

## Mentoring and Being Mentored: Guided Internships and Arts Partnerships

BY GAIL BURNAFORD

What happens when a young performance major takes a chance on a new opportunity for an internship in a school and an urban community? Jamie Howe was such a person when she became a part of the first cohort in the *Partnerships Through the Arts Guided Internship/FIPSE* program at Northwestern University. A sophomore music major at Northwestern, Jamie launched into the work of partnerships, learning about music-in-education at the high school and elementary level, bringing her a cappella group, Purple Haze, off campus and into an urban school, designing projects and engaging her peers in an adventure that was uncharted and often serendipitous.

What happens when a recent college graduate signs on to work with a project in which undergraduates engage with artists and teachers in communities, with her as the link? Larissa Nikola-Lisa was such a person. A recent graduate of the University of Wisconsin/Madison, Larissa was looking for a challenge. She offered to work with the undergraduates in the first cohort, 'shepherding' them to schools, (she even dressed in a shepherd's costume for Halloween!), attending their Partnerships class, and documenting their learning during the internships.

So what happens? A teacher friend recently reminded her students, "He/she who does the most work does the most learning." It seems that, if these two stories are any indication, successful interns in arts partnerships make of these experiences what they need in order to advance their own careers, teach those who are the designated leaders what is essential for success, and build on the internships to design future opportunities. They do the most work, and they also do the most learning. They make their own paths, in order to satisfy their own curiosities and creative needs.

In the years since the internship year at Northwestern, Jamie and Larissa have done precisely this. *Partnerships Through the Arts* opened a door for Jamie to become an intern at the National Arts Education Partnerships office, directed and guided by Dick Deasy. Larissa used the experience to sharpen her videographic skills, produced several videos for the project, including the piece *Purple Haze* which has been used as a discussion/model piece at the MIENC conferences to demonstrate the integration of performance and teaching among interns and urban children. She went on to attend graduate school to further study media documentation.

In the *Partnerships Through the Arts* program, we 'exposed' our interns and invited them to study this growing collaboration with us. They attended reflection meetings, investigated partnerships by interviewing leaders of such partnerships both locally and

nationally. They have been our 'guinea pigs,' and we have challenged them to go out and see what these partnerships look like and how they might play a role. That exposure has helped me, as a mentor, to crystallize what I have to learn and contribute.

Mentoring of guided interns assumes new definitions when university students are learning about schooling, artistry, and research both in and outside of the classroom, as well as within the university and out in the community. Interns develop new mentors who are teaching artists, classroom teachers, arts administrators, media technology coordinators, and children. Their activities offer new insights for what it means to mentor prospective professionals in schools.

For me, the role of mentoring has been individualized and particular to these two talented young people. The internship is for the short term; what participants do with this set of experiences over the long term is up to them. Creating that set of experiences for interns to work in is the job of the mentors. But then, mentoring, much like teaching, is about listening and learning about what wants to happen. It is about working with a project like the guided internships in *Partnerships Through the Arts* to carve out space for interns to participate in the design, implementation, and reflection/analysis of the work. And then, it's about getting out of the way. ¶



*Dr. Gail Burnaford was the Principal Investigator for the Chicago initiative of the Music-in-Education National Consortium while a faculty member in the School of Education and Social Policy at Northwestern University. She has since moved to South Florida to assume the position of Chair and Professor of Teacher Education at Florida Atlantic University, where she is the Site Project Director for the MIENC's Learning Laboratory School Network initiative.*

## INTERN REPORT: NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY'S PARTNERSHIPS THROUGH THE ARTS

by

JAMIE HOWE

### MUSIC IN ISOLATION

A middle school music teacher works in his own wing of the building and is not involved in faculty collaborations. A college music major practices her clarinet in a small room for three hours every day. A symphony orchestra is concerned with its dwindling audiences but is reluctant to provide free concerts.

What a paradox it is that in education, music—one of the most uniquely communal experiences of human culture—exists in such isolation. When we talk about music, we use the term "musical experience," not musical event, encounter, or occurrence. It is so perplexing, then, that our music learning is not experiential. Not only does the music profession separate itself from the rest of the community, but it is even divided within itself: performers are separated from educators, instrumentalists from vocalists. Likewise, within the different sectors of music education there are chasms between the local schools and the universities, and between the artists and the teachers.

The reality of this strange and counter-productive isolation first became clear to me during my freshman year at Northwestern University. I was struck by how removed the music majors were from the world outside of the stage and practice room—not only from the rest of the college community, but also from the local community. While most of my fellow music students agreed that music was meant to be shared, they tended to feel they were "too busy" to sing at a nursing home or to get involved in any such music outreach program outside of their curriculum. Many felt they needed to reach a certain level of competence before they could enter the "real world" and share their greatest passion.

However, to me, the time to start sharing was right then. We already had a gift that other people wanted and needed to experience. I joined the Partnership through the Arts program (PTA) at Northwestern University because I wanted to get involved and make connections outside of my small college world. Not only did PTA pull me out of my music school bubble, but I realized the whole purpose of PTA was to bring together three isolated bubbles. The program was challenging the status quo: the separation of the university, the local school, and the arts organization; the dichotomy of the artist and the teacher; the divide between the professional sector and the "would be" professionals. PTA was making connections and proving that when partnerships are formed, resources are shared, people are linked, and arts education is stronger.

Through PTA, I was able to gain a sense of the bigger picture, of the ultimate goals and national struggles. My eyes were opened to the field of music education as a profession, raising it out of my limited experience—the varied academic courses and voice lessons—and bringing it into perspective. The foundation was set by my first course requirement, "Schooling in Communities," which taught me the value of local community in education—a sphere often marginalized. During my second year I was partnered with Tricia Sebastian, a Ravinia Teaching Artist, and we worked as a team with kindergartners



JAMIE HOWE GRADUATED FROM NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY WITH A DEGREE IN MUSIC EDUCATION. SHE PARTICIPATED IN THE PARTNERSHIPS THROUGH THE ARTS PROGRAM DURING HER FIRST TWO YEARS AT NU.