

another prospective buyer. Out of that disappointment came a defining moment in this collaborative venture. COMBAT made a three-year pledge to support the creation of the center by investing in the MyARTS program at a level that included the funding and management of a five-studio venture, plus necessary management fees and rent. Storytellers also agreed to house its studio offices in the new center, further supporting the project.



To our great fortune, the Allen building came back on the market in October 2005, and PEI, with COMBAT as its anchor partner, stood in position to make an offer that resulted in a lease and purchase contract that was beneficial to both parties. Aided by Missouri Neighborhood Assistance Program (NAP) tax credits, and a mortgage from Bank Midwest and the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC), PEI eventually completed the purchase, cementing its commitment to the arts and technology youth entrepreneurial business.

PEI moved to 1522 Holmes in March 2006, leaving its Independence home of more than 25 years. COMBAT's MyARTS program began full operations on May 31, 2006, with an initial group of 55 carefully selected youth. Storytellers then began remodeling its executive art studio space in July 2006. PEI will be eternally grateful to our anchor partner COMBAT, whose vision, financial support, and true collaborative spirit made the center possible. PEI is also grateful for the support and partnership of Storytellers, which is the "soul" of the art initiatives.

An idea first hatched eight years ago has now been fully implemented. May 4 represents a grand day with the unveiling of a new name, new vision, and new opportunities. Our vision is for young artists and technicians to develop their talents and market their products and services, for after-school art and technology programs to flourish, for a center where community artists will create and market their art, and ultimately, and to become a community asset where every resident benefits from the work and energy emanating from ArtsTech.

COMBAT, Storytellers, and ArtsTech all share a unified mission of positive youth development. Preparing our young people to be productive and respected community members is not a cliché. It is a responsibility. And we pledge to do it everyday.

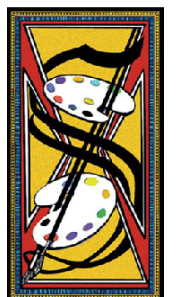
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A CENTER FOR YOUTH ENTERPRISE





HISTORY

ArtsTech Idea to Reality and Beyond



In February 1999, National Public Radio reported on research showing that youth who participated in an organized athletic program were 50 percent less likely to become involved in the juvenile justice system. Even more remarkably, the same study revealed that youth involved in an organized *arts* program were *80 percent* less likely to suffer the same fate. For those who care about the youth of Kansas City, the question became how to most effectively employ the arts for the benefit of our young people.

ArtsTech represents the culmination of efforts by government entities, local artists, non-profit organizations, and community groups to create a program that meets those needs. By offering opportunities that go beyond mere skill development, ArtsTech helps our youth to become healthy, productive young adults.

In the beginning, this group of government and community partners envisioned young artists cultivating their talents through after-school programs where they would collaborate with community artists to create art and be involved in expressive therapy. The first step in seeing this vision to fruition came in March 1999 when the City of Kansas City, Missouri, received a \$630,000 Juvenile Accountability Incentive Block Grant from the U.S. Department of Justice, to be used to develop programs to provide for graduated sanctions for crimes committed by juvenile offenders. Because the juvenile justice system is a County function, the City directed the funding to the Jackson County **COMBAT (Community Backed Anti-Drug Tax Program)** program, and the Sentenced to the Arts Project (STTAP) was born, with COMBAT providing both the day-to-day supervision and administration, as well as the required matching funds. STTAP was charged with providing art skill development, drug prevention, and expressive therapy services to Jackson County Family Court adjudicated youth.



COMBAT engaged Pan-Educational Institute (PEI), a local non-profit organization, to manage STTAP's finances and to distribute grant monies. Throughout the life of STTAP, which will begin its ninth year on October first, COMBAT and the City of Kansas City have continued to provide funding and exceptional leadership, resulting in several independent evaluations which show significant improvement in participating youths'



academic performance, recidivism rate, respect for authority and peers, and a remarkable reduction in re-offending behavior. The collaborative spirit of COMBAT, City of Kansas City, MO and PEI has grown with each passing year.

In the summer of 2000, another piece of the vision came into being when the KC Futures 150 Internship program put more than 70 youth in paid positions with arts and arts-related organizations. Again, the City of Kansas City, MO and COMBAT provided the funding to support the interns. Youth were exposed to many arts and arts-related venues, and given the opportunity to apply their skills in a real-world setting and earn money. Though the U.S. Department of Justice LLEBG grant monies ended in November 2006, the Internship program was a huge success throughout its six-year run.

As this arts youth movement gained momentum, the management team recognized that a key component of this comprehensive youth development effort was still missing. STTAP and KC Futures 150 interns produced quality artwork and achieved significant improvement in the classroom, along with better citizenship. Participants also kept asking, "What's next for us?" The young artists wanted more!



In April 2002, the management team (Alan Welles of the City of Kansas City, Angela Castle of COMBAT, and Deana Bellamaganya and Dave Sullivan of PEI) visited Artists for Humanity (AFH) in Boston. Susan Rodgers started AFH with four teenagers selling t-shirts, and grew it to include five studios dedicated to ceramics, silk screening, graphic design, painting and photography. Inspired by AFH's work and aided by a collegial relationship with its leaders, the management team came away determined to follow this successful approach in Kansas City. During the process, Storytellers, Inc., a local non-profit organization dedicated to interactive arts with youth, joined this initiative and also shared a common vision. The collaboration led to the creation of Metropolitan Youth and Technology for Students (MyARTS), a program funded and managed by COMBAT.

At that point, finding a center where young people could apply their art and technology skills became our priority. We looked at more than 25 buildings, from the West Bottoms to Independence, evaluating sites for practicality and value. During the process, we decided that the Crossroads Arts District near Kansas City's booming downtown was where we needed to be. The Allen Marking building at 1522 Holmes Street, a 32,000 square-foot structure with many attractive features including a 9,000 square foot space for an art gallery and reception hall provided our best option.



But in the summer of 2005, as PEI was attempting to secure the necessary financing, the Allen building's owner agreed to sell to