

APAP | MetLife Foundation Case Study  
Engaging Underserved Communities

# UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SANTA BARBARA ARTS & LECTURES

Santa Barbara, CA

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## Take Note

- By directly involving targeted community members in the selection of artist and marketing efforts, Viva el Arte strives to a relevant source of free arts opportunities that provide culturally resonant and language-appropriate arts events for low-income and Spanish-speaking youth and families.
- Key to the program's success has been the use of paid bilingual project coordinators who work directly with their assigned communities on a grassroots basis.
- Based upon feedback from community members, Viva el Arte partners have made distinct changes into the program like increasing marketing efforts via grassroots and major media outlets and engaging additional community partners to reach a wider audience to continue the programs growth and relevancy to the targeted audience.

- Viva el Artes activities offer unique opportunities for cultural education and connection with cultural roots.

## Overview

UCSB Arts Lectures (AL) is dedicated to providing accessible arts opportunities to diverse audiences across the County. In 2004 AL and its partners, the Marjorie Luke Theatre, Guadalupe Cultural Arts Education Center and Isla Vista Youth Projects, founded Viva el Arte de Santa Barbara in response to the lack of low to no cost opportunities for low income, Spanish-speaking communities in the county.

The objectives of Viva el Arte are:

- 1) to serve a diverse and underrepresented audience with accessible and relevant arts opportunities,
- 2) expand the program's reach through strategic community collaborations,
- 3) continue connect with audience members on a multi-generational and personal level, and
- 4) seek out new and continued support from a diverse group of funders and individuals.

## Commitment

### Strategic Concepts

To achieve their goals, Viva el Arte partners:

- engage in various marketing efforts and strategic partnerships with local organizations to reach the largest constituency possible, and
- implement recommendations made by program participants through evaluation surveys.

## Effective Practices

### Community Engagement

Key to Viva el Artes success has been the ongoing efforts of the paid bilingual project coordinators who work directly with their assigned communities on a grassroots basis. Each serves as the face of Viva el Arte, acting as the program's representative to collect feedback, organize the volunteer base, and promote the events. Each draws on their organization's strengths and expertise to provide communities with one consolidated and easily accessed performing arts project that is unique to the community.

Viva el Arte also engages an established network of arts groups, business organizations, churches, after-school projects, schools, advocacy and social service agencies, and Spanish-language media in order to reach the entire county.

## Implementation

Viva el Arte provides Spanish-speaking youth and families in the area with access to exceptional artists through free family night presentations of public performances in three targeted neighborhood venues. It also provides unique residencies comprised of in-school assemblies, community workshops, and lectures/demonstrations, many of which include high cost.

Partner organizations pool resources, avoid duplication of service, leverage support, and draw on their organization's strengths and expertise to provide communities with one consolidated and easily accessed performing arts project that is unique to the community. Paid bilingual project coordinators work directly with their assigned communities on a grassroots basis to collect feedback, organize the volunteer base, and promote the events through creative and effective means.

Based on community recommendations, Viva el Arte has presented mariachi, son jarocho, Columbian, Cuban, folklorico music, and dance traditions to explore a wide variety of Latino-influenced heritages. AL and its partners employ an extremely successful marketing campaign using Spanish language print, radio, and television media.

Since its inception, the program has served over 43,000 community members and continues to be on successful collaborative efforts in promoting arts accessibility in Santa Barbara County to some of its highest need residents.

## Evaluation

Project staff documents the number, location, and type of events offered number of youth and families in attendance at events number of schools served and number of teachers and other educators participating and numbers of collaborative community partners. Staff also solicits comments from artists, educators, community leaders, past participants and reviews media commentary. The bilingual coordinators and project partners obtain feedback from participants and audience members at the events and conduct informal surveys about effective advertising. They also query youth and families who do not attend events in order to discover impediments to participation and to improve communication.

## Challenges

Challenges include developing ongoing, sustainable funding sources in order to continue to offer programming at no cost and to secure additional funding to expand efforts into the broader community.

## Advice

Engaging partners and incorporating feedback from evaluations are key to successfully implementing programming in target communities.



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