

Amira Millicent Davis, EdM, PhD
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April 29, 2015

Pauline Tannos
City of Urbana, Public Arts Program
Community Development Services
400 South Vine Street
Urbana, Illinois 61801
ptannos@urbanaininois.us

Re: Jewelry Making for Self-Empowerment
Courage Connections Workshop
Urbana, Illinois
April 7 – 28, 2015

Ms. Tannos:

I hereby certify that I am authorized to approve this Report, which serves as a Request for Reimbursement, that I have reviewed the attached invoices in the amount of \$500.00; that all costs claimed have been incurred for the Project in accordance with the Agreement between Amira Millicent Davis and the CITY OF URBANA; that all submitted invoices have been paid; and no costs included herein have been previously submitted.”

Amira Millicent Davis, EdM, PhD

The Report

- 1. Accomplishments and how grant funds were utilized during the grant period.** During the period of the grant, I worked with women who are currently clients of the local domestic violence shelter, Courage Connections. The funds were used to purchase supplies (beads, string, containers, wire, charms, etc.) for a 4-week jewelry making workshop for an ethnically diverse, intergenerational group of women. The goal of the project was to demonstrate the therapeutic and economic benefits of crafting for women at a crisis point in their lives. Funds were also used for copies for handouts and transportation to and from the site.
- 2. The impact that the grant funds had on your artistic or organizational development.** The project stemmed from a research project in which I had been engaged since the fall of 2013 that explored the effects of stress and violence on low-income women in a neighborhood on the South Side of Chicago. I had conducted a review of literature that found empirical evidence for the deleterious effects of stress and high cortisol levels on women's bodies that resulted in lowering of the immune system and an increased risks of inflammatory diseases: cardiovascular diseases, hypertension, diabetes, etc. Additionally, the effects of stress and depression on pregnant women have been shown to lead to high infant and maternal mortality rates and low birth weight babies that, in turn, leads to development issues with the child. Engagement in the arts and the creative process is the hallmark of human development. Research suggests that U.S. adults have limited opportunities for arts involvement and that only 26% of all adults report having been involved in the arts during their school age year. As such, this project has allowed me to bring the arts to an underserved, vulnerable population in ways that proved to be mutually beneficial. The participants in this workshop were enthusiastic about the information provided, especially information on crafts entrepreneurship that demonstrated how they could turn a \$60 investment into \$200 profit.
- 3. The number of hours spent in completing the project, including planning, administration, promotion, production, and the final presentation.** In addition to the 5 hours to write the proposal for this project, I spent approximately 10 hours online researching and ordering materials, 8-10 hours each week prepping for the 90 minute workshops that included purchasing materials locally, gathering information, preparing slideshow presentations, and making copies of handouts. Two hours each week were spent editing images and writing reflections following each workshop. Additionally, approximately 8 hours will be spent preparing the final report. The total approximate number of hours spent on this project: 80 hours.
- 4. The number of participants in events or activities related to your grant project.** The project was developed for 15 participants each week. During discussions with the staff of Courage Connection during the planning phase, it was communicated that the shelter had a capacity of 15 and that the clients came and went so that I may not be interacting with the same women each week. However, the residents were encouraged to work so that not all 15 residents would attend the workshop which was offered during their regular empowerment sessions from 10 – 11:30 each Tuesday. In the end, the first week there were 8 women. The second week there were approximately the same number. There were 9 the third week, and 10 the final week including 2 new women and the teen daughter of one of the clients.
- 5. Description of experience working with collaborating partners.** I'm grateful to Isak Griffith, Director and Jean Algee, the former program coordinator for Courage Connection for this collaboration. I approached Ms. Griffith, whom I had met doing other artistic projects in the community, in September 2014 about the possibility of facilitating a project. She had recently taken the director's position but was very receptive to the idea. She arranged a meeting with the director of program who gave me a scholarship to attend a 40 hour DV certification training session. Members of the staff participated in the workshop and made their own pieces. The staff gave positive reviews to the program, stating that the clients had spoken quite favorably of the experience.
- 6. Any additional comments.** This was a mutually rewarding experience for me as an artist and educator and for the women. I administered a short survey at the end to ascertain the women's responses to the experience. I received 10 responses that all rated the experience as a 10 on a scale from 1-10. Ninety percent of the women reported some degree of stress; 60% reported some level of depression. They all stated they found the workshop to be fun and relaxing, that they would recommend the workshop to others, and they would like to participate in similar activities in the future. I was able to make valuable human connection with these women, most of whom gave me a hug before they left. I would receive weekly text messages from another telling me how empowered she felt about the workshop. The counselors participated in the workshop, as well, making their own bracelets. A counselor shared the following comments about the workshop from one of the clients during their one-on-one session: "4/8/15: "I told my roommate about our bead making class and how the colors represented different things." She said "That's not empowerment from abuse. I said, "Oh yes it is. It gave us something else to think about, a different way to think about ourselves other than being abused. It was also very peaceful." My project also allowed staff to imagine other ways to engage the clients. One counselor stated that after seeing the response by the women, she'll begin incorporating jewelry making in her empowerment sessions. I was also able to present the concept of the workshops at two events in Chicago and California and will be writing a paper about the experience for presentation at the National

Association for Women's Studies annual conference in November. These types of events and outcomes are made possible by the collaborations of artists, arts organizations/commissions, and community partners.

Grant Award Form

Grant Award Form: Please complete the Project Questions below and include this page in your Final Report materials submitted to the address below.

The information provided in question #1 – 5 should be the same as the information on your Urbana Arts Grant Agreement with the City.

1. **GRANTEE:** Name of Applicant or Primary Contact

Amira Millicent Davis
810 East Burkwood Drive
Urbana, Illinois 61801

Project Title: Jewelry Making for Self-Empowerment
2. **TOTAL AMMOUNT OF GRANT FFUNDS AWARDED:** \$ 1,000.00
3. **TOTAL AMOUNT OF GRANT FUNDS RECEIVED TO DATE:** \$500.00
4. **GRANT PERIOD:** April 7, 2015 through April 28, 2015
5. **EXPENDITURE DEADLINE:** April 28, 2015
6. **DATE OF PROJECT COMPLETION:** April 28, 2015

Budget

(Receipts attached)

Item		Notes
Jewelry & Supplies	\$418.95	
Copies & Printing	20.00	Weekly handouts. (No receipts, library copy machine)
Transportation	60.00	To and from stores & program site
	\$498.95	

Week 1: (Self) Love Bracelets

Concepts discussed

- Inspirational, empowering quotes
- Colors, symbols, gemstones (Rose Quartz, Lepidolite, Aventurine)
- Chromotherapy, Vibrational medicine



Week 2: Memory Wire Bracelets – Stress and the Re-memorying Body
Concepts discussed

- Stress and health
- Crafting as therapeutic
- Gemstone meanings



Week 3: Memory Wire Necklaces
Recap of previous discussions



Week 4: Crafts Entrepreneurship: From Hobby to Income

Concepts discussed

- Materials Needed
- Suppliers
- Turning \$60 investment to \$200

