

APAP | MetLife Foundation Case Study
Engaging Underserved Communities

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA PERFORMING ARTS

Gainesville, FL

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Take Note

- AIM Together continues to expand on a regional and national level to increase awareness of Arts in Healthcare, specifically regarding the performing arts field.
- The program is designed to demonstrate the use of the arts as a tool in the healing process to artists, patients and their families and healthcare providers.
- AIM Together partnership-based programs have been seeded in five Florida cities and training is offered to artists and performing arts centers alike in order to impact communities on a broader scale.

Overview

Since 2004, University of Florida Performing Arts (UFPA) has been leading the arts presenting field in reaching beyond the theatre walls to bring world-class and developing artists into various healthcare settings through its groundbreaking initiative, AIM Together. This program of Arts in Medicine provides performances and interactive arts events to individuals who, due to illness, age, disability and challenging socio-economic and geographic circumstances, have little or no access to the arts. With no discrimination towards age, race, culture, financial standing, degree of illness and mental or physical restrictions, AIM Together steps outside of the standard presenting boundaries to enable active arts access and experiences in areas that otherwise present no arts interactions. In addition to these goals and objectives, UFPA also strives to provide people living with illness and disability with opportunities to discover, explore and develop creative, expressive and artistic abilities, and to serve as a model for excellence in accessible arts programming.

Commitment

Strategic Concepts

- UFPA provides training opportunities to other performing arts centers and healthcare facilities interested in replicating similar programs in their communities.
- The program provides varying degrees of participation – from group activities to bedside sessions – to accommodate a variety of needs.
- Artists learn skills that they are able to employ in other cities and while on tour.

Professional Development

- AIM Together offers an intensive training opportunity to artists from outside the Gainesville area. Artists receive instruction that help them to replicate their interactions in other cities.

Leadership in the Community

- UFPA has introduced the AIM Together program at regional, national, and international healthcare and arts conferences.
- AIM Together provides training opportunities in group and individual settings to other performing arts centers and healthcare facilities interested in creating similar programs in their communities.
- In 2006-07, the program seeded AIM Together partnership-based programs in five Florida cities, thanks to grants from the Florida Division of Cultural Affairs and the NEA.

Effective Practices

Community Engagement

- Persons with disabilities play an active role in the creation and evaluation of AIM Together activities, as they shape each interaction. Through dialogue with the artists, they determine the best strategies for providing enriching and educational experiences.

Implementation

- UFPA works closely with the staff and administrations of healthcare facilities, publicizing events to patients, families and medical staff through flyers, meal tray cards, posters, newsletters, and email blasts.
- Art performances and activities are set in public areas of the hospital including waiting rooms, main atrium lobbies and outpatient clinics.
- Artists work at the bedsides of those who are too ill or frail to participate in group activities.
- Individuals of all ages (from newborn to end-of-life) with varied illnesses and diagnoses participate in the program.
- Activities are advertised in advance to the outpatient treatment clinics in order to facilitate scheduling for those patients who wish to attend the activities at the time of their appointments.

Evaluation

The evaluation of the program is based upon reports by the patients. Factors taken into account include an improvement in mental well-being, an increase in physical activity, and an improvement in pain management without the use of medication. AIM Together staff also measure the success of the program based upon continued growth and requests for training from other presenters, healthcare systems and artists.

Challenges

At the beginning, UFPA faced challenges in explaining the nature of and need for AIM Together, especially since there were so few similar programs. They needed to determine the most logical way to present their program and plan to engage participants. The longer the program existed and the more artists who participated, the easier it became to explain the nature and mission of the project.

Advice

Be patient. Programs don't develop overnight. Spend time developing a plan and revisit that plan after each project. Don't try to do too much at once; as the momentum builds, so will success.



Association of Performing Arts Presenters

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