



Special Edition June 2006

The Impact

IMproving People's Access to Computers & Technology 617 854 1765 info@massimpact.org

MassIMPACT is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that supports technology centers in underserved neighborhoods as they work to enhance their communities and the lives of their residents.

Our mission is to facilitate a collaborative effort among HUD Neighborhood Networks and other community technology centers to: enhance site capacity; maximize use of computer technology by local residents; and encourage information exchange and skills transfer as a strategy for long-term operational viability, community responsiveness, innovation and entrepreneurship.

Key elements of our approach include:

- stimulating idea exchange, group learning and collaboration between technology centers, government agencies, community groups, small businesses, foundations and philanthropists.
- promoting facility with digital media technologies as a means of empowering and increasing the visibility of communities that are inadequately represented by mainstream media.
- supporting and developing sustainable, meaningful digital media programming at Neighborhood Networks and other community technology centers.
- using train-the-trainer models to encourage self-sufficiency and create development opportunities for technology center staff.

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Special Edition: Neighborhood Networks Regional Technical Assistance Workshops

Welcome to Boston!

MassIMPACT is excited to welcome participants to the 2006 U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Neighborhood Networks Regional Technical Assistance Workshops.

The theme of this year's conference is *Uniting Neighbors. Strengthening Communities*. Workshops will focus on more advanced topics for experienced Neighborhood Networks stakeholders with the goal of allowing community practitioners the opportunity to meet and engage with other Neighborhood Network members from across the country as well as exchange best practices.

On behalf of the Neighborhood Networks National Consortium (NNNC) we would like to invite you to our fundraiser on Thursday, June 22 at 7pm. We will be taking a luxury boat cruise on the Boston Harbor. Tickets for this event are \$75 and include dinner, entertainment and an after-cruise Fiesta. Look for additional information at the conference about this event.

We hope you enjoy reading some highlights about the work that MassIMPACT is doing. Look for our full newsletter in August. Again, we would like to welcome you to Boston and hope you enjoy your stay in Bean Town!

Roxbury Youth *Imagine Mars!*

[Note: Site Visit to the *Imagine Mars!* exhibit will take place on Friday, June 23 from 2pm - 4pm. Transportation will be provided. Meet in hotel lobby].

In collaboration with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), Jet Propulsion Laboratories (JPL), Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Tuskegee University, and the New Academy Estates Neighborhood Network Center in Roxbury, MA, MassIMPACT is *Imagining Mars!* Co-sponsored by NASA and the National Endowment for the Arts, the *Imagine Mars Project* is a national arts, sciences, and technology education initiative that encourages youth to work together with scientists, engineers, artists, and civic leaders to design and share a futuristic Mars community for 100 people. MassIMPACT brought the project to Massachusetts and over the past year a team of nine Roxbury middle school



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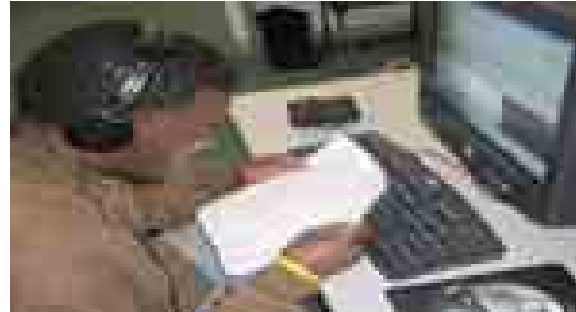


Telling Stories

MassIMPACT's digital storytelling project is inspiring communities throughout Massachusetts to find their individual and collective voices while advancing their understanding and use of multimedia technology. Digital storytelling uses integrated digital technologies to develop and share personal stories and community histories. These multimedia narratives generally consist of text, voices, and images that allow the individual to create candid and/or artistic accounts of their lives, experiences, and points of view on an array of topics.

Spreading Stories

Since 2001, MassIMPACT has been sponsoring digital storytelling workshops that guide participants through an intensive process of developing scripts, gathering and digitizing images and videos, editing, voice recording, and finally, integrating these various media forms into a compelling story. These workshops culminate in screenings and discussions of individual and community digital stories. Through digital storytelling, participants are transformed from mere consumers of media to producers of media: often arriving to the point of seeing themselves, their communities, and use of technology from a new and enhanced perspective.



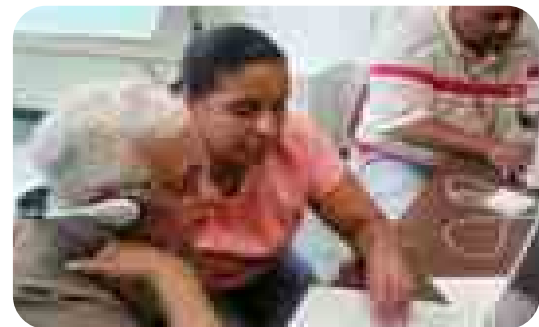
To expand the reach of digital storytelling, MassIMPACT launched a new program in the fall of 2005 called "Spreading Stories." Spreading Stories is a "train the trainer" program open to various nonprofit groups throughout New England. The initial goal of the program was to develop a pilot workshop to provide five New England organizations with multimedia stories, skills, and networks. These five organizations included; Year Up, Somerville Community Access Television (SCAT), Dotwell, Home, Inc., and Sociedad Latina. Because this pilot program was such a success, MassIMPACT sponsored a second group of organizations in December including Viet-Aid, Tufts Women's Center, Community Catalyst, UMass' CTC Vista Project, and GLOW (Girls, Ladies, Onto Womanhood). Representatives from each of these organizations learned a range of multimedia, technical, and storytelling skills, which will enhance their own programming. In addition to gaining practical skills, participants found inspiration in the creative process as well as unique networking opportunities among the participating organizations.

For more information on digital storytelling visit: www.massimpact.org/projects/digital_storytelling/index.shtml.

TOLD

In western Massachusetts, community groups in the city of Springfield are conducting broad outreach to engage historically isolated and marginalized residents in story-based programming including writing, music, an array of visual arts, and multimedia technology. Organizing and community outreach in Springfield began in an effort to address a variety of problems facing the city's economically distressed communities. In 2001, a group of activists from the North End of the city, came together to form the North End Outreach Network (NEON).

NEON works to engage North End Springfield residents in conversations about their specific social and economic needs as well as provide opportunities to advance personal skills in reading,



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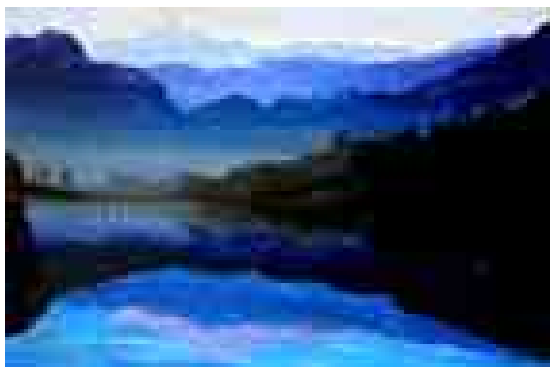
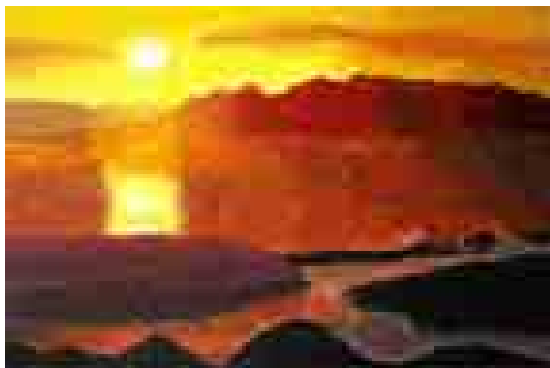
Creating Opportunities Through Art

Over the past year, MassIMPACT has collaborated with several community-based organizations to create positive experiences for youth by providing students with opportunities to develop their art skills, explore art as a career, including developing portfolios for higher education, broaden students' interest in art and the creative process, and connect youth to various art communities throughout the city.

Burke High School

MassIMPACT sponsored artist and instructor, Ben Steele to run an art after-school program at the Jeremiah E. Burke High School located in Boston's Dorchester neighborhood.

Using various mediums, Steele works with students to broaden their perceptions including seeing themselves in different dimensions or environments. Steele says, "Students need to learn to see things from different perspectives to be able to represent them in physical form. I found that exposing these kids to a process which called into question



their very own ability to see and judge enabled them to better handle their own challenging environment." Some of the art projects include painting landscapes as well as a variety of self-portraits including an expression of hands.



Through art, students are changing their perceptions of themselves as well as their communities and creating new opportunities for development both personally and professionally.

The Art Center

MassIMPACT joined forces with The Art Center in Chelmsford, MA to develop and support a unique summer camp program of art and technology for children and youth. The Art Center is dedicated to the advancement of art education, art appreciation, and the availability of art for people of all ages and backgrounds. The Center's summer program allows students ages 9 to 18 to learn and utilize digital technology for storytelling and expression including web design, cartooning, animation, and video. Last summer, MassIMPACT sponsored eight young students from the Lowell area to participate in the two-week program.





Music To Your Ears

MassIMPACT is collaborating with the Boston-based organizations Inquilinos Boricuas En Acción (IBA), Arts Incentives Program (AIP), and the Berklee College of Music to form the Boston Music Consortium. The goal of the Consortium is to use music as a tool to break down community barriers and bring youth together from different Boston Area neighborhoods as well as provide quality music instruction to these youth.

With funding from MassIMPACT, AIP offers voice lessons and IBA offers Latin percussion drumming classes through its Latin Percussion program. Both organizations work with the Berklee College of Music, which provides professional instructors and student interns for the courses.



IBA's Latin Percussion program offers eight-week sessions in which youth participants, ages 12 to 20, meet weekly with instructor Ernesto Díaz, master percussionist and faculty member at Berklee, to learn varied and popular Latin rhythms including Bomba, Plena, and Salsa, as well as playing a variety of instruments including conga, timbale, bongo, maracas, and panderetas. Professor Díaz has recruited work-study students at the College to participate as music training assistants and tutors for participating youth. Additionally, program participants have had the opportunity to attend several concerts at the Berklee Performance Center. During the 2005-2006 academic year, IBA conducted five sessions with forty-four students participating. For more information visit www.iba-etc.org.

The Arts Incentives Program serves young people by facilitating an engagement with the arts as an incentive toward health and hope for a positive future. As part of the Boston Music Consortium, AIP specifically works with girls ages 11 to 18 engaging them in music programming including voice and percussion. AIP established the "Voice Group," which is led by Darcel Wilson, faculty member at Berklee as well as students from the College. Additionally, participating youth are invited to attend concerts and special events such as a fall 2005 Sweet Honey and the Rock performance. For more information visit: http://www.uses.org/AIP/arts_incentives.htm

Telling Stories [continued from page 2]

writing, and computer technology. NEON aims to bring the city's underserved residents a responsive, stable environment for expression designed to enhance learning and advance citizen participation in vital issues such as affordable housing, public education, health care, and economic development.

With the opportunity to express themselves in a supportive environment, residents shared personal stories of family, economic struggle, and aspirations for a better future. These stories revealed rich personal legacies within Springfield's North End communities inspiring NEON to capture these stories through multimedia including video, audio, and animation.

This multimedia story archiving initiative became the **Telling Our Legacies Digitally (TOLD)** project. With support from the Mass Cultural Council, The Waitt Family Foundation, and MIT, MassIMPACT partnered with NEON to train community members in the process of producing short multimedia narratives of topics that were significant to them and their communities. More than 150 residents have participated in the TOLD project ranging in ages from 10 to 65. Additionally, in conjunction with the city's North End Strategic Planning Process, MassIMPACT and NEON developed a proposal for establishing the nation's first community-based digital storytelling center in Springfield.

The digital stories produced by TOLD have now been shown at a number of venues including its Digital Storytelling Film Festival, educating other community groups and organizations. To view Springfield resident's legacy stories visit: www.massimpactds.org/albums/15.aspx

Image Mars! [continued from page 1]

students from the New Academy Estates have been exploring elements of their home community including cultural, scientific, and artistic, to determine how to replicate a successful community on Mars. Through research, lectures, and several hands-on workshops facilitated by NASA scientists, engineers, and architects, students learned about the extreme Martian environment and began to imagine what community development might be like on the red planet.

The team of students explored the concept of “community,” in a variety of contexts: locally, nationally, and globally. As part of the *Imagine Mars* curriculum, they had to consider and answer three essential questions:

- What makes a good community?
- What gives life meaning?
- What does it take to survive?

These questions were designed to encourage students to take into account basic human needs as well as inspire analysis and discussion of other essentials for a sustainable community including equity, aesthetic, health, and psychological needs.

When imagining a community on Mars, some of the issues that students had to confront included the need for sufficient clean air, water and food, creating adequate living and working spaces, and determining which occupations might be essential to sustain life for 100 people on another planet.

MassIMPACT, NASA, JPL, MIT, and Tuskegee trained and assisted the team of Roxbury students with research and colony construction methods based on their respective practices. A number of workshops were organized over a twelve-week period to examine an array of issues from agriculture to architecture. The students participated in several educational trainings and lectures including: watching video of astronaut Neil Armstrong, space exploration, and the “Spirit” landing; teleconferences with NASA Mars team scientists; and listening to presentations about the solar system.

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Image Mars! [continued from page 5]

Using the internet, they also conducted their own project research.

“The kids have put in over 100 hours of work into creating their own Mars community,” said Jayme Bonds, Resident Service Coordinator and Project Director at the New Academy Estates. “The have built simulations of what it would be like to work, play, and live on Mars including how to grow food, exercise, communicate with Earth, and how to deal with conflict. They are looking forward to sharing their community vision with everyone.”

The students invite the public to *Imagine Mars* at their project exhibit June 21-23, 2006 at the New Academy Estates Neighborhood Center in Roxbury. Images of the students' project can also be viewed in the online gallery of the NASA/NEA *Imagine Mars* website. To view the gallery, visit: <http://imaginemars.jpl.nasa.gov/index2.html>

Sponsors of the Imagine Mars exhibit include: MassIMPACT, MassHousing, NASA, JPL, MIT, Winn Residential, the Boston Museum of Science, Dave Clark Corporation, Scientist Ambassadors Program, MIT's Aeronautics Astronautics Organization, KeySpan, Tuskegee University, the Aldrich Astronomical Society Club, and Zoo New England.



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