

## Final Report Playhouse Arts, Homeward Bound, May 31, 2023

### Deliverables:

Homeward Bound did not happen in the street in front of the Playhouse. With some additional funding from the California Arts Council and Arcata House Partnership, we were able to rent a space in the Feurwecker building from January to June 2023. I have included photos with this report as well. I encourage you to come to the Feurwecker Building in Arcata on Friday June 9 from 5 to 9pm and take part in Arts Arcata, in Our Space 854 9th street. There will be music, art for sale, food, and short performances.

We created Our Space with a team of seven outreach workers. We were able to offer participants a safe place to create, be and give their feedback. We were newly opened when the extreme weather hit, and we found ourselves operating a day center for cold, wet, hungry community members. It was hard to engage them in art, when their basic needs were so pressing. We learned from this experience that we needed to stay true to our mission of building community through the arts, and connect with other organizations to fulfill the pressing other needs, or we would risk burnout.

Though the stability and connective tissue of Our Space we were able to:

- Create Our Space Zine: with artwork, poems and opinion pieces
- Create a “tiny house” installation that expressed the grief and anger of living and dying on the street.
- Create a mural: four 4 by 8 plywood panels that will be installed in the Marsh in June, 2023
- Create a portable memorial art installation for those without walls in our community that have died, which will be viewed at the Farmers Market and hopefully City Hall.
- Participate in Arts Arcata in May and then again on June 9
- Encourage houseless participants to help with food, organization and upkeep in the space. To take ownership of the space.
- Have a community meeting where we discussed steps forward and how to meet needs, what people wanted to see happen in the space. This was documented and will be shared out.
- Mobilize community volunteers to bring clothing, hot food, and volunteer their time in Our Space.
- We worked with the Northcoast Environmental Center to present their trash Art Exhibit in Our Space.
- Develop a protocol and signed agreement for participation in Our Space that was agreed upon supported and enforced by participants.

Some of the salient points we took away from this time in Our Space is:

- Arcata needs a day shelter close to the town center with one or two rooms dedicated to artistic ventures like music creation, practice, performance and lessons, studio space for visual and literary arts, opportunities for theater, movement and storage for artistic supplies.
- As artists we are not trained to meet all the needs of everyone who came in during extreme weather and so partnership is essential.
- We have a deep commitment to continuing Our Space. Staff and participants alike agree it provides a vital outlet to our community.

- There is a marked benefit to offering space and time for houseless/housed persons to create, express themselves and have a stable space to leave their work.
- We worked to provide good, healthy, mostly organic food to people.
- Participants and staff dreamt about dome houses, tiny homes, community living. We talked about garbage and recycling and how to encourage cleaner, more sanitary camps and applied for a grant to support this vision.
- We met good people, with big hearts who had fallen through the cracks for whatever reason.
- We have hired one person from Our Space to work at the Playhouse in facilities, our library, and to train as a technician for lights and sound. They are no longer houseless.
- Our work in Our Space is not yet finished.

In closing, we firmly believe that this type of engagement with our community is essential to bridging the gaps between the housed and houseless and truly finding solutions to this crisis. We need a building, Our Space, that can be a spot of refuge and inspiration. We see the arts as the great connector and look forward to the next incantation of this pilot project.

We are currently looking at two different spaces to further develop community connections that have been made through this pilot project.