

2002/2004 Annual Report
July 1, 2001 – June 30, 2004

33-00 Northern Boulevard
Long Island City, NY 11101
Tel: 718-729-3001 Fax: 718-729-3941

Web: www.mfta.org Email: info@mfta.org

The Milestone Years, 2001-2004

Introduction

Materials for the Arts (MFTA), a program of the NYC Department of Cultural Affairs, has been serving the not-for-profit arts and cultural community of New York City since 1978. The program receives additional financial support from the Departments of Sanitation and Education, and from the private funding community. MFTA's mission is to provide organizations with access to donated items available through its warehouse and newly-created online services.

MFTA's lifeblood is the collection of donations from businesses and individuals, and their distribution to nearly 3,000 recipient groups. It is a simple and elegant concept that continues to work. Each shopping visit by a recipient organization translates into an instant grant of approximately \$1,500 in materials and supplies. These savings allow recipients to redirect funds to enrich programs, hire more staff and provide better services to the public. In addition to regular shopping privileges, MFTA offers recipients professional development workshops and opportunities to collaborate on outreach projects.

By the end of FY 2004, active recipient groups numbered 2,892 and included art groups, social, health and community service organizations with arts programs, public schools and city agencies. The number of annual donations increased to 1,808 as a result of a transportation initiative that put more trucks on the road and an increase in donors dropping off their materials at the warehouse. The value of the donated materials for FY 2004 was \$3.86 million.

Under the leadership of director Harriet Taub, the last three years have been incredibly productive for MFTA, beginning with the move to a renovated Long Island City warehouse in early 2001. MFTA's most notable accomplishments include the establishment of a 501(c)(3), Friends of Materials for the Arts(FOMA), and the creation of a website

(www.mfta.org). The MFTA team, comprised of staff, agency partners and board members, has helped the program make great strides into the 21st century.

Friends of Materials for the Arts

In April 2002, Friends of Materials for the Arts (FOMA) was incorporated and a few months later received its 501(c)(3) tax status. FOMA was created to assist in MFTA's development of projects and programs and to garner fund-raising support for the organization. FOMA was formed with a group of incorporating officers, in fruitful collaboration with its host agency, the NYC Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA). The incorporating officers for FOMA are John Peebles, Gail Gershon, and Leith ter Meulen, all former members of MFTA's Advisory Board.

In February 2002, Kate D. Levin was installed as DCA's new Commissioner. Ms. Levin has been a major force in this partnership, not only as an *ex officio* member of the Board of Trustees but as a significant link to other NYC agencies and private funders. This combination of municipal and private sector leadership has created a highly successful program in support of the arts community of New York City.

The inaugural meeting of the FOMA Board was held on October 8th, 2003. At the meeting, board members laid the groundwork for FOMA's recruitment policy. During the course of the fiscal year, five new members were added: Barbara Randall, Vivien Mamelak (both former Chairpersons of MFTA's Advisory Board), Emmett Watson, Deanna Caceres Cahn, and Andrea Schaffer.

FOMA's goals for the next few years include the creation of a strategic plan to help prioritize issues as well as training the board in the area of governance and development. The Board is committed to ensuring that the organization creates a solid foundation in all areas of compliance and operations.

Fund-Raising: The MFTA Development Plan

Jayne Koszyn Consulting (JKC) was hired to address the fundraising needs of FOMA and help create a development plan. Included in the plan was a strategy to maintain City funding, reconnect with past funders, identify first-time funders, and institute an Annual Appeal.

FY 2004 saw a tremendous surge in fundraising from the private sector and individuals. Two fundamental concepts drove the fund-raising strategy: 1) the roll-out of new initiatives for program-based funding, anchored by a comprehensive education program; and 2) the creation of the Silver Anniversary Fund, a combination project and general operating fund-raising initiative that allowed flexibility in both grant-making and gift allocation. Year Two of the FOMA fund-raising plan focused on first-time grants in addition to increases in renewals. The year ended with fourteen first-time grants, which along with renewals totaled \$299,081.

Technology Initiative

The design and implementation of a website, (www.mfta.org) and updated database was made possible by a generous grant from the LuEsther T. Mertz Donor-Advised Fund at the New York Community Trust. In order to manage this project, an extensive partnership was formed including the Departments of Cultural Affairs, Information Technology and Telecommunications, and three technology consultants. Deputy Director Bob Bangiola oversaw this project and its implementation. The goals of the technology initiative include:

- Empowering recipients and donors to “give stuff” or “get stuff” more easily and streamline the management of MFTA accounts on-line; and
- Automating administrative tasks so MFTA staff could focus on developing programs, thereby responding to the needs of increasing numbers of recipients and donors.

The technology initiative was divided into two phases. Phase One was the three-month construction of a brochure website offering basic essential information including mission, hours of operation, location, directions, etc. John Peebles, FOMA's current Board President, was instrumental in guiding this phase.

Phase Two of the Website/Database allows donors to go online to register items on the Direct Donation board and contact the warehouse manager with information about future donations and recipients, as well as review account information and make appointments. An online events calendar allows groups to view upcoming workshops and gallery shows. The launch of the interactive website has enabled MFTA office and warehouse staff to work more efficiently and assist groups in person on shopping days. The technology initiative includes orientation meetings for users and virtual tours, both of which have enabled new recipients to successfully navigate the warehouse and website to their best advantage.

Donors and Donations

As e-mail became a more popular mode of communication, a list of items available through Direct Donations was sent out weekly to registered groups by Direct Donations Coordinator, Janae Russell. The Direct Donations service allows MFTA to broker items located at the donors' site. Successful matches included the contents of a Long Island movie theater—including seats, projector and stage curtains—that went to Anthology Film Archives, Ring of Fire Productions and Gene Frankel Theater Workshop. The contents of a large warehouse in Astoria, which housed the sets and backdrops of Showtime's One Center Street, was successfully given away to over ten theater and dance companies including Nuyorican Poets Cafe, the Tennessee Project, Olympic Theatre, Queens Theatre in the Park, Foundation for Filipino Artists and Cherry Lane Theatre. The total value of these two donations was \$93,500. In early 2004, Aliza Arenson took over the position of Direct Donations Coordinator when Janae Russell was promoted to the position of Education Administrator.

Program Highlights

With the help of Friends of Materials for the Arts and the generosity of the private and corporate foundation community, MFTA was able to expand services. Program highlights include:

Evening and Weekend Shopping

To serve more groups, evening and Saturday shopping hours were piloted. After an initial trial run, the Saturday shopping mornings were phased out, but monthly Evening Shopping hours continue to be popular for groups—especially public school teachers who often find it difficult to visit MFTA during the day. Funding for this initiative was received from both corporate and private foundations to enable twice monthly shopping beginning in late FY03 and continuing for all of FY04.

Transportation

At the end of FY 2003, the long-anticipated MFTA truck arrived, compliments of the New York City Council class of 2000. At the end of FY04, Commissioner Levin authorized the purchase of a new truck and van for MFTA to replace the decade-old fleet vehicles.

During the FY 02 City budget cycle, Materials for the Arts received valuable support from an unlikely partner. Waste Management Inc., a national waste hauling company, learned that MFTA had trucks but not enough drivers to manage the fleet. The company then came forward to offer MFTA a volunteer driver. Beginning in January 2003, with the help of the weekly Waste Management driver, MFTA was able to increase its pick-up capacity by 20% and has continued to do so through the end of FY 04.

Pick-Ups and Trucking

One of the challenges MFTA faces is how to respond in a timely fashion to all donation requests. Warehouse manager Jesse Charland works with donors to make sure donations are appropriate for the warehouse and can be picked up promptly. The demand for pick-up service is so great that sometimes MFTA staff is unable to pick up donations to meet the needs of the donor. One way to solve this challenge is to have more trucks on the road. An initiative to raise funds to hire more drivers and trucks was created and two foundations came forward with support. In FY 04, 39 additional pick-ups weighing 54,507 lbs and valued at more than \$80,656 were brought into the warehouse and given to 452 recipient groups.

Volunteer Initiative

MFTA launched its Volunteer Initiative in January 2002 with a plan developed by Deputy Director Bob Bangiola. The first group included students from the DeVry Business Institute, the LIC-based computer training school. The students inspected and repaired donated computers to make them immediately reusable to recipient groups. A volunteer team from YAI/NIPD (a national organization for adults with learning and developmental disabilities) and their supervisor began to spend two half-days a week in the warehouse, stocking and organizing shelves and labeling items. The tasks accomplished by the YAI/NIPD team were very valuable to the MFTA warehouse staff and helped the YAI/NIPD members hone skills and develop a sense of responsibility towards their work.

MFTA's own recipients comprised a third group of volunteers. By providing administrative support several hours a week, recipients in turn received a private shopping session. By the end of FY 2004, volunteers had contributed over 80 hours a week of valuable assistance. Due to the success of the work with volunteers, MFTA submitted a proposal to a number of different foundations in order to fund a coordinator of volunteer activities. At the end of FY 04, the proposal had been fully funded and a candidate chosen to begin the work fulltime.

Partners with the Department of Education

A vigorous outreach effort to Department of Education teachers was undertaken and by the end of FY 04, 1260 DOE sites were registered. Working closely with District Art Coordinators, MFTA's Education Administrator Ann Woodward arranged for group shopping visits to the warehouse in FY 02 and 03. By sharing a truck, art teachers from one district were able to pool resources, save money and take advantage of the tremendous volume and scope of the donations available. In the spring of FY 04, Education Administrator Janae Russell oversaw the distribution of 1200 Lexmark color printers to DOE art teachers. In FY 2004, it is estimated that NYC DOE art teachers received \$1,4 million worth of materials.

Reuse Education Initiative

MFTA's education program has been designed to address the needs of recipient groups. While most performing arts groups work with designers and directors who have a very clear vision of what they want and how to create it with our materials, other recipients are often stymied as to how to use the materials found on the MFTA shelves. Arts educators, community workers, and even art therapists may be overwhelmed by the unusual finds in the warehouse. As part of the initiative to expand reuse education, MFTA brought in teaching artist Joy Suarez to help recipients maneuver the wealth of materials in the warehouse. As MFTA's "Artist in Residence," Joy circulates throughout the warehouse on shopping days, encouraging recipients to think creatively about possible uses for the varied items on the warehouse floor. The role of the teaching artist on shopping days is to widen the artistic vision of shoppers, spark discussion and brainstorming, and to connect recipient groups with one another.

Joy Suarez also led and continues to lead a series of professional development workshops training recipients on how to use non-traditional materials. This includes discussing the concept of reuse, reviewing a variety of materials and learning techniques for use including weaving, knotting, binding and notching. The workshops stress the importance of working without glue and are designed to give recipients options for creative hands-on activities. Workshop subjects include: No-Sew Costumes; Book Making; Jewelry Making; Mask and Hat

Making; Summer Program Ideas and Back to School Ideas. The workshops are free and all materials are provided. As word has spread about the workshops, their popularity has risen and they are often booked to capacity.

In an effort to work with groups who have specific needs, MFTA has offered the NYC Department of Parks & Recreation a series of five free workshops for their employees. Other groups served include the NYC Department of Juvenile Justice and art services providers who work with senior populations in nursing homes.

Funding for this initiative has come from both corporate and private foundations and is also supported through the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.

Community Initiatives

2001/2002 - Art Frenzy, a celebration of the arts throughout Queens sponsored by the Queens Council on the Arts.

October 2001 – Costume Ball sponsored by Old Navy and Kentucky Fried Chicken. Event held to honor recipient groups. Guests included board members, recipient groups and donors.

2002 – 2004 Summer Solstice event at Socrates Sculpture Park. Annual family event with art making supplies and artists provided by MFTA

September 2002 – Gallery show in partnership with PS 1 Institute for Contemporary Art and student curators. Commissioner Kate Levin and City Councilmember Leroy Comrie attended.

October 2002 – 2nd Annual Costume Ball hosted by DCA Commissioner Kate D. Levin.

December 2002 – Site specific sculpture show of student work from the Noguchi Museum's education program.

April 2003 - Queens Day - President, Helen Marshall, Council Member Eric Gioia from the 26th District and DCA's Deputy Commissioner Susan Rothschild attended.

May 2003 – Exhibition of student work from the International High School at LaGuardia Community College.

Awards

2003 – Broadway Theater Institute Annual Award for Distinguished Service to the theater community

2004 – Jackie Robinson Center for Physical Culture Annual “Richard Green” Award for outstanding commitment to supporting education and the communities of NYC

Funding Support in 2002/2004

Governmental

NYC Department of Cultural Affairs

NYC Department of Sanitation

NYC Department of Education

NYS Department of Environmental Conservation

Corporate Foundations

Citigroup Foundation

Estee Lauder Foundation

Gap Inc.

Macy's East – Federated Department Stores

Sony Corporation

Private Foundations

Andy Warhol Foundation

Arnhold Foundation
Betty Parsons Foundation
Carnegie Corporation of New York
David Rockefeller Fund
Dillard Foundation
Edith Meiser Foundation
Independence Community Foundation
Innovative Design Fund
Jean & Louis Dreyfus Foundation
Liman Foundation
LuEsther T. Mertz Donor-Advised Fund at the New York Community Trust
Max & Victoria Dreyfus Foundation
New York Community Trust – Drexell Burnham Lambert Fund
Robert Sterling Clark Foundation
Time Inc. through the Fund for Public Schools

Press / Television/Radio

NY 1 – New Yorker of the Week – 2/2004

Newsday – 2/21/01
Daily News – 2/21/01
Queens Tribune – 3/2001
Time Out New York – 3/2001
Queens Chronicle – 3/2001
Crain's 5/2001
Astoria Times – 8/2001
Village Voice – 10/2001
Queens Gazette 11/2001
New York Times 11/2001
New York Times 11/2001
Newsday 4/2002
Northwest Courier 5/2002
Newsday 5/2002
New York Sun – 5/2002
Printing News – 7/2002
Backstage – 10/2002
Daily News – 4/2003
Queens Chronicle – 5/2003
Waste News – 5/2003
New York Times – 3/2004

NPR - 2002
The CBS Early Show – 6/2003

MFTA Advisory Board: June 2003

Kate Levin, Commissioner
Department of Cultural Affairs

John Doherty, Commissioner
Department of Sanitation

Harold O. Levy, Chancellor
Board of Education

Elizabeth H. Berger, Gov't Relations
Advisor

Law Office of Claudia Wagner

Denise DePrima, Senior VP
NYC Off Track Betting

Sharon Dunn, Special Assistant to the
Honors College

CUNY, The Graduate Center

Gail Levitt Gershon, Program Officer
GAP Inc.

Paul Gertner, President
Starborn Industries

Hollis Headrick, Executive Director
Center for Arts Education

Mary Holloway, President
The Holloway Group

Joseph Janeczek, Jr., Director
Corp Environmental Mngmnt. ABC, Inc.

Joan Firestone, Special Assistant to the
Chancellor

NYC Board of Education

Robert Lange, Director BWPRR

Department of Sanitation

Gail Gershon, Director

Gap Foundation

Greg McCaslin

Gap Inc.

Center for Arts Education

Vivian Mamelak, Financial Consultant

Susan Rothschild,

Barbara Blair Randall, Executive Director

Deputy Commissioner

The Fashion Center

Department of Cultural Affairs

Andrea Schaffer, Consultant

Strategic Urban Solutions

Harriet Taub, Director

Friends of Materials for the Arts

Leith ter Meulen, President

Landair Project Resources

FOMA Board of Trustees: 2004

Emmett Watson, Director of Planned

Giving, Associate Director, External Affairs,

MoMA

John Peebles, President

Intuitive Resources

Consultants

Jayne Koszyn Consulting – Fundraising

Julia Rothwax – Press and Public

Relations

Kate D. Levin, Commissioner (ex officio)

Department of Cultural Affairs

Deanna Caceres Cahn, AVP

Brand Manager

Martha Stewart Signature

MFTA Staff: June 2004

Aliza Arenson - Direct Donations

Robert Bangiola - Deputy Director

Jesse Charland - Warehouse Manager

Bernard Hall - Mover/Driver

Yudelka Olivo - Administrative Assistant

Jose Rosa - Warehouse Assistant

Janae Russell - Education Administrator

Anthony Salamone - Warehouse Assistant

Harriet Taub - Director

Chris Trainor - Assistant Warehouse
Manager