



Database of Programs That Engage Youth

In the arts or the natural world

Paul Botts

Since its founding in 1952, the Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Foundation (GDDF) has pursued an interest in the welfare and positive development of young people in its two areas of geographical focus, the greater Chicago region and the Lowcountry of South Carolina.

In 2004, when the foundation's board voted to concentrate on two broad subjects within each of those regions – artistic vitality and land conservation – it also identified the successful engagement of youth (defined as ages 11 through 21) in each of those broad subjects as a long-term, grantmaking interest.

As the foundation began delving into the field, it soon became apparent that no reasonably comprehensive, specific list of non-profit organizations and programs in arts education and environmental education existed in either geographical area.

Thoughtful discussion of strategy and debate about these subjects kept floundering on incompatible understandings, even among individuals having many years' experience in those fields, of "what's out there now."

Accordingly, in 2007 GDDF commissioned the consulting firm of Arabella Philanthropic Investment Advisors to design and populate a database of such programs.

The database helped inform extended discussions by GDDF board and staff, and led to a decision to focus its youth engagement efforts entirely on strategies for engaging youth in the natural world.

In 2008, the GDDF board decided to make the database available to the public as a resource for other funders and practitioners interested in these important subjects.

The database includes 470 active organizations and more than 800 programs. It includes programs run by public agencies as well as by tax-exempt, non-government organizations.

The foundation commissioned the consulting firm of Arabella Philanthropic Investment Advisors to design and populate a database of non-profit organizations with arts education and environmental education programs in the Chicago region and the Lowcountry of South Carolina and decided to make the resources available to the public.

It was developed using public records to identify an initial broad list of organization, followed by a phone survey which was used to adjust that list and to gather specific information about current programs. Further information was obtained from GDDF's own files, online searches, and other resources.

The term "youth" in this context refers to young people aged 11 through 21 years. The geographic regions involved are [nine coastal counties of South Carolina](#) (known as the "Lowcountry"), and a [13-county region centered on Chicago](#) (including three counties in Indiana and two in Wisconsin); specific maps of those counties can be found at www.gddf.org.

In addition to the Microsoft Access file containing the entire data base, we also have included a handful of Microsoft Excel files consisting of basic lists from the database as of August 2008 and a document providing basic instructions for using the database for those who would find such guidance useful. ■

[Chicago Arts Education Programs](#) – Excel (287 K)

[Lowcountry Arts Education Programs](#) – Excel (44 K)

[Chicago Environmental Education Programs](#) – (70K)

[Lowcountry Environmental Education Programs](#) – (38K)

[Full Database](#) – MS Access (9.64 MB)

[Instructions for Database Use](#) – MS Word (250 K)