

**Legal Name**

Studio At 620 Inc

**Project Title**

To support an Artist Accelerator with Sharon E. Scott featuring new work in jazz, theater, and/or contemporary dance created by Gen Y artists to reach a peer audience in the Tampa Bay area online and through live performances

**DDCF Grant Number**

2013025

**Project Progress and Successes**

The Studio@620 began its work on its Artist Accelerator project in June 2013 immediately upon receiving the award from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation. The initial development team included the Studio's artistic/executive director Bob Devin Jones, resident artist Sharon Scott, web designers Reuben Pressman and Hunter Payne, evaluator John Collins (Organization Advancement Consulting) and grant specialist Sandy Tabor.

Following are project milestones.

- The Project GenYes! Web and social media sites were launched on June 17, 2013.
- A press release was distributed to area media announcing the DDCF grant on June 18, 2013.
- The Studio@620 announced the receipt of the grant from the DDCF at its 9th Anniversary Event on June 20, 2013.
- In August 2013, the Studio@620 was recognized at a St. Petersburg City Council meeting as an agency of excellence as a result of the DDCF grant.
- On August 2, 2013, the Studio@620 begins recruiting young artists to participate in the Project GenYes!.
- Eighteen young artists apply to participate in the GenYes Project. Following interviews in December 2013, six are selected to move forward with live performances at the Studio@620.
- Artists and mentor Sharon Scott meet regularly to shape their new work. Performances are scheduled for July-October 2014. Sir Brock Warren, a graduate of the Boston Conservatory, will perform his original work "Journey to Greatness" July 11-13.
- Social Media expert Tracy Kennard is added to the team in April 2014 to work with Sharon Scott and the artists on building social media for the project.
- Organization Advancement Consulting began to develop and implement evaluation tools for the project in February 2014.

**Challenges / Obstacles / Failures Encountered in the Project**

The Studio@620 initially faced challenges in find a rhythm for Project GenYes! and its work. In particular, there was friction among founding team members arising from differences in

how to brand and market the project. This disagreement did not delay the project but caused the team to have less productive meetings at the start. As a result, the envisioned social media campaign to bring Millennial artists to the project was not coordinated as well as anticipated and 18 applications were submitted rather than the expected 37.

With fewer applications, Bob Devin Jones and Sharon Scott decided to pick six artists from the 18 who would develop their projects for performance at the Studio@620. A part of this determination also was because some of the artists' talent was less developed than originally predicted. In particular, the economic challenges of urban family life brought to the project by these artists has created the need for greater mentorship and financial support.

### **What was learned from these that might be of benefit to others?**

As described by Bob Devin Jones, the Studio@620 now has added "lump alum" to Project GenYes! to tighten up expectations. A conservatory model has been established that focuses on one-on-one engagement between Sharon Scott and the artists rather than group meetings. Jones' has increased his hands-on participation with the Millennial artists, understanding the significance of an African American male role model in the success of the project.

Artists are learning time and financial management as well as developing artistic stamina, skills needed to become working artists. As Jones' aptly put it, they are moving past the drama of the talented child. These efforts, ultimately, will undergird the artistry of the Project GenYes! participants, making their collective work more professional and attractive for audiences.

Initially, the project was approached as a "hot-house," separate from the Studio@620 brand. This created challenges in integrating the work of the project into the organization's overall culture. This quickly changed by January 2015 as the Studio@620 brought the Project GenYes! Web site in-house. Further, adding social media consultant Tracy Kennard to the team has helped to anchor Project GenYes" among the Studio@620's ongoing programs.

### **Links to relevant website(s) and/or project publications, reports, etc.**

<http://projectgenyes.com/>

<https://www.facebook.com/ProjectGenYes>

<https://twitter.com/ProjectGenYes>

<http://www.thestudioat620.org/announcements/project-genyes>

<http://projectgenyes.tumblr.com/>

<http://sirbrock.com/video/sir-brock-x-project-genyes>

<http://www.stpeteartsalliance.org/index.php/2014-01-04-21-44-24/item/264-studio620-announces-call-artist/264-studio620-announces-call-artist>

**If someone wishes to speak with your organization further about your project,**

**would there be a willing contact? Y/N**

If yes, please provide contact name and information for preferred method of contact (email, phone, etc).

Bob Devin Jones, executive/artistic director for the Studio@620 will happily speak with interested persons. He can be reached at 727-460-9140 or jonesbdjarts@aol.com.