

GUILD HALL TEEN ARTS COUNCIL SUMMARY 2018



Mission

The Guild Hall Teen Arts Council (GHTAC) has defined its mission as “building an immersive environment where teens can regularly create, making Guild Hall accessible and affordable to teens, and serving as a conduit for interaction among teens of all the town schools.” GHTAC is an important component of Guild Hall’s mission to educate and inspire a diverse audience and to serve as a gathering place for members of the community. Guild Hall firmly believes we have much to gain and learn from giving creative agency and a platform to the next generation.

As many studies have proven, engaging adolescents adds value to any organization. Giving teens meaningful art experiences helps them relate better with their peers and adult mentors and helps them grow exponentially as individuals. We as an institution can also benefit from their energy, insights, and points of view. **Nurturing young people is nurturing our future, and it is mandatory if we want the arts to survive and thrive.**

Framework

GHTAC offers twenty teenagers per year the opportunity to work for Guild Hall as content producers, curators, and programmers. Council students meet regularly during the school year with a GHTAC coordinator to generate public programming for their peers. GHTAC members are chosen annually through an application process and are paid \$12 per hour, a unique feature of Guild Hall’s teen program. GHTAC member experiences and benefits include: developing leadership and team building skills by working together as a group; advising Guild Hall on engagement strategies for local teens and their families; learning about a range of professional options and career paths, such as curating, theatrical direction, design, marketing, and fundraising; and building extracurricular work experience while learning about the arts.

2018 Programs, Activities, and Accomplishments

Workshops:

GHTAC organized four workshops for their group:

Jeremy Dennis, a local photographer and member of the Shinnecock Nation, whose works were on exhibit at Guild Hall, led GHTAC members in a workshop on photography basics, followed by a photo scavenger hunt around Guild Hall and the surrounding area.

Aviva Jaye is an African-American performer who is dedicated to expressing empathy and promoting diversity through music. While in East Hampton as part of Guild Hall's multi-disciplinary Artists-in-Residence program, Aviva involved teen council members in her exploration of the writing medium, specifically Black Out poetry, as a means of expression. For the final installation piece of her residency, the teens worked alongside Aviva in her creation process, helping collect magazine articles and advertisements, and then eliminating words from them to create new meanings with arrangements of the images. The students also created and shared their own Black Out poetry.

Brianna Ashe is one of the teens' favorite local artists. They asked her to lead a workshop on Zine Making, in which she explained the origin and history of zines, and how a zine can be created on any topic one wishes. She emphasized that the content and appearance of zines are completely up to the creator, and concluded the workshop by showing the teens how to make their own personal zine.

Corinne Feinberg, a healer, taught the teens strategies for coping with stress and fluctuating emotions. She played the Crystal Bowls, conducting a meditation with them to show the teens that art is not only visual but also mental and physical.

Podcast

TAC members expressed great interest in producing their own podcast. Knowing that Guild Hall had a relationship with WNYC's podcast *Here's The Thing* producer Kathy Russo, they asked to meet with her for advice. The teens presented ideas to Kathy, who helped them to articulate what they were trying to create and to determine what worked best for them. Working with our local LTV Studio, they produced a podcast of three episodes called "In the Trenches." These were conversation-based podcasts in which Council members discussed real-life issues such as growing up, sexuality and gender identities, and politics.

Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*

In Spring 2018, Guild Hall inaugurated an annual program to stage a professional production of a Shakespeare classic, designed in conjunction with school curriculums, and in which 10 high school students could participate in various aspects -- including set design, lighting, and tech, as well as acting roles - alongside the professional actors and director. Auditions were open to all high school students in the district, and TAC members helped promote the opportunity to their peers. Two TAC members were awarded roles in the play, and TAC members also assisted stage managers and backstage crew. The district brought over 800 students, from 3 Middle Schools and 5 High Schools, to attend our regular matinee performances. Guild Hall is unique in presenting a play in which teens are cast in a professionally staged production.

Shadow Program

TAC members had the opportunity during their February school break to select a staff member from various departments within GH whom they would spend one to two days shadowing. They chose this year to work with the Executive Director's office, the Museum and Theater departments, and Marketing and Development staff.

Student Art Festival (SAF)

Now in its 25th year, SAF utilizes the entire Museum for an exhibition of artwork by 3,500 students in K-12 from 12 school districts. The exhibit is visited by every school in the districts represented. TAC initiated an Awards Program, working with curatorial staff to learn about the judging process, determine the award categories, and award prizes. They organized an Awards Ceremony for the distribution of certificates and prizes to the winners.

artXchange

TAC members provide important outreach for Guild Hall's free, public, family oriented multi-cultural day which focuses on the exchange of cultural traditions, ideas, and stories to advance inclusion, foster respect, and ignite interaction within our community. Bi-lingual art workshops (150 K-6 attend) occur all day, and 10-15 teens/ELL students work with TAC members to serve as planners and hosts. Over 400 attend.

Clothing Swap

Because TAC members discovered a common passion for thrifting and recycling clothing, they decided to organize a community clothing swap. This included designing a poster and creating commercials. They succeeded in generating participation by other teens as well as adults, who donated clothing for the chance to get "new" clothing for themselves. The clothing which remained at the end of the event was donated to various charities, churches and thrift stores in the area.

Guild Hall trustees, staff and TAC members extend gratitude to the generosity of our sponsors who made possible the first year of this meaningful initiative: First Data, Kim Charlton and Steven Meringoff, Julie Spain, The Hearst Foundation, and an anonymous donor.

Plans for 2018/2019

Based on interest and success, we have expanded our Council membership from ten to twenty participants, and have even greater outreach planned to ensure that as many students as possible have access to the application process. We will host a mixer for interested students and involve Council members in the selection process.

The Museum's curatorial and educational staff will become more involved in mentoring TAC members as they develop programs for the Student Arts Festival and artXchange. TAC members have considered producing their own exhibition with members' artwork, and they would also like to increase their participation with the artists in our Artist-in-Residence program. We are also approaching other local organizations, such as the East Hampton Library, local art galleries, and the Shinnecock Indian Nation Youth Council, about ways in which TAC members can collaborate on programs and activities. The workshops and shadowing experiences were also extremely rewarding and will continue to be developed.

