cutting back on supporting it. Consequently, some artists have had to change the art they produce in order to more closely suit consumer demands – even when it means that they pursue projects they would otherwise prefer not to do.

Many individuals also believe that the effects of the economic situation on the arts are hard to discern at this point, but they anticipate seeing significant effects in the next one to three years. Several organizations reported that they expect decreased enrollment in classes and programs in the future; some explained that they have not experienced such effects yet because their programs follow the academic calendar year and do not begin the enrollment process again until the summer.

The future of the Arts and Culture Commission may also be in jeopardy due to the economic situation. The City Council is reviewing all boards and commissions with the objective of cutting costs. Even though it does not actually have a budget, the commission receives in-kind support from the city of Northfield, which includes staff time. One early proposal suggested merging it with the Human Rights Commission. The whole question of which boards and commissions will remain is still open. With respect to the Arts and Culture Commission, it may depend on how the Council weighs its potential as an economic driver as well as a contributor to the quality of life for the community (Spensley 2009).

Finally, there is anxiety about how the economic situation will affect the arts in Northfield through state budget cuts. Some organizations receive their “keeping the lights on” budgets from state arts money, which may be threatened in the future (Boxrud 2009). This is especially worrisome because it can be difficult to find grants that help cover operational costs, and grant funding in general is becoming scarcer now. In addition, since the governor wants to eliminate the State Arts Board, people fear that arts money may end up being diverted to other sectors. Additionally, some people in Northfield are concerned that arts funding could then end up in other geographic areas such as the Twin Cities, which may be seen as more prestigious and therefore more deserving of support than smaller towns. With such a severe economic situation

in which social services and health care are facing cuts, many individuals in Northfield wonder what hope the arts have to receive funding at all.

However, some believe that the economic situation will not have significant negative effects on the arts in Northfield. Since so much of the arts activity takes place for free, it is already hard for working artists to make a living here. Thus, tougher economic times may not be as difficult for the arts to weather relative to other sectors since it has experience struggling to make ends meet. Some artists reported that they are not being hit as hard as expected. Possible reasons for this include the fact that being involved in the arts may serve as an alternative to more extravagant luxury activities or that when people lose their jobs some return to former interests, such as creating art and thus taking classes. One gallery owner mentioned that tough economic times are a great opportunity to invest in art, so sales of sophisticated pieces could actually increase (Kjerland 2009).

The most optimistic perspective on the economic downturn is that it could even be beneficial for the arts in Northfield, particularly if people recognize and take advantage of the situation. Individuals and organizations are trying to capitalize on opportunities for getting more funding and positioning themselves for when the market is better. Since there is substantial research that demonstrates the beneficial impact of the arts on overall economies, funds to stimulate the economy may actually be directed at the arts in particular. For example, arts events attract visitors and tourists, which is profitable for hotels, restaurants, and other businesses (Minnesota Citizens for the Arts 2006a; Minnesota Citizens for the Arts 2006b).

Artists and organizations have been responding to the economic situation in other creative ways, as well. A number of organizations have been discussing partnering and sharing resources. Some are also changing business models in order to maximize profits. For example,

ArtOrg started an online gallery of artwork available for purchase, which has helped expand its market beyond Northfield and increase its revenue stream.

A number of artists are also changing their practices in order to respond to changing consumer needs and desires. One artist mentioned that instead of doing a thorough, three-series workshop in which people really learn a certain artistic technique, she has started doing one-time “make and take” workshops, which are less expensive and have been more popular recently (Wolcott 2009). Others are considering focusing on creating more functional art, like ceramic mugs and vases, since they are generally less expensive and more useful – two attributes which may increase the likelihood of people buying them when they have less disposable income. This is also a good opportunity for artists to position themselves for when the market improves. Devoting more time to creating art rather than trying to sell it, and making an artist book for publicity are a couple methods that have been discussed.

Project Ideas for Community-College Collaboration

College students and faculty already engage with the Northfield arts community in a number of ways. Student interns have worked with different art galleries in town and the Northfield Youth Choirs have had St. Olaf students interns since 1991 (Boxrud 2009). Art students have also served as interns with individual artists to do collaborative projects while learning from experts. For example, two St. Olaf interns recently completed a project with Jennifer Wolcott, a Northfield sculptor. At Carleton, there are also examples of existing engagement with the arts sector. Chérif Keïta, a Carleton College French professor, has partnered with ArtTech, the charter high school, to work on documentaries he produces. Another Carleton professor, Carol Donelan of the Cinema and Media Studies department, has been working with ArtOrg on a Japanese film festival (Richardson 2009).

The success of these initial connections serves as inspiration to increase collaborative efforts and also helps to create relationships upon which future projects can be based. In the spirit of increased collaboration, this section of the report outlines other project ideas that would benefit individual artists, arts organizations, or the arts sector of Northfield on the whole, as well as the involved Carleton parties.

Projects with Individual Artists

A number of interviewees suggested ideas for joint projects working with individual artists. Many cited student interns as particularly useful resources. Students with experience in accounting, legal work, marketing, or advertising could help artists with those aspects of running their businesses. Others with technology expertise could help with website development or the creation of Internet businesses for artists interested in reaching a broader market. Additionally, art interns could work with and learn from local artists by collaborating to complete a diverse range of projects.

Most project ideas with individual artists involved some kind of research. For example, information about affordable housing and healthcare access for working artists would be extremely useful. Also, finding ways to organize group art supply purchases would benefit artists working in expensive media, such as clay. Looking into how individuals set up and run working studios could also help artists. Details about average income, consignment policies, business models, and financial management would be valuable information.

In light of the current economic downturn, research could help artists maximize funding and other opportunities to earn money. Those pursuing leasing or renting their artwork would need to know whether there is a market for temporary art displays in Northfield. Additionally, grant research is always greatly needed. Since artists are working for profit, sometimes funding

opportunities are more difficult to find than grants for non-profit organizations. Joint grants with other artists or organizations might also be available, but again, research must be done to identify sources of financial support.

Projects with Organizations

Throughout the research conducted for this study, many potential projects were proposed involving Carleton students and faculty working with arts organizations in Northfield. Some of the projects that would be helpful for artists were mentioned as potential projects for organizations, as well. Many organizations mentioned the possibility of having students as interns to work in several different areas. Students with interest and/or experience in advertising or marketing could assist in creating or updating marketing strategies, which would be especially beneficial in light of the current economic situation. Additionally, many organizations would be interested in having students with web development experience work on their websites. Some interviewees mentioned that their organizations are not satisfied with the current state of their websites, and only have sporadic updates made by volunteers. It will be important to create awareness of the seemingly limitless possibilities for college students participating in internships with Northfield organizations.

Comparative organizational research was one of the projects most frequently suggested by interviewees. It would be useful for many Northfield arts organizations to know the specific policies and procedures of similar organizations. For example, the Northfield Arts Guild would like to create an employee handbook and a system for determining how to award scholarships. Instead of trying to 'recreate the wheel', they would like to have models on which to base these new policies. Strategic planning is another concern for many, and is an even more crucial need because of the difficult economic situation. Students could research what others have done in

the past to incorporate creative new ideas into their plans for the future – for example, what could be done to engage broader audiences? Finally, all organizations would appreciate research on the most effective fundraising techniques, for which comparative research would be extremely helpful.

A number of organizations have unique needs which could be addressed by specifically tailored projects and internships. For complete details on all the projects organizations have proposed, please see Appendix A. The Arts and Culture Commission, the Northfield Arts Guild, the Northfield Public Library, and ArtOnWater Gallery all suggested multiple projects that Carleton community members could take on – through both research and hands-on production. For example, the Arts and Culture Commission could benefit from research on existing sculpture programs, competitions, and displays. The Library, on the other hand, proposed many hands-on projects that students interested in the arts could do. In addition to the possibility of having students as temporary curators for the Library’s art collection, the Director, Lynne Young, suggested working in conjunction with the Northfield Historical Society to create a DVD about the history of the Library and residents’ memories of and experiences with it.

For the Arts Sector as a Whole

Many project ideas address needs of the entire arts community in Northfield. To begin with, because so many different ideas do exist, it would be useful to clarify the specific vision for the arts in town. Working with Northfield residents to identify the main goals for the future of the arts would be extremely useful. This has been attempted in the past through town meetings, and currently the work of the Riverwalk Arts Quarter Initiative involves community brainstorming and prioritizing of arts-related goals and projects. However, it is important to understand the views of Northfield community members who are not currently involved in the

arts – a segment of the population that past research has not engaged. Future decisions on what path to take will depend on whether individuals emphasize improving the economy, creating an arts colony, bringing in an audience from beyond Northfield, or some combination of objectives.

A thorough assessment of what resources exist in the town, including people as well as facility space, would also be helpful. Information about the different kinds of artists here might clarify what specific needs they have. It would be important to know what discipline in which people work, as well as the breakdown of how many people do art as a hobby, are established artists with a Northfield market, and are sophisticated artists whose work extends beyond Northfield. Creating an artist directory, and comparing it to the resources of other “arts towns”, could be helpful in determining the viability of Northfield as an arts town. In addition, an analysis of what facilities are available at what times of year versus what the demand is for different arts spaces and equipment would be helpful for determining future building projects that would benefit all artists in the area. Many people spoke generally about the need for more facility space, but specifics both about need and availability could help prioritize and identify what is most crucial to the Northfield arts community.

Although some resources with information about the arts do exist in Northfield, many people brought up the need for other resources, in addition to having the existing information more easily accessible. An artist directory listing all Northfield artists, what they do, and their contact information would help with collaboration. Additionally, a central calendar of events that artists and organizations could update regularly would help ensure access to details about upcoming activities. To help with both publicity and collaboration, some suggested creating a map of the artists, galleries and arts businesses located in the town. Because Carleton has access to Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technology there is the potential to do a GIS version

of this map in addition to an artistic rendering completed by local or student artists. One other useful resource would be a website with links to arts-related sites with information about recent developments in the arts, as well as information about how to get affordable healthcare or address other common needs. Ultimately, it might be most useful to compile all of these resources in one website.

A number of other research projects might also benefit the town. For example, some people suggested that students work with the community to craft a law in support of the arts. Another idea was to analyze the interaction between downtown businesses and arts organizations. This might lead to more Northfield-specific information about how the arts affect the economy, as well. One more interest included finding models of public art forums in order to create one successfully here. Finally, an organized film scene seems notably absent from the arts sector in Northfield. A few people mentioned this and suggested that the colleges and city might consider collaborating to start a film society. Again, comparative research investigating other models, as well as what people are looking for specifically in Northfield, would be a useful starting point.

Because so much art goes on in town, there has been a lot of talk about whether Northfield should strive to make itself into an “Arts Town,” a better publicized destination for people interested in the arts. Other places, such as Stillwater and Winona, Minnesota, have successfully done this in the past. Some comparative research on how to approach such a process was completed in 2006 as part of ArtsPlan06, but it would help to revisit this and potentially complete further research on how feasible an option this would be for Northfield. Currently, the RiverWalk Arts Quarter Initiative committee is working on this project, but would appreciate increased Carleton involvement.

Whether or not the town takes on the specific image of an Arts Town, a significant need exists for better marketing to bring outside audiences to Northfield. It would tremendously help arts (and other) businesses to attract more people from outside the town. Since the Twin Cities are so close, this is one target population for marketing that came up in many conversations. In order to publicize the town of Northfield, students might help develop joint marketing strategies with the different organizations and artists in town. Additionally, specific research on who potential buyers might be and what they are looking for would make the project more successful. Right now, addressing this aspect is particularly crucial since consumers may have different priorities than they did even a few months ago due to the increasing financial crisis.

Finally, as always, funding for the arts in Northfield is another vital need. Students could search for potential grants as well as opportunities to receive state or national support. Providing potential funders with information about the positive impact of the arts on the economy might increase chances of receiving some of this money. In addition, it would be useful to investigate the impact of new policies currently being put into place, like the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment, as well as look into alternative funding methods at the local level. For example, some interviewees wondered whether it might be possible to increase the town's sales tax slightly and designate that extra percentage of revenue to the arts. Others noted that a portion of the tax money that hotels and some other large businesses pay is supposed to help fund the arts in town, but they were not sure if this is actually occurring. Research into where that money goes and whether such a set-up is viable would be very helpful.

Conclusion

This report has outlined some assets and needs of the Northfield arts sector, as well as compiled and recommended a number of projects that would begin to address some of the needs.

For all of the projects, collaboration between college students or faculty and the Northfield community would be crucial. While ensuring that community-identified needs are being addressed, such an approach would contribute to the learning experiences of involved Carleton parties, as well. These projects would help also foster the relationships between Northfield residents and the colleges.

Although it is important to begin work on the recommendations listed here, this is not all that needs to be done. More research should be conducted to supplement this report, specifically considering the disciplines of art not covered as thoroughly here, such as dance, the literary arts, music, and theater. It is quite likely that artists in these disciplines have extremely different experiences, needs and ideas than those involved in the visual arts. Because artists of all kinds work in Northfield, their views must be included in order to have a full picture of this sector.

In the end, one must remember that all aspects of a community are fluid, and what appear to be great challenges today may not be as significant in the future. With this in mind, Carleton College and the Northfield arts community should not hesitate to move forward together in collaborative efforts, but both groups must enter into partnerships ready to be flexible and willing to adjust as situations shift. Maintaining mindfulness of one another's circumstances through constant honest and respectful dialogue will be critical to doing work that benefits everyone involved.

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