

**A Timeline of West Baltimore's CultureWorks  
working with  
Alternate ROOTS' Resources for Social Change  
Fall 2007 through Fall 2014**

Compiled by Bob Leonard

*(Unless noted otherwise, citation notes refer to digital documents in Bob Leonard's computer files under the general file name ROOTS or in his e-mail archives)*

**September 15, 2007** – Ashley Milburn, a found object artist and a graduate student in MICA's Master of Arts program in Community Arts, produces "A Cultural Reclaiming of *The Highway to Nowhere*," a graphic proposal for art making for social justice and community cultural development.  
(overview2b.doc -> Culture Works Project)

**October 3-7, 2007** – Creative Convergence, A Festival Celebration of Art, Activism & Community in Baltimore, MD. Presented by Alternate ROOTS, Baltimore Theatre Project, and ClancyWorks Dance Company. Event Design and Organizer/Coordinator, Ashley Sparks. Ashley Milburn learns about Alternate ROOTS through Ashley Sparks and other ROOTers from Baltimore. Ashley Milburn seeks further connections with ROOTS.  
(Details about partners and programming from DanceNow's website - <http://www.dancenow.org/convergence.html>)

**November 28, 2007** – Ashley Milburn resubmits *The Highway to Nowhere Cultural Project* to the faculty of the Center for Art Education at the Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA) in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Arts in Community Arts, and prepares an accompanying document *Historical Review of the Highway to Nowhere*.  
(final submission pas-11-07.pdf -> Culture Works Project)

**July 12, 2008** – Alternate ROOTS Resources for Social Change (RSC) Learning Exchange (LE) in Chestertown, MD; organized by Hope Clark, Bob Leonard, Margo Miller, Laura Schandelmeier, and Stephen Clapp; 13 participants including Ashley Milburn, Sheila Gaskins, and Brian Francoise from Baltimore. Following the LE everyone goes to dinner at a local restaurant. Ashley Milburn sits with Hope Clark and Bob Leonard, picking crabs and telling stories.  
(-> CAPP/RSC 07/08 -> Summer 08 Trainings -> Chestertown)

**July 30, 2008** – Report from July Learning Exchange leadership team to Community Artists Partnership Program (C/APP) Work Group on the CultureWorks Project in West Baltimore, as envisioned by Ashley Milburn. Report introduces Ashley Milburn and his work in West Baltimore as a passionately conceived arts project seeking to develop cultural assets within culturally isolated communities in West Baltimore. Ashley identifies the challenge of organizing 14 blocks of neighborhoods and begins looking for an RSC partnership. Ashley proposes the incorporation of ROOTS artists from the Baltimore, Philadelphia, and DC areas into the effort to organize artists for cultural work in West Baltimore. He asks that

mentoring partners from RSC be directly involved in the development of the West Baltimore project.  
(Culture Works Project Report.doc -> CAPP/RSC 07/08 -> Summer 08 Trainings -> Chestertown -> Project Report Packet)

**August 4, 2008** – RSC views the invitation from Ashley Milburn as a long sought opportunity to work with artists in a specific community on economic and social justice, and community development. RSC responds to July report by forming an RSC team to work with Ashley Milburn and West Baltimore’s CultureWorks on investigating the potential of a partnership between Alternate ROOTS and CultureWorks. Preliminary ROOTS and RSC team: Laura Schandelmeier, Stephen Clapp, Caroline Morris, Priscilla Smith, Kathie de Nobriga, Carlton Turner, Maurice Turner, Hope Clark, and Bob Leonard. Leonard identified as “point person.” Hope Clark and Maurice Turner join Leonard as a three-person team working with Ashley Milburn.  
(RSC-CWP response 8.6.doc -> Culture Works Project)

**September 29, 2008** – First of many meetings of RSC team members Hope Clark, Bob Leonard, and Maurice Turner with Ashley Milburn

**October 10-12, 2008** – Hope, Bob, Maurice, and Ashley Milburn meet with several community members at Bon Secours Foundation of Maryland in the heart of West Baltimore. Meetings organized and arranged by Ashley Milburn. Meetings include several community organizers from Bon Secours, as well as: Ray Baylor, a neighborhood activist in West Baltimore; several students from Johns Hopkins studying Policy Studies; Lucretia Jackson whose stories about the Highway to Nowhere inspired Ashley Milburn to begin this project; Art Cohen, retired legal aid lawyer, who was involved with the resistance to the proposed construction of the Highway to Nowhere and is still committed to community activism for justice; Kenny Clemens, art student of Ashley’s interested in art making as community action; Hannah Belcher, preacher and photographic artist committed to improving West Baltimore; Mr. Paul Booth, a long time union organizer and community activist; Edna Mann, organizer of the Fayette Street Outreach Center; and Denise Johnson, a community organizer on staff at Secours Foundation, a community relations and engagement arm of Bon Secours Hospital in West Baltimore. Denise is assigned by Bon Secours as an advisor to CultureWorks, and eventually becomes a co-partner with Ashley Milburn, forming the leadership team for CultureWorks in West Baltimore.  
(-> Culture Works Project -> Oct Meet Report material)

**Fall 2008** – Ashley Milburn explores potential strategy of aligning CultureWorks with Urban Farming including a concept proposal. He identifies another potential local ally: Laurie Kendall and the Spiral Dance Womyn’s Center and Bookstore in Baltimore.  
(final-EXHIBITION ANNOUNCEMENT PERSPECTIVE.doc -> Culture Works Project -> EcoArts/FreshStartFarm)

**Fall/Winter/Spring 2008/09** – Ashley Milburn explores possibilities of the West Baltimore Mural Project on the walls of the Highway to Nowhere, and encounters the political struggles between the City of Baltimore (Baltimore Office of the Promotion of the Arts – BOPA), CultureWorks, and the various neighborhood organizations and alliances within West Baltimore.

**February, 2009** – Focus group convened by CultureWorks, organized by Morgan State University School of Public Policy students, facilitated by Dr. R. Rowel to determine what artists need in order to be able to work in the community.  
(Morgan State University student report - CultureWorks notes and photographs held by Denise Johnson or Ashley Milburn).

**April 28, 2009** – Ashley Milburn submits final report for his Open Society Institute Fellowship outlining Accomplishments and Concerns: City moves forward with mural project independent of CultureWorks. CultureWorks shifts its immediate attention to Drumming event in late June and longer term attention to working with Morgan State, Coppin State, and OSI to develop community planning mechanisms, including Denise Johnson's innovative suggestion of a community charrette strategy. This report marks Ashley Milburn's deepening understanding that: the community must be at the center of any cultural development efforts; CultureWorks might be thought of as an organizing team; and community allies (West Baltimore people and organizations) must come together as the conceivers and implementers of actions for effective and sustainable community cultural development. BOPA backs away from working with CultureWorks implying an overt disinclination to work with communities in West Baltimore and a preference to work strictly from within the Mayor's office.  
(AshleyOSI report.4.28.doc -> Culture Works Project)

**June, 2009** – Second Drumming Up Community event at the end of the Highway To Nowhere is planned and implemented by CultureWorks Committee for Art and Culture. The event is supported by PNC bank and provides free drums to children 12 and under including drummers of Park Vibe organized by committee chair King Teasdell. Includes local community food vendors and open mike dialogue.  
(CultureWorks notes and photographs held by Denise Johnson or Ashley Milburn).

**June 6, 2009** – RSC team of Hope, Bob, and Maurice submit report to RSC Workgroup. Report observes the challenge within ROOTS/RSC to design effective action steps and sequences for effective organizing in partnership with CultureWorks. A meeting of interested but non-aligned community people may come up with good ideas, but essential follow through by CultureWorks can slip away for lack of resources (personnel, time, and minimal funding). When RSC is asked to help initiate action within a specific community, follow-through as key to the support of the action needs to be considered as a possible aspect of RSC's commitment. Report proposes the possibility of working with Denise Johnson to design an innovative charrette to "gather people's dreams," working with community leaders as facilitators. This might be a next level of community meeting, coming out of the October 9-12, 2008 community meetings. Ashley observes that the project cannot be based on one or two peoples' efforts, will, or leadership. He states clearly that neither CW nor RSC has the resources to carry out this project without the community. He states that the work of CultureWorks, with the assistance/guidance of RSC, is in community cultural organizing. As an example, he observes that the community resists the asset mapping initiative so other actions need to be explored as organizing strategies. MICA and BOPA are separating themselves from CultureWorks. Ashley calls for RSC to deepen its commitment through a "prolonged residency" in West Baltimore. Report proposes the RSC team work with Ashley on:

1. A strategic action planning session in preparation for the June 27<sup>th</sup>/28<sup>th</sup> drumming event
2. A strategic action planning session following the drumming event
3. A strategic action planning session for the support and advancement of CultureWorks itself as a key organizing aspect of the overall plan for community cultural development in West Baltimore and the neighborhoods of the Highway to Nowhere

The report states that this kind of extended RSC engagement with CultureWorks will require funding – a need to be shared between CultureWorks and Alternate ROOTS. (CWRSCreport 6.6.09.final.doc AND CWRSCreport 6.6.09.final-1-ashley.doc -> Culture Works Project)

**June 8, 2009** – CultureWorks proposes WaterCulture: Our Hidden Streams. (four documents – Culture Works Project -> Hidden Streams)

**June 27, 2009** – “Drumming Up Community.” West Baltimore Coalition, Committee on Arts and Culture (organized by Ashley Milburn and Denise Johnson) produce a drumming weekend in West Baltimore that draws a crowd and advances recognition of CultureWorks as an effective organization. Event attracts potential allies. Video and still photography document the event. (CultureWorks notes and photographs held by Denise Johnson or Ashley Milburn)

**July 23-26, 2009** – A series of Community Meetings are held Thursday through Sunday, organized by CultureWorks with RSC team. Hope, Bob, and Maurice in Baltimore for the weekend to facilitate and assist Ashley and Denise in conducting these conversations. The weekend discussion is of two parallel topics: 1) The various projects surfacing in the West Baltimore communities through extensive community dialogues that CultureWorks is interested in pursuing and identifying the various people and groups as possible partners in these projects; 2) The future of CultureWorks. Ashley Milburn frames these topics in the context that the community needs to be the driving force, not one or two people from CultureWorks. CultureWorks can support and help lead, but the community needs to be understood and respected as the essential driver of what will be done.

### Topic 1

The group identifies the need to strengthen leadership capacity within CW and within the community as a whole, and strongly endorses the many possible projects under consideration. There is a sense of urgency for change in the face of worsening national climate. Sheila Gaskins identifies her interest in building a play from Ashley Milburn’s scenario *The Last House Standing*. Ashley feels less alone as the result of the weekends’ conversations. The Hidden Streams project draws strong interest and support from all participants. Group establishes a set of questions to help guide participants in moving forward.

- When we create institutions, how do we create life, living fluid things?
- How do we keep ourselves grounded, and take this work and make it grow?
- Regular and constant dialogue – How can my own self make a connection and make a difference? It is important to keep a regular dialogue about race present in all our work together, so how do we keep dialogue present and continuous?

- How do we present light bulb moments? Stories. Art-making. Strategic choices. Information/dissemination.
- How do we remember the transformational moments? We are asking to help transform ourselves and others, so how do we live in the moment of our intentions as we meet their challenges?
- The days and weeks before an incarcerated person returns to the outside community are a time of exceptional stress. Feeling good is scary. I can't go there. I've been walled in and concreted over and I have to break that concrete apart to find my freedom. There is no room left for feeling. How do we address fear of freedom?
- How do we keep a check on roles and responsibilities?

An observation: this list of questions can help form the covenant we will make with ourselves and our partners.

## Topic 2

Successful progress for CultureWorks will require many partnerships, some local and, possibly, some national. Possible partners evident right now are:

- Bon Secours
- Fusion
- West Baltimore Coalition, Arts and Culture Committee
- The Institute of Visual Arts in a West Baltimore Middle School
- Baltimore City School System for EcoArt project
- Chesapeake Bay Trust and Parks & People's 263 Watershed Council
- Nicodemus Church
- Community Development officer at PNC Bank
- Alternate ROOTS

To advance a possible partnership with ROOTS, the group identifies the importance of CultureWorks leadership attending the upcoming ROOTS Annual Meeting (August, 11-16, 2009) in order to deepen an understanding of resources available on both sides of this potential partnership and of the needs and challenges faced by both sides.

The idea of CultureWorks submitting a C/APP grant proposal in late Fall, 2009, is discussed, including the possibility of some funding for *The Last House Standing* project and some funding for documentation of CultureWorks actions.

(NotesMeet7.26.09 HC.doc -> Culture Works Project -> July 2009 Meet) (Agenda7.23-26.09.doc - same)

**August 12, 2009** – RSC team (Hope, Bob, and Maurice) reports to CultureWorks and the C/APP/RSC Work Group at the July 23-26 meeting. Report documents planning, design, participants, process, and outcomes of the July 23-26 community meetings. RSC team re-confirms commitment to CultureWorks with specific interests and capacities. Potential partners affirm their commitments: Parks&People commits to Hidden Streams project; Community Development office of PNC Bank commits to re-vitalization of West Baltimore through CultureWorks' arts-based strategies; Ray Baylor commits to "on the street" organizing in the neighborhoods; King Teasdell, lead drummer in Drumming Up Community project, agrees to chair the Arts and Culture Committee of the West Baltimore

Coalition (WBC) and to work with Mr. Paul Booth toward bringing the WBC into effective communication with the City of Baltimore's Transit Oriented Development (TOD) committee; and Denise Johnson agrees to facilitate communication amongst all parties.

The report clarifies that the Arts and Culture Committee of the WBC will serve CultureWorks as an Advisory Board, and that CultureWorks will, for the time being, remain a non-incorporated entity. Further Ashley Milburn has met with the pastor and board of Nicodemus Church (on the corner of the Hidden Streams project site) and has begun to allay the fears of the congregation that CultureWorks is "just another opportunist organization."

The report offers some cogent analysis of the functionality of the key leadership of CultureWorks and RSC.

The absence of youth in CultureWorks' organizing team is noted and 2 key individual youth with like interests are identified: Kenny Clemens and Ayanna Barmore.

Report recommends continuing to explore the potential relationship between RSC and CultureWorks, broadening those directly involved to include more ROOTers and West Baltimore folks. WorkGroup agrees.

Report states, "CultureWorks offers the possible opportunity for ROOTS to learn from and with CultureWorks by joining together to make specific projects happen in Baltimore. As Ashley wisely says, every such joint venture must be something new, not what's been done before, for it to be of value and worth the effort. And, as Ray Baylor has said, such new ventures must be done right, primarily connected to the ground roots in the neighborhoods of West Baltimore."

(RSCCWReport8.12.final.doc -> Culture Works Project -> July 2009 Meet)

**August, 2009** – Hannah Belcher mounts an exhibit of her photographs in a community gallery space.

(No documentation in Bob Leonard's files)

**Fall 2009** – Ashley Milburn and Denise Johnson work daily to advance the many potential partnerships and projects the community dialogues have identified. Many e-mail and phone call exchanges transpire between CultureWorks and the RSC team. Community mural is sponsored by BOPA. CultureWorks facilitates envisioning sessions with Operation Reach Out SouthWest, Housing and Physical Planning Committee, Recovery In The Community, and New Hope Substance Abuse youth services.

(Mural located at Fayette and Fulton Streets. Project archived with BOPA).

**December 2009** – CultureWorks receives a Kresge Art Community Grant. Group identifies a youth Empty Lot Project. Three community conversations produce three lot sculptures designed and built by Kenneth Clemens working as an apprentice with Ashley Milburn. Project conversations with Lockerman Bundy staff and students (Believe In Us), Boyd Booth Community Association (Legacy), and Bon Secours Family Support Center. Central idea of the project is generated by students of the Baltimore Freedom Academy (You Tube Video).

(CultureWorks notes and photographs held by Denise Johnson or Ashley Milburn)

**December 1, 2009** – Ashley Sparks, then Chair of the Executive Committee of Alternate ROOTS, reaches out to Baltimore ROOTers and CultureWorks to consider hosting the 2011 ROOTS Fest. CultureWorks responds expressing interest.

(Ashley Sparks [ashleyasparkles@gmail.com](mailto:ashleyasparkles@gmail.com) e-mail thread in ROOTS -> Culture Works Project)

**January, 2010** – ROOTS chooses to locate its ROOTS Fest 2011 in West Baltimore, June, 2011 with CultureWorks serving as hosting organization.

(No documentation in Bob Leonard's files)

**March 26, 2010** – Ashley Milburn proposes a “Mutual Statement of Purpose” between CultureWorks and ROOTS’ RSC. In this statement, he proposes that CultureWorks and RSC will work together, “to explore tangible means to assist communities to move forward in [a] natural evolution to be creative, establishing a clear visual presence within [CultureWorks’] communities, and to build cultural assets that are community driven.” Further, the statement asserts, “We have identified the ROOTS 35 ON RT 40 [ROOTS Fest 2011] as the vehicle for implementing what we (CultureWorks and the RSC team) had begun two years ago – a focus for art and culture to affect change. Both CultureWorks and RSC view [the festival] as an opportunity to implement guided community engagement that leads to broad community participation in the festival. CultureWorks will request of RSC that they will assist us in working in community engagement, guiding the Baltimore arts community into the process of community envisioning, and assisting in planning both pre-festival and post-festival strategies to continue after the festival in strengthening our communities.”

(mutual statement of purpose.doc -> Culture Works Project -> CW/ROOTS PARTNERSHIP Spring 2010)

**March 29, 2010** – At the RSC Workgroup monthly meeting, the RSC/Baltimore team (Hope, Bob, and Maurice) recommends the partnership outlined in Ashley’s proposed “Mutual Statement of Purpose.” The discussion identifies “a distinction between the Festival production and CultureWorks’ work over time.” Further, the discussion clarifies that “RSC will not tackle Festival design and production – that will be a different group of people.”

Next steps are identified:

- “Encourage CultureWorks to identify projects
- Bring a plan for moving forward back to RSC, then we can develop a budget together
- Bob, Maurice, and Hope to continue working on [developing ROOTS/CultureWorks partnership]
- Vet the statement of purpose before it’s written in stone.”

RSC WorkGroup agrees to move forward without objections.

Bob revises the initial draft of the Statement of Purpose to include: “Agreement on a preliminary action plan through the Festival, with specific statements of responsibilities (mutual and separate) from both parties is the next step in bringing this to a mutually agreed partnership.”

(RSC notes 3.29 re CultureWorks partnership.doc ->Culture Works Project -> CW/ROOTS PARTNERSHIP Spring 2010)

**Spring 2010** – Conversation with Bon Secours Health Systems to examine the utilization of community artist to showcase work at Bon Secours Baltimore (For Your Good Health Bon Secours Baltimore/The Art of Healing-Artistic Expressions Aim to Unify the Community).

**April, 2010** – Creation of the Baltimore Artmakers Facebook group, which remains active.

**Spring 2010** – Creation of CultureWorks Community Art Gallery at Bon Secours Foundation Community Center. Work includes local community artist.  
(CultureWorks notes and photographs held by Denise Johnson or Ashley Milburn)

**May 14-15, 2010** – Festival Planning Retreat in Baltimore. General concepts of *ROOTS Fest 2011: Many Communities, One Voice* put forth. Dates set: June 22-26, 2011. Many voices from West Baltimore and ROOTS present a volume of good ideas for consideration and people for inclusion. The idea of a two-part festival is presented and generally found agreeable: a “pre-festival” National Learning Exchange with invited participants to take place Wednesday - Friday, followed by a broad public celebration of performance, art, and community on Saturday and Sunday. Randy Rowel states his interest in joining the CultureWorks team and bringing his students into the project as volunteers. A list of “Who Will Be Responsible for What?” is proposed and accepted. Agreement is acknowledged and clarified that the Festival is for both Alternate ROOTS and West Baltimore. Next steps are specified and assigned.

(FestNotes.5.14-15.10.doc -> Culture Works Project - ROOTS Fest 2011)

**May 23-24, 2010** – First CultureWorks Strategic Planning meet, Bob Leonard facilitating. Preliminary articulation of

- Organizational and project missions and values
- Goals with Time Line
- Action Steps (Projects) with Time Line
- Funding needs and possible sources.

Coming out of this preliminary strategic planning session, participants recognize that the complexity of CultureWorks taking on community cultural organizing and hosting the festival is nearly overwhelming to all. Everyone feels positive about the potential worth of the efforts but unsure about the capacity of both CultureWorks and the RSC team to do all that is envisioned. Participants agreed, somewhat reluctantly, that the RSC team would need to contain its partnership commitments to CultureWorks’ immediate and long term community cultural organizing efforts and not to CultureWorks’ Festival hosting. In acknowledging this distinction, everyone agrees that the event of the Festival needs to serve West Baltimore and CultureWorks by providing a strong base from which the community and CultureWorks can build capacity, advance community cultural development, and grow following the Festival.

(NOTES FROM RSC WORKSHOP 5-10.doc -> Culture Works Project -> May 23/24, '10 meet) (NOTES FROM RSC WORKSHOP2.doc - same) (NOTES FROM RSC WORKSHOP – notes1-2.rhl.doc - same) (board #4.doc - same)

**June 26, 2010** – 2nd Drumming Up Community event at the end of the Highway To Nowhere is planned and implemented by CultureWorks Committee for Art and Culture and supported by PNC bank. Free drums are provided to children 12 and under including drummers of Park Vibe organized by committee chair King Teasdell. Includes local community food vendors, open mike dialogue.  
(CultureWorks notes and photographs held by Denise Johnson or Ashley Milburn).

**September, 2010** – Gallery celebration, youth performances (dancing, singing, poetry), live band performance by Executive Director-George Kleb.  
(CultureWorks notes and photographs held by Denise Johnson or Ashley Milburn).

**September 11, 2010** – Community Festival Workshop is organized by CultureWorks.

- “Before we figure out what communities are going to do, we need to take [the festival] concept to [the communities] and help them plan.”
- “We should not presume the use of what we call ‘empty spaces.’ These are lots in a community and [they] belong to [the communities.] They are not just empty lots. They have a history with each community. ... The City imposed their plans and the community was not involved. We can’t make the same mistake.”

Many ideas for “Re-Wiring” West Baltimore put forth. Conceptual base of Festival: Remembrance/Healing/Celebration.  
(meeting-9-11-10.doc -> Culture Works Project -> September 11 meet)

**September 18-19, 2010** – ROOTS conducts a C/APP Learning Exchange to inform interested people from West Baltimore about the Festival and the C/APP grant program in which folks from West Baltimore can participate. Hope Clark facilitates. 39 people participate.  
(September 2010 notes.doc -> CAPP/RSC 10/11)

**September 23, 2010** – Randy Rowel, Denise Johnson, Carlton Turner, Bob Leonard, Ashley Milburn, and Ray Baylor present “Contributions and Functions of Art and Culture in Building Resilient Communities,” a panel and open discussion exploring primary functions of arts and culture in the resilience-building process. The panel uses the upcoming ROOTS Fest 2011, with its underlying social change purpose, as the focal point of the discussion.  
(No substantive documentation in Bob Leonard’s files)

**December 4-5, 2010** – Second CultureWorks Strategic Planning meets, Bob Leonard facilitates. This session builds on the preliminary strategic planning developed in the May 23-24 Strategic Planning. King Teasdell, Zelda Robinson, Glenn Smith, Arlene Fisher, four key community leaders, participate with Ashley Milburn, Denise Johnson, and Bob Leonard.

- Draft Mission for CultureWorks: Identify and Enhance Art and Cultural Resources in West Baltimore
- Strategic Projects:
  - Hidden Streams
  - Last House Standing – Sheila Gaskins with Ashley Milburn advising
  - Sculptures in empty lots – Kenny Clemens with Ashley Milburn advising
  - Cultural Asset Mapping – Randy Rowel and students

- Organize and facilitate Community Conversations about community cultural development
- Organize self-sustaining artists in the community
- Murals on the walls of the Highway To Nowhere
- Organizational Development
- Develop functional structure – Explore how West Baltimore Coalition Committee on Art and Culture serves as advisory board for CultureWorks
- Develop and implement fundraising strategies in partnership with ROOTS and others
- Partner building

Strategic focus: How to utilize the Festival for each and all of these actions? Be prepared to postpone any actions that the Festival cannot support or otherwise advance.

The first of these to go is the Mural project on the Highway to Nowhere, which all agreed is a long term project, too demanding to realize in physical terms by ROOTS Fest, June, 2011.

Hidden Streams is recognized as central to the Festival, as well as to the long term interests of CultureWorks. A somewhat detailed project plan and time line is developed for this project. All agree that the Hidden Streams project planning process serves as a model for the necessary planning of the other projects on CultureWorks list. Responsibilities and task assignments are discussed and agreed upon.

The Sunday session focuses on the organizational development of CultureWorks itself, resulting in a preliminary flow chart of actions targeted over five years (Dec. 2010 to December 2015).

(CWPlanningRprt.12.10.doc -> Culture Works Project -> December 4,5 meet) (12.4.10 missn-prjcts.doc - same) (12.4.10 Hidden Streams.doc - same) (12.5 OrgDevFlowChart.doc - same)

**December 16-17, 2010** – CultureWorks and Fayette Street Outreach Organization (FSOO) meet to ascertain common cause and how to gain mutual benefit from working together. Hope Clark and Maurice Turner facilitate. Fayette Street Outreach project faces serious contracting problems in their effort to renovate buildings into a community center. The organization is stuck between gaining city building code approval and a “messed up” contracting agreement. Despite promises on all sides, over more than one city administration, satisfactory completion of renovation remains out of reach. Nevertheless, FSOO sees potential of regaining organizational capacity through the Festival and agrees to help promote the Festival and provide Festival programming activities on site as resources allow.

(Fayette St Outreach Meeting 12.16.10.docx -> Culture Works Project -> 12.17-19.10 FayetteStOutr -> FayttStOutrch 12.16-19.10) (Fayette St Outreach 12-17-10.docx - same)

**February 26, 2011** – Meeting of ROOTS RSC and CultureWorks. Participants: Carlton Turner, Ashley Milburn, Bob Leonard, Maurice Turner, Denise Johnson, Tufara Waller Muhammad, Ebony Golden, Omari Fox, Sheila Gaskins, Ayanna Barmore, Jason Capoeira, and Hope Clark. In anticipation of the upcoming RSC Retreat, March 24-26, this meeting considers the possibility of dedicating a day of the RSC retreat to preparing for an RSC

presence at the National Learning Exchange, and to connect with/analyze how and what C/APP is doing with CultureWorks.

Complications with the relationship between CultureWorks, Fayette Street Outreach, and ROOTS are unpacked and discussed.

Carlton Turner says, "If we cannot get Culture Works doing what it has to do by the time the Festival is over, then Alternate ROOTS has not done its job."

Denise Johnson says, "CultureWorks has been investing in the community. What it has not been doing is focusing on CultureWorks as an organization. Perhaps [CultureWorks needs] to focus on specific [Festival projects,] and not focus so much about the community engagement."

Denise and Ashley eventually agree that they will have to stop their community engagement work in seeking partners and developing projects for long term community cultural development, and limit their work to the needs of hosting the Festival. (ROOTS RSC & Culture Works 2.26.11.docx -> Culture Works Project -> 2.26.11ROOTS/RSC/CW)

**March 25-27, 2011** – RSC Retreat. Ashley Milburn and Denise Johnson present an overview of CultureWorks' development and association with ROOTS and RSC. Ashley offers his observations about "the dynamic of artists entering communities vs. artists being rooted in the community." He also says, "The project began as an organizing project to get responses from the community about art and culture. The challenges were to identify art and culture potential in the neighborhood. ... The community arts contingent of our community is at a tipping point. ... The conversation began with one-on-one dialogue. Now, it is a community dialogue. Next step is to turn this into community action."

The meeting engages in an important series of questions and responses between RSC and CultureWorks:

*Who or where is your community?*

Monroe to Warwik to Baltimore to Mulberry St. There is a need to connect with community so that community members have investment in a project.

*How is this process of community engagement going?*

Very well. For example: Ashley Milburn and Kenny Clemens – street art project. We wanted young people to come up with a concept – "where could you put trash?" We asked young people to draw ideas that could be developed on vacant lots. We received some small grant funds with Parks and People to work with children for this project. We are trying to make W Baltimore after the festival, a location for art-making to move forward. Right now, we are in the process of developing a community center. To turn youth 'destructive' energy to positive community engagement. Also, new playground to be developed with community input.

*What is the best way to aim connections made in W Baltimore towards Culture Works?*

Ashley – It is not appropriate to think of ourselves as 'outsiders'. We need to make personal contacts in the community. What we lack is a plan to implement... that's why we are here.

*How do we link the W Baltimore community, through oral histories, to communities outside of W Baltimore?*

Many people have never been asked to share their stories and histories.

*How does Culture Works assist in the process of an "Independent Self-Directed Community"?*

*How do we define the word "talent"? Who is counted as talented, how is talent measured?*

There is a general assumption that talent exists. Our role is to take the talent 'off the shelf' and identify individuals with talent and connect them with other individuals who may be able to mentor.

*Who are the gatekeepers for this work? Again, how do we aim these interested individuals towards Culture Works?*

The opportunity here is to look at our resources. Vacant lot project gets us to focus on vacant lot properties. While CW starts the conversation, CW is not responsible for systemic change. This is where the concept of self-directed community comes in.

(At the NLE [planning meetings], there was a large delegation of neighborhood representations in the room.) *How can we put the needs of individuals who want to work now? Is Culture Works a facilitator and not a gate keeper?*

*What is the change you'd like to see in the community?*

Denise Johnson – We are still in the process of identifying art and culture throughout W Baltimore. Using the lens of organizing. The switch was recognized when we realized that our conversation was the same conversation among community members.

*Need resources to put identified artists throughout the community.*

*Independent community direction and the holding of culture – what else do we do to ensure this? Ultimate Goal = ARTS INTEGRATED COMMUNITY*

The group identifies the following NEXT STEPS regarding long-term partnership between ROOTS and CultureWorks

- There may be a need for grant writing
- RSC In-house resource map
- Dance Box Theater as fiscal sponsor very low negotiated fee (0% - 7%); as well as fundraising strategy development
- Crowd sourcing: A structure that is non-hierarchical and more organic. (Model:

Church. People give to something that they can't find elsewhere; feeding the soul of the community.)

- Establishing a timeline of [CultureWorks'] objectives is essential!

(March 2011 Retreat Notes.doc -> CAPP/RSC 10/11 -> Retreat 3.25-27.11) (CW-RSC ACTIONSTEPS3.26.11.doc - same)

Subsequently a more detailed statement of Action Steps for CultureWorks and RSC is prepared and shared. The Retreat agenda goes on to matters of RSC and the Festival. (CW-RSC ACTIONSTEPS3.26.11.doc -> CAPP/RSC 10/11)

**April 28, 2011** – Morgan State students in Dr. Randolph (Randy) Rowel's Public Health class, "Community Needs and Solutions II," prepare and submit a report, "Final West Baltimore Team Report," documenting a two-semester project "concerned with art makers' perceptions of using art or creative expression to bring about social change." The main topical areas are as follows:

- Art and art making or Creative Expression
- Barriers to art making
- Social Change
- Disaster Preparedness

(Final West Baltimore Team Report-MAY 5A 2011-1.pdf -> ROOTS 35 Festival 2011 -> Rowel's Report)

**May 13-15, 2011** – Final Festival Planning Meeting. Festival leadership, Hosting leadership, Baltimore staff, and multiple festival partners.

(May 15 2010 ROOTS Festival Community outreach.rtf -> ROOTS 35 Festival 2011) (May 14 2010CW & ROOTS next steps after meeting.rtf – same) (May 13 2010 ROOTS Fest May 13 Hope's Notes with office requests.rtf – same)

**June 22-26, 2011** – National Learning Exchange and Festival. Sometime prior to actual event, Hosting team decides that hosting tasks and time do not allow CultureWorks to prepare a presentation during the National Learning Exchange, on the Festival grounds, or during the weekend Festival. Preparing the facilities for the National Learning Exchange and the Hidden Streams site require considerable labor. Numerous other prep and hosting tasks abound. The affair itself is a grand success. ROOTS and CultureWorks provide bus tours of West Baltimore for National Learning Exchange participants. The Learning Exchange goes well. There are more than 200 participants. The weekend Festival draws crowds (11,000 is the recognized number) from West Baltimore, the city as a whole, and from afar. The Festival creates an atmosphere of celebration, human fellowship, and peace during which time there are no acts of violence recorded by the police in West Baltimore. (No documentation in Bob Leonard's files)

**July 15, 2011** – CultureWorks hosts a Post ROOTS Fest 2011 Conversation. Participants include: Glenn Smith (West Baltimore Coalition), King Teasdell (Chair, Committee on Art and Culture, WBC), Al Robinson (Coppin State), Ayana Barmore (CultureWorks and BAM), Sam Thompson (ROOTS), Ashley Milburn (CultureWorks), Denise Johnson (CultureWorks) Tim Bridges (Bon Secours and Fayette Street Outreach), some members of the cast of *Last House Standing*, other staff from Bon Secours, and one home owner adjacent to the Hidden Streams site. Everybody is tired and not yet recovered from the hard work. Nevertheless,

everybody recognizes that the Festival was far more successful than anyone had imagined. Community was energized, and many came out just because the event felt so good. Concerns are raised about groups from the community that were not present or represented in the Festival. Some express potential to move and improve from here. Bon Secours staffers feel that there was no net gain for the community, certainly no economic gain, either immediate or foreseeable. Home owner was pleasantly shocked by the “serenity” and community feeling of the event, noting “more than a few” people spoke of “investing in the area.” Some speak about conversations during the Festival that were uncommonly interactive (between community and police, for example) about community and values of West Baltimore. All recognize the event as successful in itself. Some see it as a start, even a good start. However, anything that might happen next represents too much for anyone at this time to imagine undertaking. Everyone needs time to digest and re-group.

(Culture Works Post ROOTS Fest 2011 Conversation.docx -> ROOTS 35 Festival 2011 -> Hope's notes 7.15.11 meet) (RSC member WB notes.docx – same)

**September 10, 2011** – Meeting of CultureWorks, RSC team, and Carlton Turner. Review of work together and debrief from the Festival. Everyone is still tired. CultureWorks leadership not inclined to undertake any projects or action steps at this time. Need time to let things evolve on their own. Ashley and Denise focus on personal needs and professional careers. Nevertheless, commitments are re-affirmed for ROOTS and CultureWorks to continue to consider building on their partnership, as realities in West Baltimore and within Alternate ROOTS unfold.

(ROOTS CWmtg 9.10.11.docx -> Culture Works Project -> ROOTS.CW meet 9.10.11)  
(Above cited document is a draft agenda. No other documentation in Bob Leonard’s files)

**September 16, 2011** – Ashley Milburn submits a final report on the Festival to Alternate ROOTS. Report is an in-depth review and analysis from point of view of Festival host and CultureWorks artistic leader.

(final ROOTSFEST 2011-3.doc -> ROOTS 35 Festival 2011 -> Ashley M's Report – ROOTS)

**October, 2011** – Ashley Milburn, Randy Rowel, and Bob Leonard present as a panel, moderated by Dudley Cocke (Roadside Theater and Appalshop), on “ROOTS Fest 2011: Key Partnerships, Community Cultural Development, and the Emerging Social Movement.” The dialogue begins in this panel presentation that evolves over the following two years into an extensive essay.

(Original panel discussion was recorded by Appalshop/Roadside. A copy and/or a transcription of the recording was provided to Jon Catherwood-Ginn who utilized it to develop the eventual essay. Location of recording and/or transcription currently unclear.)

**May, 2012** – Hoodie Diaries Exhibit at the Artist Housing gallery. Depiction of the hood as expressed in community dialogue and created by Ashley Milburn. Exhibit includes community and youth conversations.

(CultureWorks notes and photographs held by Denise Johnson or Ashley Milburn)

**October 25, 2014** – ROOTS Fest 2011 Reunion in West Baltimore. Three years have passed. Over that time, Ashley Milburn, Denise Johnson, Randy Rowel, Bob Leonard, Dudley Cocke (Roadside Theater and Appalshop), and Jon Catherwood-Ginn (Virginia Tech,

Center for the Arts), develop a lengthy article about the Festival and the partnership between CultureWorks and Alternate ROOTS. This article originates out of the panel discussion at the October, 2011, Imagining America Conference. The idea of a “reunion” of the Festival emerges over the summer of 2014, through conversations between Dudley and Carlton Turner, with the notion of gathering West Baltimore Festival staff, CultureWorks, Alternate ROOTS Executive Committee, and interested people from Baltimore to have a look at where things lie now, after the three years. Jamie Haft (Roadside Theater and Imagining America) works with Dudley, Carlton, and Bob to create a 30 minute play, crafted out of the dialogues within the draft article. The play is presented as a staged reading to a crowd of 60 or so folks gathered at the Arch Social Club in West Baltimore. The reading elicits an extraordinary discussion about the Festival and its resonance, now, three years later, for community cultural development action in West Baltimore. Several people, who had participated in or witnessed the Festival but had remained distant from the Festival organizing, stepped up with respect and excitement, offering to work together to move forward the work that CultureWorks and Alternate ROOTS began. The responses to this presentation satisfy the longing for the Festival to serve as a launching place for West Baltimore to organize for economic and social justice. At this date, CultureWorks and Alternate ROOTS are ready, able, and excited to consider joining forces with the communities of West Baltimore to further the work they began dreaming about together so long ago over crabs on the Chester River.

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