



SCOTT ANGELLE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

State of Louisiana
OFFICE OF THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR
DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE, RECREATION & TOURISM
OFFICE OF STATE MUSEUM

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SECRETARY

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To whom it may concern,

August 18, 2010

I am writing in support of the Brooklyn Four Plus One, Inc.'s efforts to revise a programming partnership with the Louisiana State Museum. The Brooklyn Four Plus One music performance program has been extremely successful. And although the Louisiana State Museum could not fund the program last year, we would like to fund a return of the program for August 2011, when it would coincide with the Satchmo Summerfest, a free public event celebrating Louis Armstrong in New Orleans.

As historian at the Museum, I nurtured the original Brooklyn four Plus One program partnership which used music performance to teach broader lessons on history and culture. The Museum education department ran the program, which was partially funded by the Charles Evans Foundation, for two years (2008-2009), and we continue to get extremely positive feedback. Most visitors and participants were struck by the participation, engagement and positive interaction that the music performance engenders among the students. Barnes encourages the students to dance and experience the rhythms that he discusses in his music history lesson. We believe that this program is worth reviving, and would like to once again establish this programming partnership with the Brooklyn Four Plus One group.

The educational philosophy behind the Brooklyn Four Plus One program embraces the on-going democratization of public history institutions like the Louisiana State Museum. The group's leader and educational director Wade Barnes employs a hands-on teaching philosophy that stresses the use of museums as public inter-disciplinary classroom. As we came to know one another professionally over the last ten years, I have come to truly respect Mr. Barnes' vision for reaching out to underprivileged youth in this manner. He continuously tries to find effective ways to integrate history, music and culture into his lessons and educational activities. As a community activist, he is committed to reaching out to youth and making his lessons relevant to their lives and interests.

Given the success and positive response to the Brooklyn Four Plus One's music performance program at the Louisiana State Museum, I believe the program could serve as a model for a much larger program that travels nationally and potentially internationally. I would think that the interactive nature of the program would be popular anywhere. Wade Barnes understands that if the participants have fun, they will associate learning with joy and want to continue. His subtle teaching of history and culture through music performance enables the participants to learn by engaging them directly. His passion for the subject also is infectious, as students get excited about the content through Barnes' engaging style and personality.

Sincerely,

Charles Chamberlain, Ph.D.
Museum Historian