

WHAT MATTERS?

What Matters is an ongoing project inviting people of all backgrounds to answer the question, **What Matters?** This project creates an opportunity for people to reflect on the larger view of life. Participants are of every age and cultural background. The purpose is to break down barriers of perceived separateness and connect people to each other in creative ways.

- Gathered several thousand of responses in pictures, words, movement, music and drama creating an opportunity for individual expression and community connection.
- 100 events in Peekskill, Yonkers and the Bronx, New York since 2012
- Created a mural of compelling written responses painted by 88 people ages 4-80+
- Reaching the public and underserved through six free literary and performing arts workshops partially funded by the NEA.

Learn more at: lanayu.net

Contact the artist Lana Yu for events or to contribute to this impactful creative and social practice: lanacyu@gmail.com or 914-737-1141. The Hudson Valley Center for Contemporary Art, a 501(c)(3) non-profit arts and education organization is the fiscal sponsor for What Matters. Donations are tax deductible and go to service these free What Matters programs intended to reach the broadest possible audience. Thank you for your support.

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The What Matters Mural on the James St. Garage on Park Street in downtown, Peekskill, New York. Erected October 2014.



Peekskill Arts Alliance Pop-up Gallery show on Main Street in Peekskill, NY in 2012, one of our first events where people shared their thoughts with one another.

What Matters Programs

The National Endowment of the Arts has awarded a grant to the Hudson Valley Center for Contemporary Art to create literary and performing art responses to the question: What Matters? Workshops designed in partnership with community and cultural organizations will invite participants to use word, music, movement and drama to create shared public performances.

Free innovative workshops taught by professional artists, writers and performers include:

1) A Writing Circle for Seniors. Seniors in their 50's-90's created rich memoir pieces inspired by prompts such as "What mattered to me when I was six?", "A conversation I wish to remember" and other provocative starters to exploring what matters. A reading by our "elders" share their voices with the larger community.

2) Family Theater Workshop at New Era Creative Space. Families and best friends express through music and drama what matters to them. The final presentation includes a co-created blues song and drama skits playing out the themes of life.

3) I Am Here. I Belong. Produced by Embark Peekskill. Participants share What Matters to them in their lives, community, culture and family, exploring their differences and similarities with the goal of mutual respect and understanding. Dozens of immigrants from all over, first, second generation and beyond gather to discuss issues of identity and home. We reach out to both Spanish speaking and English dominant adults and youths from various corners of our community.

4) Maiden, Mother, Matriarch – Performance Art Workshop. Produced by Embark Peekskill. A diverse community of women will examine: What matters in the past, present, future through a woman's eyes. Performances coincide with Women's History Month through Spring 2017. Concurrently, Marcy B. Freedman held six lively discussions engaging over 60 women from their 50's to 90's culminating in a one woman show entitled **Women Rising, Scars and All**. In collaboration with Skin Against Metal, a unique soundtrack and musical presentation accompanies the show.

5) Penpal/Mail Art Project: The Power of Handwritten Connections. Produced by Embark Peekskill. Children ages 6-14 are connected to a penpal to use words and pictures to tell each other about What Matters in their lives. Select postcards have been donated to the Art for Aleppo cause raising funds for the refugee children of Syria.

6) Interviews in front of the What Matters mural. Street interviews will ask everyday folks to share their views of "what matters" giving voice to a diversity of people. A record of responses to be reflected back to the public in a Youtube video to invite further inquiry.

Funding Goal

This project is supported in part by an award from the National Endowment of the Arts in collaboration with the Hudson Valley Center for Contemporary Art. To receive funding we must match the grant. Most of the our match is given as "in-kind" donations by generous members of our communities including, artists, organizers and others, yet we still need cash funds to pay our teaching artists and cover program expenses.

Donate by check: Make check payable to HVCCA, Attn: The What Matters Project, HVCCA, 1701 Main Street PO Box 209, Peekskill, NY 10566. Donate online: Follow the link at www.lanayu.net

Your tax-deductible gift goes 100% toward this worthy social and artistic cause.

Contact

Information about What Matters programs and how you can get involved as a participant, volunteer or audience member: artist/project director, **Lana Yu**, www.lanayu.net, lanacyu@gmail.com or 914-737-1141