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## PAC Summer Presentation

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# CBA Prison Arts Collective: Comprehensive Certificate and Facilitator Training

Professor Annie Buckley

Jessica Agustin, Diana Hernandez, & Lindsey McDonald

California State University, San Bernardino

# Incarceration in the U.S

- ▶ In the past four decades, our country's incarceration rate has more than **quadrupled** and is now unmatched in world history.
- ▶ Today, **2.2 million** people are behind bars in the United States. **We have the world's largest prison population.**
- ▶ About **7 million people** are under the supervision of the corrections system, either locked up, on probation or parole.
- ▶ It's a system marred by vast **racial disparities**. Today, African-American men who failed to finish high school are more likely to be behind bars than employed.

Source: Southern Poverty Law Center (Information of mass incarceration)

<https://www.splcenter.org/issues/mass-incarceration>

# Higher Education in Prisons

“In 1994 the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act **barred people incarcerated in the U.S. from receiving Pell Grants**. This piece of legislation effectively **ended prison higher education in the U.S...**”—Prison University Project

Prior to this:

- **23,000 incarcerated persons** were receiving Pell grants out of 4 million students overall
- **35 million dollars** was allocated for Pell grants for incarcerated persons out of 6 billion as a whole.

However:

- If we can reduce recidivism **by 1% we save \$80 mill per year**
- The cost of educating an inmate for a year **(\$2,000-4,000)** is less than incarcerating them for a year **(\$32,000-40,000)**
- With education **75%** of prisoners are able to overcome stigma of their criminal records and get jobs; greatly improves job outlook



## A University and Prison Collaboration

*Community-based Art: Prison Arts Collective (PAC)* is dedicated to collaborating to facilitate creative arts and writing in prisons. We are committed to supporting the development of self-expression, reflection, communication, and empathy.

We believe in the capacity of art to expand make a difference in how we see and understand ourselves and the world around us.

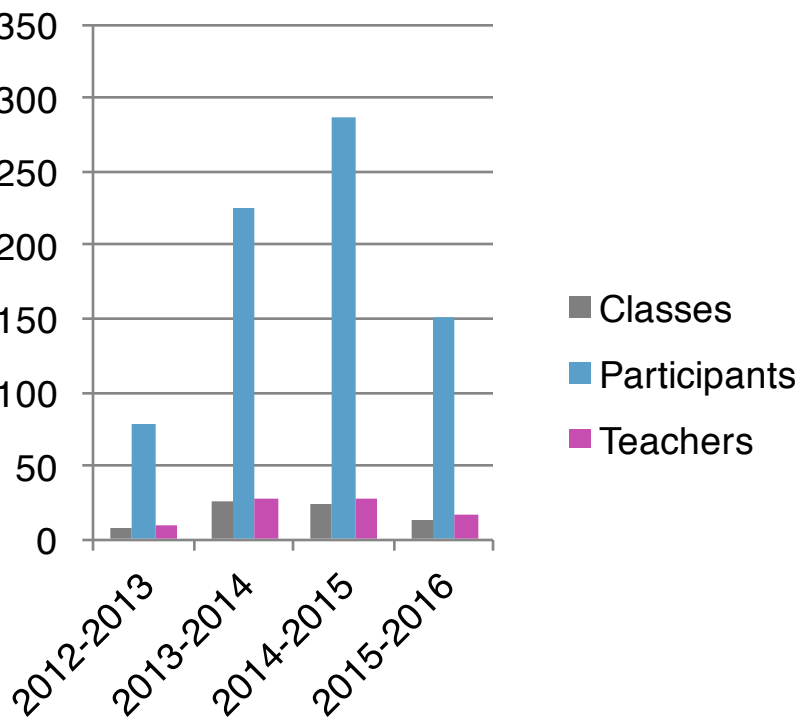
We currently facilitate weekly programs in three California state prisons:

- California Institution for Men (CIM)
- California Institution for Women (CIW)
- Los Angeles County State Prison (LAC)

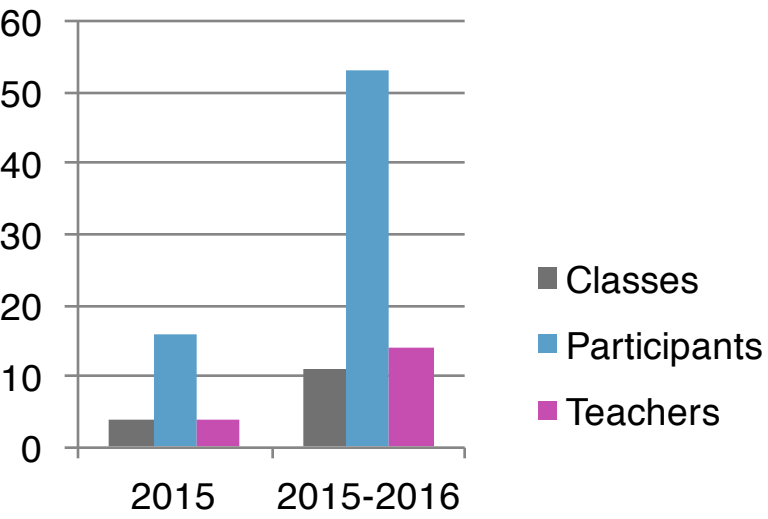
# History:

- ▶ Prison Arts Collective (PAC) is a project that grew out of CSUSB Community-based Art (CBA), a program dedicated to facilitating art in communities that have little to no access to art. Both programs were founded by Annie Buckley, an associate professor at CSUSB.
- ▶ PAC consists of:
  - Undergraduate students
  - Graduate students
  - Writers
  - Faculty
  - Guest artists
  - Alumni
  - Community members
- ▶ The first iteration of PAC was a pilot program at the California Institution for Men (CIM) in March 2013 and has grown ever since.

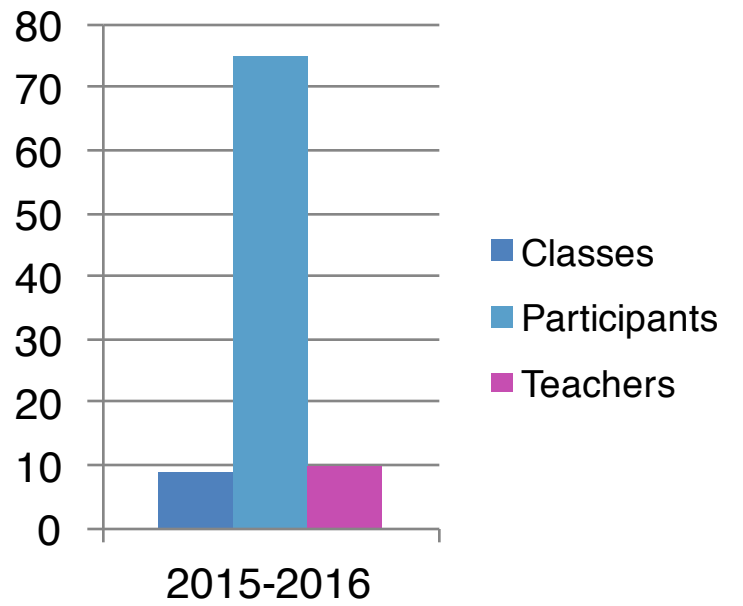
# California Institution for Men



# California Institution for Women



# Los Angeles County State Prison



# Mission & Core Beliefs

- PAC is unique in its connection to public higher education and its commitment to **academic activism**.
- We believe in a strong emphasis on **collective decision making**, by providing mentoring programs for both university students and inmates interested in teaching.
- We focus on establishing **communication and dialogue** through creative arts to support people that are incarcerated in developing both their **creative voice** as well as **patience, confidence**, and **skills** to interact effectively with others.
- We hope to expand our program and be able to offer **credit-bearing courses in the future**.



# Our Initial Research Goal:

- ❖ The purpose of our research was to investigate and design two areas within PAC's prison work:
  - A comprehensive certificate program in the prisons, whether a BA or certificate.
  - A facilitator training for those interested in teaching with Prison Arts Collective.



In order to achieve our goal for credit-bearing classes our project shifted to:

- ▶ Summer Guest artist program
- ▶ Pre and post surveys
- ▶ Research on other programs & research visits
  - Curriculum
  - Training
  - Support
  - Organization- website, titles, structure
- ▶ Resources: Art Library
- ▶ Year Long Certificate Program– developing curriculum
  - Course participants up for release & Corita
  - What are some challenges: materials, content, etc.

# Summer Pre & Post Surveys

Our program implements assessment through Pre & post surveys in every session. This summer, we tailored surveys to fit with our Summer Guest Artist Program.

## **Pre-Survey**

- Have you participated in Community-based Art? If so, how many times and which classes?
- Why did you join the art program? What do you hope to gain?
- What do you hope to learn from our guest artists this summer?

## **Post Survey**

- What are the most valuable skills you have gained from attending the summer art program?
- How did meeting guest artists shape your class experience? Please be specific.
- Explain how your class experience shaped your existing views on art/ art making. Did you find this to be a valuable experience? If so, why?
- Do you plan to return to the art program in the fall? What do you hope to learn or study?

These surveys are essential because they give us feedback and insight directly from our participants. This can help us to better our program by tracking participant progress and improvement. Data collection will also benefit us for a future collaborative ethnographic study with the sociology department.

# Summer Guest Artist Program

This summer PAC facilitated a summer program that featured local guest artists. From July 8- August 12 we had guest artist give a presentation about their own artistic practice at CIM & CIW.

After their talk we would do a project inspired by the artists' talk.

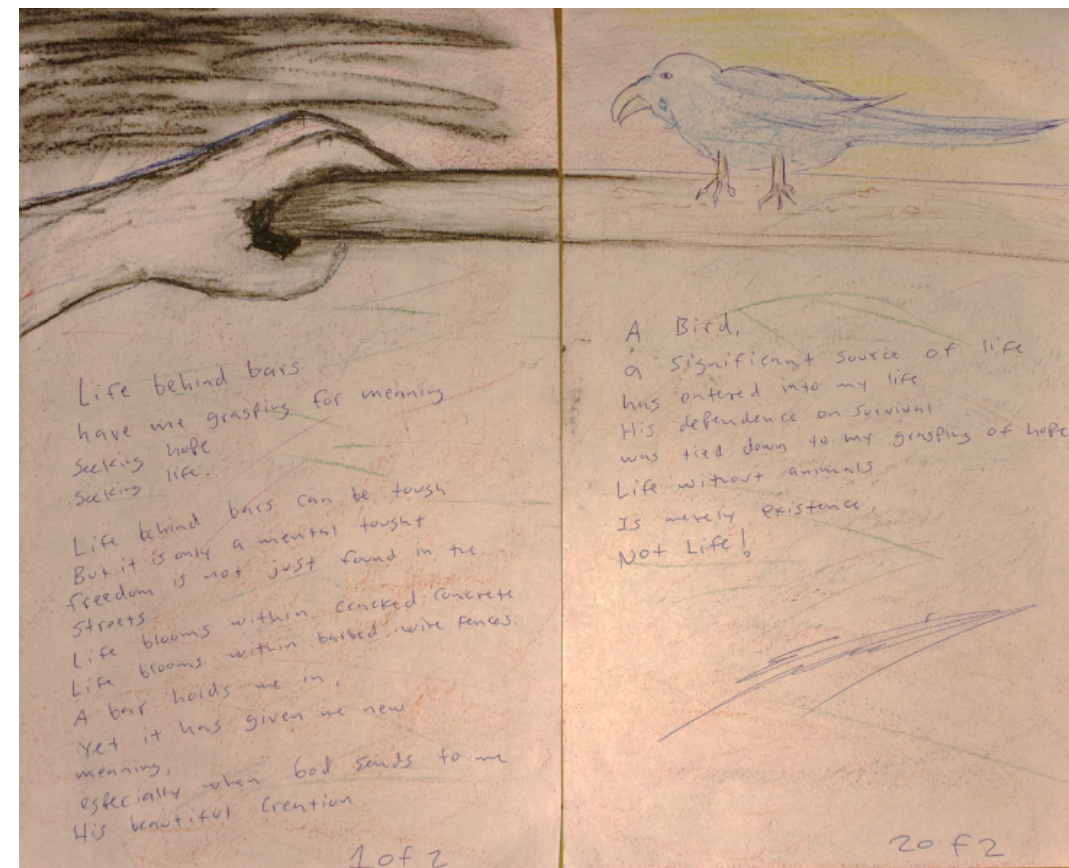
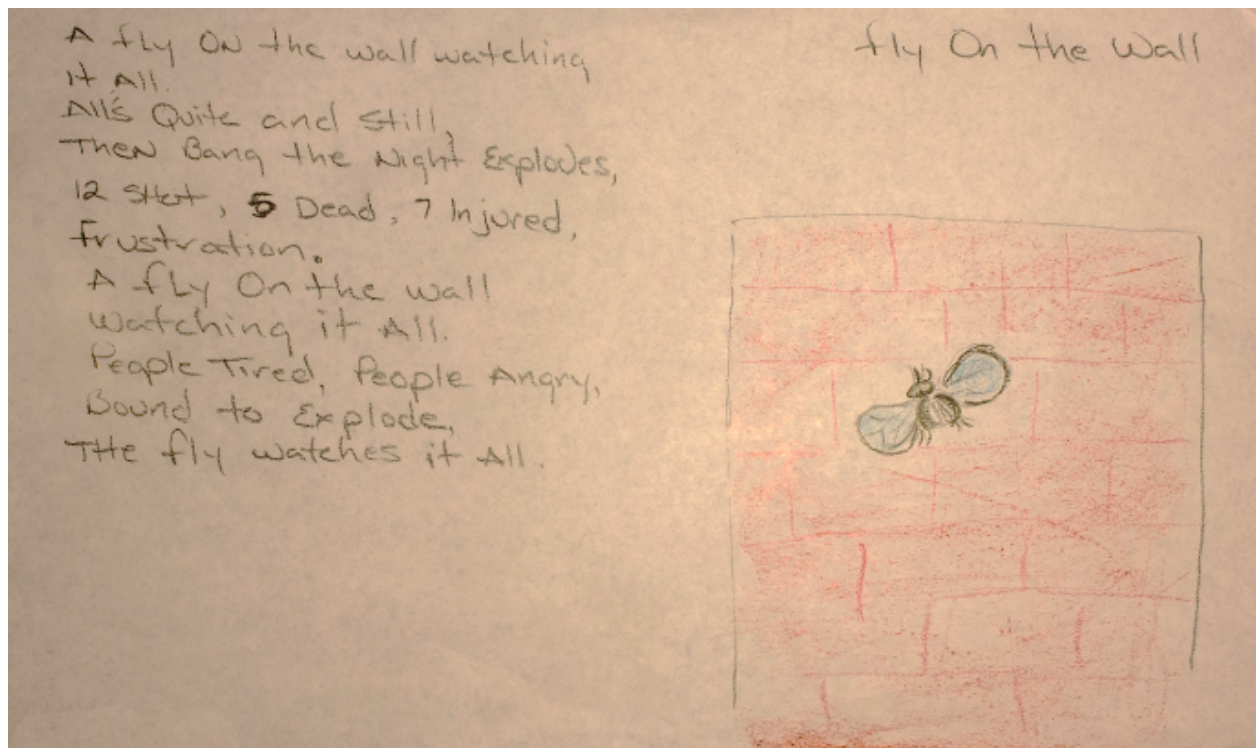
The goal of this program was to expose participants to a diverse pool of contemporary art. This included artists who worked with a variety of media and subjects as well as artistic styles.

Guest artists included:

- ▶ Eve Wood
- ▶ Annie Buckley
- ▶ Nancy Stevens
- ▶ Mariah Armstrong
- ▶ Jenny Montenegro
- ▶ Samantha Fields

# Guest Artist: Eve Wood

Project: This project touched on symbiotic relationships with the use of visual art and poetry.



Art work by CIM participants

# Guest Artist: Annie Buckley

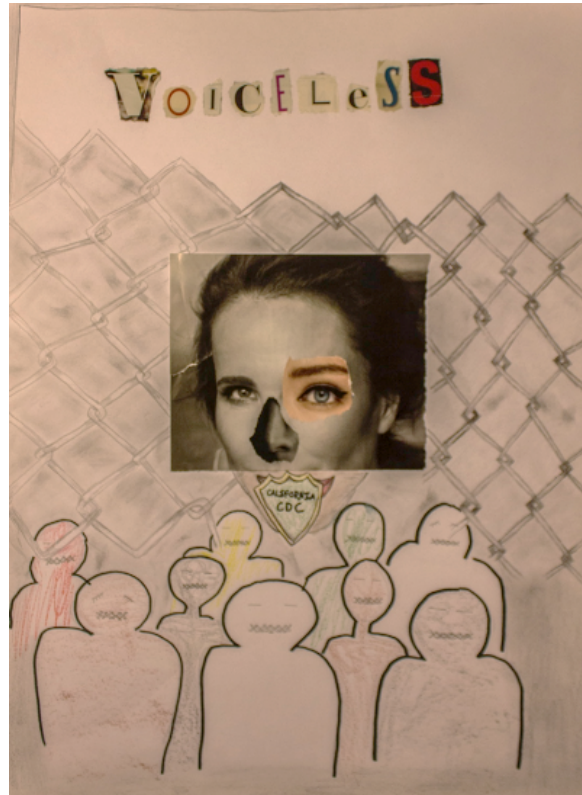
Project: Visualization was an important aspect of this project. Participants visualized a safe space and projected it in a drawing.



Art work by CIM/CIW participants

# Guest Artist: Nancy Stevens

Project: In teams or alone, participants created a political poster advertising their view on a social issue.



Art work by CIM/CIW participants

# Guest Artist: Jenny Montenegro

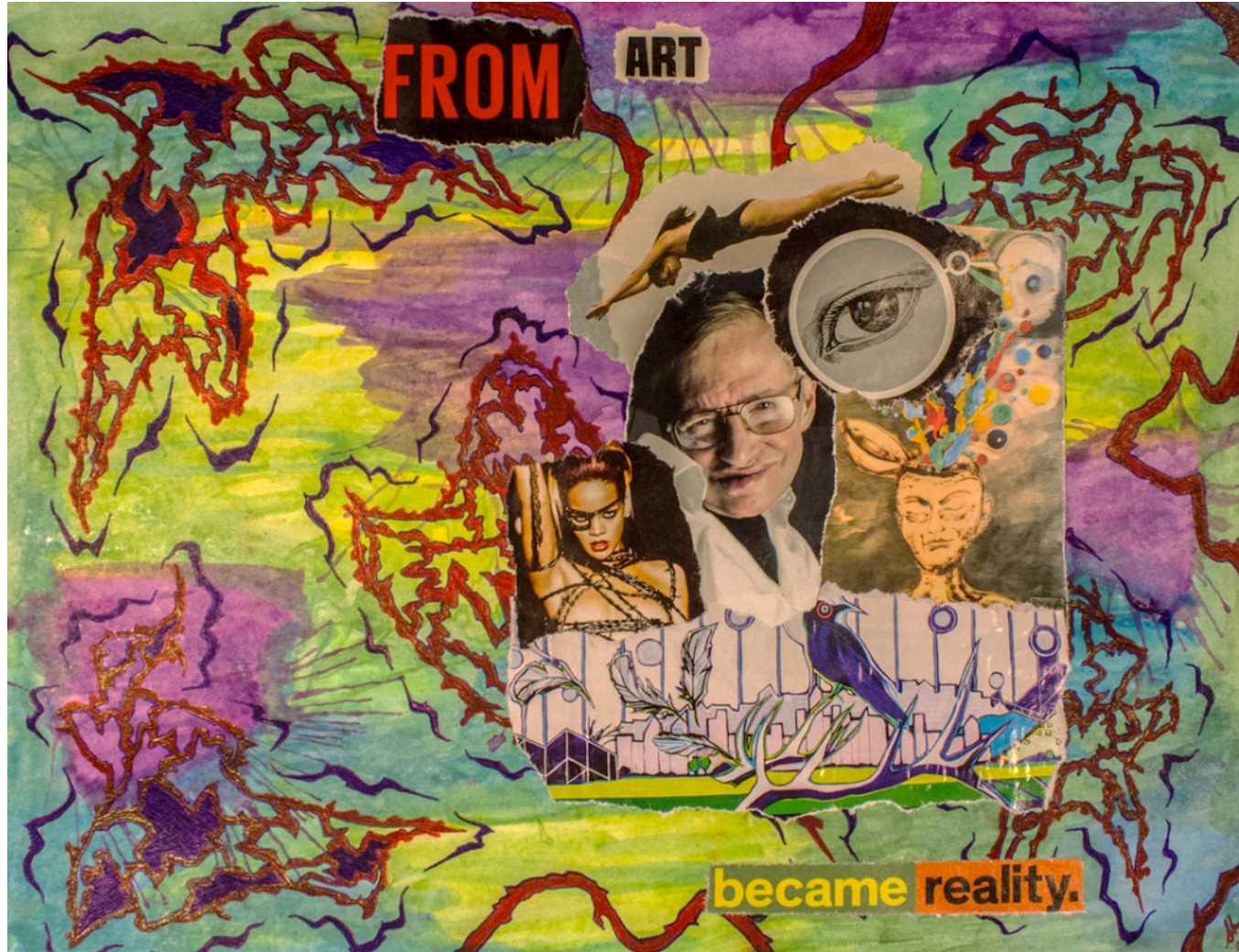
Project: Participants had to create an image or self portrait expressing emotions with color.



Art work by CIW participants

# Guest Artist: Mariah Armstrong

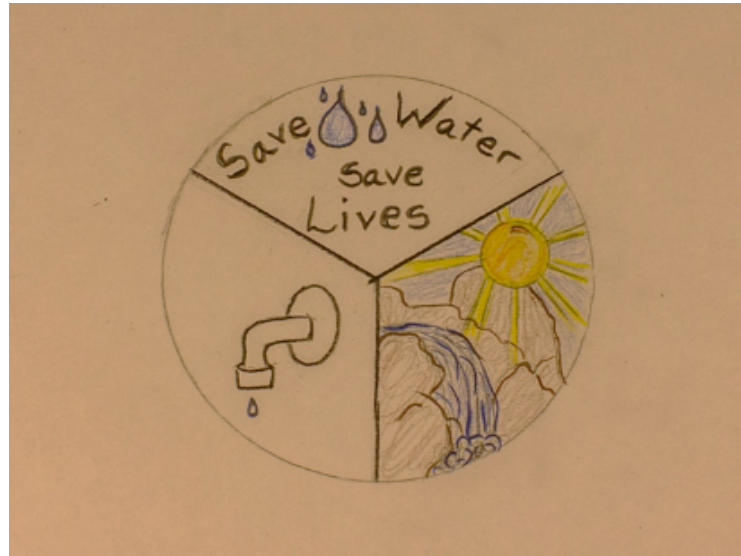
Project: Participants had to create a collage with their distortion of reality.



Art work by CIM participant

# Guest Artist: Samantha Fields

Project: At CIM the participants had to render an image using only one color value. Where at CIW participants had to create a logo that represents a wish for the future of the planet.



Art work by CIM/CIW participants

# Research on other Prison Programs

Much of our research focused on other higher education and prison arts programs. Some of these programs have several years of experience or have been offering credit and degrees:

- ▶ Prison University Project- AA Degree
- ▶ Prison Education Project
- ▶ Alabama Prison Arts & Education Project
- ▶ Actor's Gang
- ▶ Arts in Corrections
- ▶ William James Association

# We considered several areas within these programs:

## ▶ Curriculum

- What kind of classes are taught?
- What is the overall learning goal?

## ▶ Training

- Is there an application and training process?
- What are some of the qualifications required to be a part of the program?
- What level of education is being brought in?

## ▶ Organization

- How is the curriculum organized?
- Are classes for credit or a degree?

## ▶ Support

- Are these programs supported and partnered with universities?
- How are these classes paid for?
- Do these classes provide textbooks & resources?

# Research Visits: L.A. Trip

Part of our investigative process was to make visits to three programs.

- ▶ Anti-Recidivism Coalition

- ▶ The Anti-Recidivism Coalition provides a support network for formerly incarcerated young men and women, and advocates for fairer criminal justice policies.
- ▶ What is **recidivism**? A return to incarceration, following release from prison or jail. The failure of our justice system to rehabilitate returning citizens and keep our communities safe.

- ▶ Corita Art Center

- ▶ The Corita Art Center has developed a number of outreach programs to continue Corita's tradition of teaching in the classroom. PAC is currently collaborating with them to create a rehabilitative and uplifting curriculum for our participants.

- ▶ Homeboy Industries

- ▶ Provides hope, training, and support to formerly gang-involved and previously incarcerated men and women allowing them to redirect their lives and become contributing members of our community.

Each program allowed us to gain a different insight on the inner workings of organizations and how they make it possible to help people.

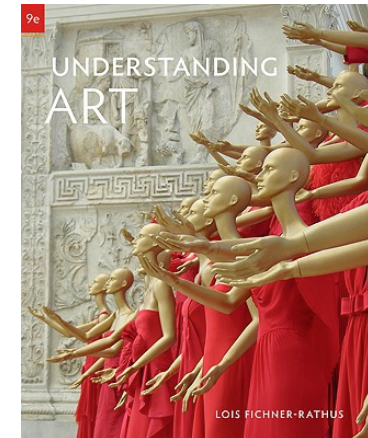
Part of our process was to research each program prior to our visit and as a team come up with questions for our hosts. These questions would be created with the aim to help further our knowledge about our own program.



“Homeboy Industries has been the tipping point to change the metaphors around gangs and how we deal with them in Los Angeles County. This organization has engaged the imagination of 120,000 gang members and helped them to envision an exit ramp off the "freeway" of violence, addiction and incarceration. And the country has taken notice. **We have helped more than 40 other organizations replicate elements of our service delivery model, broadening further the understanding that community trumps gang -- every time.**” - Father Greg

# Resources for Participants: Art Library

- ▶ One of the main challenges of teaching art inside state prisons is the lack of resources and images accessible.
- ▶ Upon further research of the Alabama Prison Arts & Education Project, we came across a solution, the idea of a library.
- ▶ The library is an ongoing project that will consist of:
  - approved art books
  - scanned images & readings
  - copies of guest artist presentations
  - posters
- ▶ Each site will also be provided sets of art textbooks to use in class.



# Year Long Certificate Program

- ▶ In order to eventually achieve our goal of implementing credit-bearing classes one of our focuses is to create a more rigorous year long certificate program. We have used our research on other programs in order to begin forming a strong successful program.
- ▶ Developing the year long certificate program has been one of the main goals this summer, we plan for it to be a three session long program that is challenging and rewarding for those who commit to its entirety.
- ▶ We plan to pilot the year long certificate program at California Institution for Men (CIM) starting this fall quarter.
- ▶ This is an ongoing project that we are currently finalizing.

# Development of Year long certificate program

- ▶ The development of the certificate program has occurred organically and collaboratively.
- ▶ Some of the concepts that have been discussed during the developmental process are:
  - Program title
  - Application process/ Requirements
  - Curriculum: What classes should be offered?
  - Assessment: Homework & how to track progress and development.
  - Forming an orientation day
- ▶ Much of our collaborative process has included **Peer Leaders**- inmate participants on the inside. They have provided their input on many of these questions and shared their insight and ideas.

# What makes a strong program?



We've discovered that much like us, many programs began small and have grown thanks to volunteer efforts. Also, only a few of these programs provide credit classes or degrees. We've learned a lot about what can make us a stronger program. Much of our research has given us a lot of insight in how to provide more for our participants.



# Thank you to the Office of Student Research.

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