

April 8, 2008

# COVENTRY SCHOOL STUDY COMMITTEE

## HEIGHTS ARTS PROPOSAL

*an exploration of the idea of Coventry School as an arts and nonprofit center*

Disclaimer: This proposal considers potential use of the school building, not the park. It is assumed that the park will remain an active green space.

### **PART ONE: VISION AND PARTNERS**

#### **VISION**

Coventry School is a place shared by nonprofit organizations with an emphasis on art, education, and community to create a whole greater than the sum of its parts. The partners in the building collaborate to present ongoing activities for all ages including art, community events, performances, exhibits, and meetings. The building is a destination for residents in the immediate neighborhood and for visitors from throughout the region.

Coventry's location as the gateway between the Heights and University Circle is an ideal one. The proximity of the Coventry business district, the partners within the building, the Coventry Library, and the immediate residential neighborhood will create a vibrant and exciting focus for the entire community.

Shared resources: reception area, offices, meeting rooms, copy center, kitchen, performing venue, rehearsal/large motor activity space, and more. Partners could also share marketing, accounting, and technical assistance.

#### **PARTNERS**

##### **Heights Arts**

*creating community through the arts*  
established 2000, annual budget \$200,000

##### **Programs:**

- Classes and workshops for people of all ages and abilities in visual and performing arts-after school, evenings, and weekends
- Summer arts camp
- Artist Studios
- Performing arts season
- Establish an intergenerational community theater

Current ongoing HA programs include public art, Heights Writes, House Concerts, and Heights Arts Gallery. Heights Arts has an ongoing, strong relationship with the business district. We have worked with them to add the Coventry Arch to the park, and unique artist-made fences, benches, and signage.

The idea of a year-round arts center has been in collective community thought since the Cleveland Heights visioning process in 2001, and even before. A stream of thought within economic development circles identifies communities rich in artists as economic development centers. This building has the potential to support artists in our City while providing an economic stimulus to the area businesses. Arts programs at Coventry School will be an unparalleled resource for the schools, as well as the neighborhood, the community, and the region. Our public schools can and should be known for exceptional arts programs because our community is uniquely rich in the arts, with arts patrons and artists

of all media living here. Coventry School will establish and sustain a relationship with teachers and schools, developing and providing outreach activities to infuse education with the arts.

After school programs, summer arts camp, and artist residencies will supplement in-school programs while providing artists with jobs.

There is a need in the community for a 300-500 seat flexible performance space that can be shared by our myriad performance groups, as well as the greater community.

## **Heights Parent Center**

*Where parents and children play, learn and share together*

Established 1982 , annual budget \$500,000

Each year the Center serves more than 2,500 families of young children.

*Our mission is to support and promote the healthy development of families and children in the belief that strong families build strong communities. We are a unique, non-profit family education, resource and support center open to all families of young children.*

### **Programs:**

- Parenting education
- Discussion and support groups
- Drop-in play and learn sessions
- Family-oriented events
- School-based family literacy programs
- Families Learning Together, a comprehensive literacy program for adults working on a GED who have children who are not yet in Kindergarten
- Toy Lending Library
- Parenting Resource Library
- Bargain Box Thrift Shop
- Kindernet partner

Heights Parent Center will bring families with young children into the building where they will become aware of many other activities available within the building. Ideally, a preschool would be located in the building as well. Families in need can be served by the Family to Family Collaborative with whom HPC would share a resale shop of children's clothing, toys and equipment. Families in need could also then be supported through the programs of HPC.

## **Cleveland Music School Settlement**

established 1912

*The mission of The Cleveland Music School Settlement is to enrich the lives of people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities by offering access to high quality music instruction, music therapy and early childhood education.*

In 1955 the Settlement initiated the work that over the years has developed into what is now the Early Childhood Department, earning a reputation for excellence in all aspects of early childhood education. Approximately 800 children annually participate in the Day School and Preschool, Early Childhood Arts Saturday programs and Music Builders Camp, programs designed to benefit children's intellectual, emotional and creative development.

Early childhood programs are a district priority, and CMMS Director Charles Lawrence is very interested in expanding the CMMS Early Childhood Program into Coventry School. They have been awarded a 3 Star Step Up to Quality rating by the State of Ohio and participated in the pilot program. They regularly partner with CSU, Tri-C, and Case hosting students for research projects and student teaching placements. While no formal study has been completed at CMSS EC regarding school readiness, students have been the source of many research/study topics including wellness programs by Cleveland

Clinic and a socialization study by Case. Recent years have published the correlation between music and academic success, again general studies. They currently serve 200 families in the school annually.

## **Reaching Heights**

*Mobilizes community resources to foster highly valued public schools that provide all Cleveland Heights-University Heights School District students a successful education.*

established 1989, annual budget \$150,000

### **Programs:**

- School Team Grants
- Community Connection Grants
- Music Grants
- Heights Summer Music Camp
- Middle School Honor Band
- Many Villages Tutoring Program
- Spelling Bee

## **Other potential partners**

**\*these have contacted HA to indicate interest**

Nonprofit organizations:

- Cleveland Heights-University Heights PTA
- Coventry P.E.A.C.E.\*
- Cleveland Heights ABLE
- Family to Family Collaborative
- FutureHeights
- Heights Community Congress

Business community:

- Coventry Village Special Improvement District, Inc.\*
- Fairmount School of Music\*

Arts community-many organizations already located in Cleveland Heights:

- Apollo's Fire
- CityMusic Cleveland
- Heights Chamber Orchestra\*
- Dobama Theatre
- Ensemble Theatre\*
- Inlet Dance
- Groundworks Dance
- VerbBallet
- Western Reserve Chorale
- Friends of Cain Park\*
- Art Therapy Studio\*
- Kulture Kids

## **Summary of services**

- Family programs
- Early childhood education
- Summer camps
- After school programs

- Performances
- Meeting rooms
- Resale shop

## **PART TWO: ORGANIZATION, RENOVATION, FINANCING**

### **ORGANIZATION**

Assuming that the school board wants to retain ownership of the school for potential future use, a nonprofit governing board (working name: Friends of Coventry School, Inc.) could be created to manage the facility with a Director of Operations as staff.

All those applying to be a partner organization would be subject to criteria set up by the FCS, and would be required to submit a strategic plan, business plan, and historical financials.

FCS would lease the school from the Board for a nominal fee and with the partners and the community would raise funds for necessary renovations and a maintenance endowment fund. If Board programs are included in the facility, perhaps a Board contribution of insurance or custodian would work towards mutual advantage.

Unexplored resource: <http://www.tidessharedspaces.org/news-events/events/index.html>

### **RENOVATION**

The three major areas needing attention are roof, heating and cooling, and windows. David Beach of The Center for Regional Sustainability and a Cleveland Heights resident suggests looking at these three major expenses as an opportunity to convert the facility to alternative energy. The up-front cost may be more than the conventional upgrades but can dramatically reduce energy bills going forward. Solar panels, wind, and geothermal energy applications can be pursued.

### **FINANCING**

*First of all, this project will only succeed with the full support of the community and funding must come from a diverse revenue stream. There is no one magic source that will create this project.*

#### **1. Program-related investments (PRIs)**

Available through The Cleveland Foundation or The George Gund Foundation who are restricting their capital grants to LEED-rated buildings.

<http://foundationcenter.org/getstarted/faqs/html/pri.html>

Program-related investments (PRIs) are investments made by foundations to support charitable activities that involve the potential return of capital within an established time frame. PRIs include financing methods commonly associated with banks or other private investors, such as loans, loan guarantees, linked deposits, and even equity investments in charitable organizations or in commercial ventures for charitable purposes. Characteristics of PRIs and PRI-making include the following:

- Of the many thousands of grantmaking foundations in the United States, only a few hundred make PRIs. In addition, relatively few PRI funders maintain formal PRI programs or make PRIs on an annual basis (about one out of three).
- Foundations make PRIs to further some aspect of their charitable mission (e.g., in the areas in which they make grants). PRIs are often made to organizations with an established relationship with the grantmaker.
- Foundations commonly make PRIs as a supplement to their existing grant programs when the circumstances of the request suggest an alternative form of financing, when the borrower has the potential for generating income to repay a loan, and as a last resort when an organization — in

most cases a charitable nonprofit but occasionally a commercial venture — has been unable to secure financing from traditional sources.

- While a large portion of PRI dollars support affordable housing and community development, they also have funded capital projects ranging from preserving historic buildings and repairing churches to providing emergency loans to social service agencies and protecting and preserving open space and wildlife habitats.
- For the recipient, the primary benefit of PRIs is access to capital at lower rates than may otherwise be available. For the funder, the principal benefit is that the repayment or return of equity can be recycled for another charitable purpose. PRIs are valued as a means of leveraging philanthropic dollars.
- **The PRI Directory: Charitable Loans and Other Program-Related Investments by Foundations**. 2nd ed. New York: The Foundation Center, 2003. **Excerpts from this publication** are posted to the Research Studies section of our Web site.
- The Grantsmanship Center's **Answers to Some Frequently Asked Questions About PRIs**.

## 2. Ohio Cultural Facilities Commission

<http://www.culture.ohio.gov/about/>

FAQs

**Q.** How can a facility receive funding from the Commission?

A. The General Assembly and Governor select the Commission's projects. All of the projects that are funded through the Commission are assigned to it in the state's biennial capital budgets. The Commission does not have discretionary control over decisions regarding capital funds.

**Q.** What should project sponsors do to be considered for a capital appropriation from the state?

A. Community leaders and project sponsors are responsible for approaching their area's representatives in the General Assembly to request that particular projects be considered for state funding. There is no official application process, although the Commission makes available a pre-assessment form and instructions for use by project sponsors, when a pre-assessment is requested by a legislator.

**Q.** When is the next capital bill?

A. Biennial capital budgets are generally adopted by the Legislature in the spring or summer of even-numbered years. The next bill is expected to be introduced in 2010.

**Q.** What types of projects can be funded through the Commission?

A. Examples of eligible projects include new construction, renovations, restorations, expansions and exhibits.

Some past grantees:

The Moreland Theatre, Buckeye Area Development Corp.	\$100,000
Near West Theater	\$ 46,000
West Side Arts Consortium (5 organizations)	\$250,000
Art House, Inc.	\$ 46,000
Karamu	\$100,000
Beck Center	\$100,000
SPACES	\$ 46,000
JCC Mandel Center	\$250,000

## 3. Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Port Authority financing

eg, Fairmount Montessori School

## 4. Tax Increment Financing

"TIF is a tool to use future gains in taxes to finance the current improvements that will create those gains. When a public project such as a road, school, or hazardous waste cleanup is carried out, there is an increase in the value of surrounding real estate, and often new investment (new or rehabilitated buildings, for example). This increased site value and investment creates more taxable property, which increases tax revenues. The increased tax revenues are the "tax increment." Tax Increment Financing dedicates that increased revenue to finance debt issued to pay for the project. TIF is designed to channel funding

toward improvements in distressed or underdeveloped areas where development would not otherwise occur. TIF creates funding for public projects that may otherwise be unaffordable to localities.” Wikipedia

### **NEXT STEPS in feasibility of proposal**

studies of more models to find best practices of multi-tenant spaces  
an energy audit by an independent contractor to determine costs/savings  
investigation by Lay Finance Committee on financing possibilities