

VOICES UNBROKEN'S 2012 PROGRAM REPORT



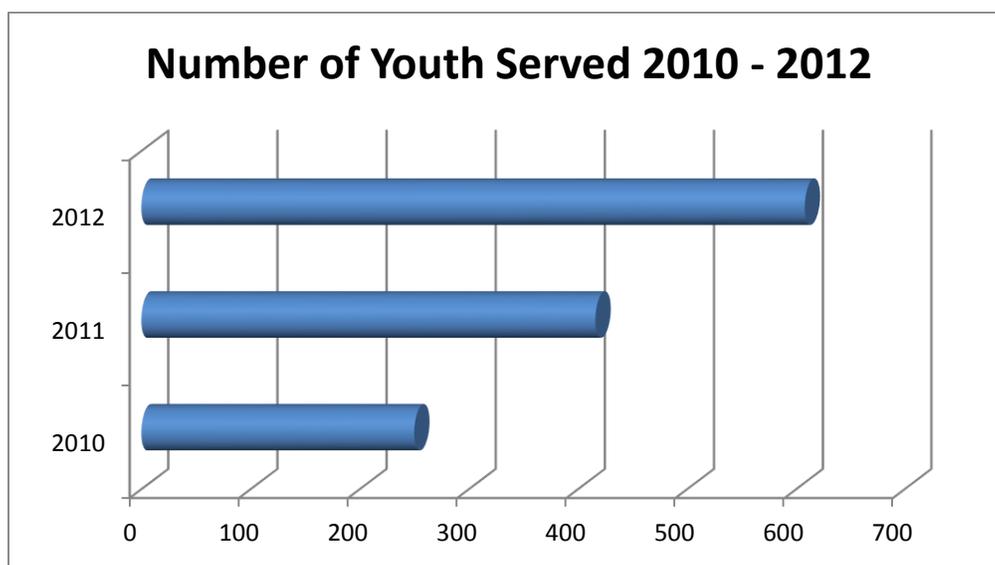
Voices UnBroken is dedicated to providing under-heard members of the community—primarily youth, ages 14-21—with the tools and opportunity for creative self-expression. Through high quality creative writing workshops in group homes, residential treatment facilities, jails, juvenile detention facilities, and various other alternative and non-traditional settings, Voices UnBroken nurtures the inherent need in all people to tell their stories and be heard. It is our belief that this telling of stories and sharing of dreams leads to individual and community growth.

OVERVIEW

The settings where Voices UnBroken's workshops take place are extremely transitional and are not very conducive to programming. As an organization that was "born" on Rikers Island and has a specific focus on working with young people in these settings, we have designed our programming to be flexible enough that we can work around the challenging limitations and restrictions that are fundamental to the facilities in which we work. Voices UnBroken's longevity in the facilities where our workshops take place is unique, and is a testament to the excellence and impact of our programming.

As you will read in this report, 2012 has been a year of transition and expansion for the Voices UnBroken; the organization has literally grown in every way and has dramatically increased the number of youth served, from 416 youth served in 2011 to 608 youth served in 2012. In order to support this expansion in services and fulfill Voices UnBroken's commitment to bringing the highest quality creative experience to the young people that we serve, we have worked hard to strengthen our organizational capacity.

Throughout 2012, we have worked diligently, through staff trainings, supportive supervision, and sharing of resources and experiences to prepare our Teaching Artist/Workshop facilitators to help youth transcend the adverse conditions of their environment to enter a space where creative exploration, goal setting, and practical learning can be engaging and fun.



Voices UnBroken's 2012 Program Report

TABLE OF CONTENTS

VOICES UNBROKEN'S PROGRAMS

Voices Beyond Bars	Page 3
Speaking Our Voices	Page 5
Voices Network	Page 7
Voices Ink	Page 7
Voices In Action	Page 8

VOICES UNBROKEN'S IMPACT	Page 9
---------------------------------	--------

STAFF UPDATES	Page 10
----------------------	---------

LOOKING FORWARD	Page 11
------------------------	---------

APPENDIX

List of Workshop Sites	Page 13
Updated Organizational Charts	Page 14

Voices UnBroken

My voices is unbroken like
the hollow sound of living
It's shielded with boastful steel
It makes the wise, wiser
For it's an incredible sound
of crisp thunder roaring
from the mouth
It's unbroken like the gates
of heaven
It's great in sound and you can't see it
for it is great and strong
and divine like my ancestors
Whom shall shutter what
but not my voice
because it's unbroken
And shall stay unbroken
Not shuttered
But unbroken

- J.D.
Voices UnBroken Participant
Horizon Juvenile Center

Voices UnBroken's 2012 Program Report

VOICES UNBROKEN'S PROGRAMS

VOICES BEYOND BARS

Voices UnBroken's first workshops were with incarcerated girls and we have maintained a commitment to serving young people who are in the juvenile and adult justice systems, even as we have expanded to serve others. Voices Beyond Bars workshops give young people who are incarcerated/detained new tools for coping with stress; moving past trauma; and learning to take responsibility for their actions and emotions. As with all Voices UnBroken workshops, participants improve their ability to speak in public, practice creative self-reflection, interpret challenges with a positive mindset, develop a hopeful future outlook, gain a willingness to engage in other essential services (counseling, re-entry, education, etc.), and increase confidence in their voice as a vehicle for change both in their lives and in the communities they come from and/or will return to upon release.

During 2012, 472 young people participated in Voices Beyond Bars workshops.

2012 Voices Beyond Bars Workshops				
Site*	# of Participants	Gender	Workshop Structure	Total # of Sessions
Rikers Island – Robert N. Davoren Complex (RNDC)	152	Male	1.5 hour per wksp session 2x per week 5-6 weeks 5 workshop cycles held	33
Horizon Juvenile Center	106	Female	1.5 hour per wksp session 2x per week 5-6 week cycles 4 workshop cycles held	56
Horizon Juvenile Center	116	Male	1.5 hour per wksp session 1x per week 5-6 week cycles 5 workshop cycles held	49
Crossroads Juvenile Center	57	Female	1.5 hour per wksp session 1x per week 8-10 week cycles 3 workshop cycles held	27
Good Shepherd Services' Peter J. Sharp House	41	Female	1.5 hour per wksp session 5x per week 1 week 3 workshop cycles held	14
Totals	472		--	179
* Please see page 13 of this report for a description of each workshop site				

Voices UnBroken's 2012 Program Report

Poem In Your Pocket Day & National Poetry Month – April 2012

In April of 2012, Voices UnBroken participated in Poem In Your Pocket Day by hosting a performance and open mic at Horizon Juvenile Center. The phenomenal poet, performer, and Voices UnBroken Board Member, Caridad “La Bruja” De La Luz, and the award winning poet and author, Carlos Andres Gomez, performed for an audience of approximately 50 young people. Audience members were also given paper and pencils, and a writing activity from Voices UnBroken’s Write Your Way curriculum to inspire young people to write. After the performances, there was an open mic in which approximately 10 young people either read their writing or asked one of the performers to read their writing for them.

I am sentimental and nice.
I wonder what my mom is doing in heaven.
I hear my inner voice.
I see my grandmother.
I want to go home.
I am sentimental and nice.

I pretend I'm going home on my next court date.
I feel sad and disappointed.
I hope I go home on my next court date.
I worry about what my boyfriend is doing.
I cry because I am separated from my family and boyfriend.
I am sentimental and nice.

I understand my mistakes.
I say, "God ..."
I dream about a lot of things.
I try to cope.
I will succeed in life.
I am sentimental and nice.

- S.M., Age 17
Voices UnBroken Participant
Horizon Juvenile Center

Voices UnBroken's 2012 Program Report

SPEAKING OUR VOICES

Speaking Our Voices is an initiative that brings creative writing workshops into a variety of community and alternative settings. During these workshops participants are able to write from the heart, speak for themselves and share their stories. The young people who participate in Speaking Our Voices workshops are primarily in foster care and live in restrictive residential facilities. All Speaking Our Voices workshops take place in partnership with other organizations and agencies, we refer to these as our “partner sites”.

During 2012, 136 young people participated in Speaking Our Voices workshops.

2012 Speaking Our Voices Workshops				
Site*	# of Participants	Gender	Workshop Structure	Total # of Sessions
August Aichhorn Center For Adolescent Residential Care	8	Co-ed	1.5 hour per wksp session 1x per week 10-12 weeks 1 workshop cycles held	8
Good Shepherd Services' Euphrasian Hall	58	Female	1.5 hour per wksp session 1x per week 4-8 week cycles 2 workshop cycles held	12
Odyssey House Lafayette	70	Female	1.5 hour per wksp session 1x per week 10 weeks 3 workshop cycles held	30
Totals	136		--	50
* Please see page 13 of this report for a description of each workshop site				

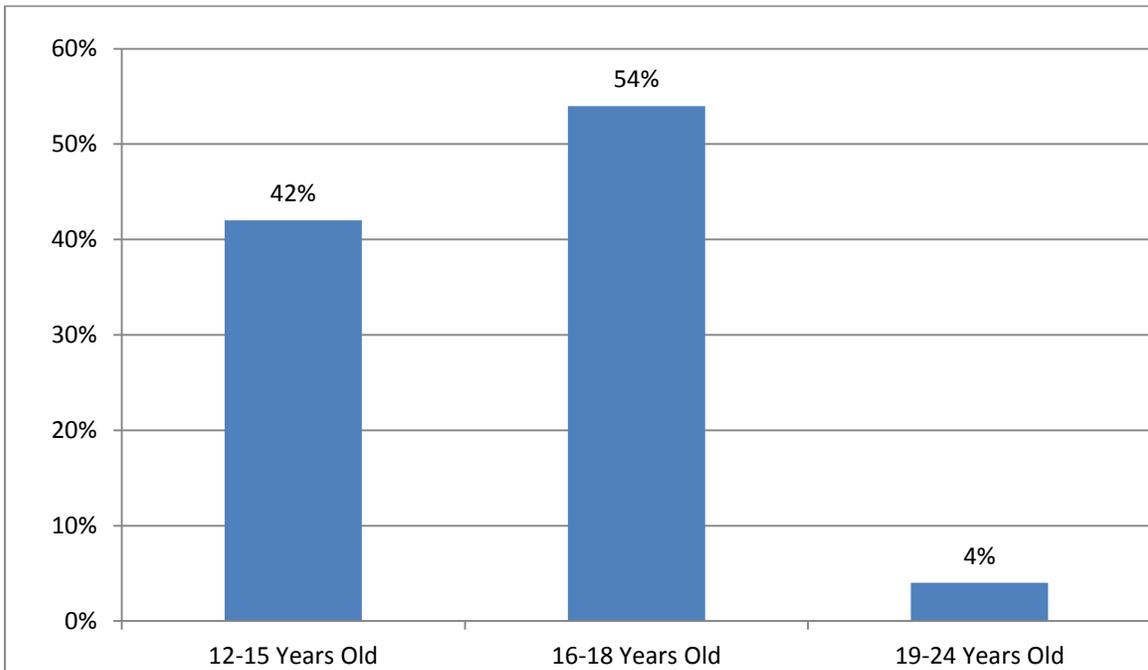
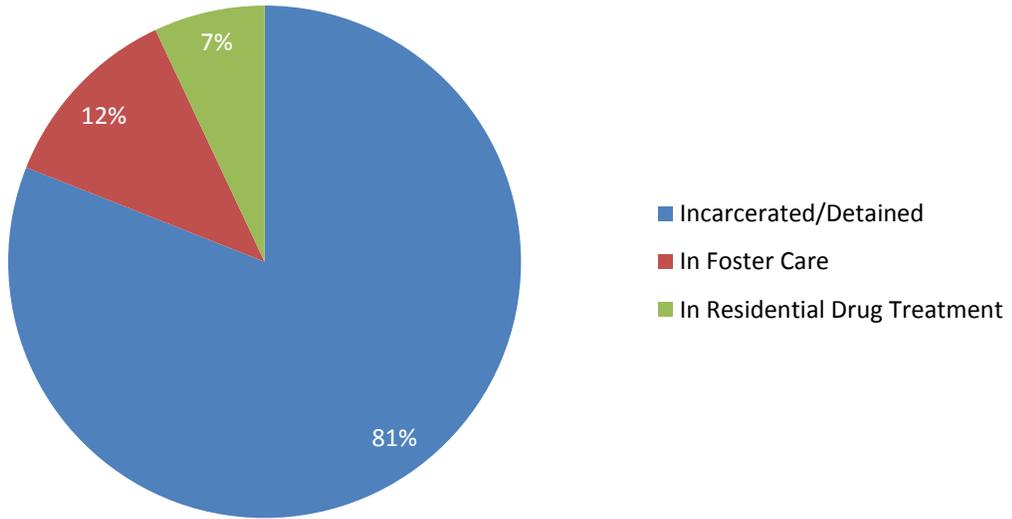
I'm from a block where they shoot
 and deal drugs
 I'm from this city with bright lights
 and tall buildings
 I'm from a home where it doesn't
 even feel like home
 I'm from a mother who's more like
 my friend
 I'm from a family that's
 dysfunctional and bent out of shape

 I'm not from that perfect family
 you see on TV
 I'm not from a place that's so pretty

- J.S., Age 21
 Voices UnBroken Participant
 Odyssey House Lafayette

Voices UnBroken's 2012 Program Report

Youth Served in 2012



Voices UnBroken's 2012 Program Report

VOICES NETWORK

The Voices Network is an informal collective of former workshop participants, young people, teachers, writers, and other artists dedicated to the incorporation of student voices in a supportive community. The network involves trainings, workshops, conference presentations, among other forums. We also use the network to connect participants to community resources. Voices UnBroken is also a member of the Juvenile Justice Coalition and The Community Justice Network for Youth.

Write Your Way Trainings

In 2012, Voices UnBroken hosted two free youth development trainings at the Fund for the City of New York. These trainings were geared towards youth development professionals who were interested in using the arts to engage hard-to-reach youth, including those who are currently in or transitioning out of the foster care system and those who have experienced incarceration/detention. Participants in these trainings had the opportunity to try out - and take home - some of the activities featured in Voices UnBroken's Write Your Way curriculum. Approximately 40 people attended these trainings, including staff of the NYC Administration for Children's Services, the NYC Department of Probation, Center for Community Alternatives, Poets & Writers, Global Kids, and various foster care agencies.

In addition to the trainings that were held at the Fund for the City of New York, Voices UnBroken partnered with Community Word Project, a local arts organization that places teaching artists in New York City public schools, to offer a training focused on facilitating arts workshops in non-school settings to participants in their teaching artist training program.

VOICES INK

The Voices Ink program projects the voices of our participants to make them heard in a larger community. This includes publication in journals, anthologies, and newsletters of other organizations. Voices UnBroken also publishes Voices Ink, a full-color magazine that features writing by workshop participants.

In 2012 we published *Please Forgive Me For Being Away From You*, an anthology of poetry by participants in Voices UnBroken's Bronx workshops. The publication of this anthology was funded by The Simón Bolívar Foundation.

What It's Like to be a Teenager

*Feeling new feelings you never thought you'd feel
Getting a new type of strength to overcome your fears
Feeling pressured by people to do the unordinary
Starting to feel as if the unordinary is ordinary
Start to feel as if you have fallen in love
Going through little changes & some big ones
Gaining new responsibilities but still keeping your
innocence*

- D.A., Age 15
Voices UnBroken Participant
Horizon Juvenile Center

Voices UnBroken's 2012 Program Report

A Highway That Came From So Many Lows

It's not my fault
I was built strong and taught to be humble.
Seen me as vulnerable and tried
to make me crumble,
but I could never break
Like bulletproof glass,
you gotta give it all it takes.
1 shot, 2 shot, 3 shot, 4
Keep it coming I know you have more.
I'll go round for round.
I hear victory
because I knocked fault out.

It's not your fault
they couldn't be role models.
couldn't be there for your bottled up emotions.
Stay positive don't lose focus.
Cause people like us are open-minded
with bruises from the clueless.
I know you wonder why would they do this.
They looked in your face and seen
You were special.

It's not our fault
people will do everything in their power
just to test you
get the best of you.
Take advantage because they seen less of you.
They wanted to be you,
so they'd beat you, mistreat you.
They tried to break you,
but forgive
because you're the best
and they could never make us
who we are.
People from a past
so, so far.
Mounded to the ground,
stomped on by pain.
They walked all over and didn't even come back
to see if we were sane.
It's not our fault
their emotions
couldn't be maintained.

It's not our fault...

- Brianna Hayes,
Founding Member, Voices In Action

VOICES IN ACTION

In 2011, Voices UnBroken launched the Voices in Action program, a leadership program specifically for girls and young women who have participated in Voices UnBroken workshops and are interested in using their voices to advocate for themselves, their sisters, and for their/our communities. Voices in Action meetings are held once a month at Voices UnBroken's office, and participants are paid for their attendance and participation.

Voices in Action group members are using writing to explore their life stories along with the life stories of their sisters, friends, mothers, and other women and girls they are close to. Voices in Action members have decided that their first project will be to write a book that uses memoirs and poetry to tell their stories. This book will also include resource information and policy recommendations. Copies of this book will be disseminated to young people who are still in the child welfare or juvenile justice system, and to the adults who work with young people in these systems.

Hope

Don't give up on me yet.
I can do better
I promise
Don't leave me here
I'm sorry
I ain't mean to
Believe me
I'll stay out your way
I'll get a job
I'll do whatever
I love you
Help me
Believe in me
You'll need me
I promise
I'll be there
I won't hurt you
like they did
You're all I got
I promise
Just don't give up on me yet

- Farah Reyes
Founding Member, Voices In Action

VOICES UNBROKEN'S IMPACT

Participants in Voices UnBroken workshops report ...



Participants in Voices UnBroken workshops develop self-expression skills through creative writing and discussion exercises, which enable them to constructively communicate in situations where they previously would not have had the confidence to speak up. They also

learn that their writing, their voices have the power to change people's perceptions about them, in particular the adults who work with them, including teachers, social workers, corrections officers and staff in the facilities they're housed in. More specifically, participants in Voices UnBroken workshops improve:

- Comfort with their ability to speak in public
- Their ability to engage in creative self-reflection
- Their ability to positively interpret challenges and develop a hopeful future orientation
- Their willingness to engage in other essential services (counseling, education, etc.)
- Confidence in their voice as a vehicle for change in their own lives and in the communities they live in

In order to track these outcomes, we currently use the following tools:

- **Sign-in Sheets** are used to track attendance
- **Demographic sheets** are used to collect basic, self-reported statistics on each participant
- **Pre-and-Post Surveys** are completed by participants at the beginning and end of a workshop cycle and offer them an opportunity both to reflect on the workshop and to assess the effectiveness of the facilitator
- **Participant Writing** is perhaps the best way to document and evaluate the experiences young people are having in our workshops. We are specifically looking for the poems that indicate progress – is the young person writing more comfortably? Are they sharing more? Are they finding their own unique voice?
- **Progress Notes** are completed by Teaching Artists/Workshop Facilitators at the end of each workshop session and are used to document their workshop plans and their observances of its execution, including the challenges faced and successes gained.
- **Tracking Sheets** are completed by Teaching Artists/Workshop Facilitators for each workshop cycle. This very simple tools helps Teaching Artists/Workshop Facilitators to ensure that they have collected all of the necessary documentation.

In 2010, through a grant with the Partnership for After-School Education (PASE), Voices UnBroken worked with an evaluation consultant who created an Excel spreadsheet to analyze the data we collect using the tools mentioned above. Unfortunately, this tool has many limitations and does not meet our needs. We are currently researching alternatives and hope to implement a new system that will help us to evaluate our workshops more efficiently.

Voices UnBroken's 2012 Program Report

STAFF UPDATES

Teaching Artists/Workshop Facilitators

Prior to 2012, Voices UnBroken contracted with teaching artists to facilitate Voices UnBroken workshops as independent contractors. In 2012, we created new part-time Teaching Artist/Workshop Facilitator positions. We had support with this process from Alexander Bogdan at Hughes, Hubbard & Reed, LLP whose patience and expertise made this process as smooth as possible.

During 2012, Voices UnBroken hired 12 part-time Teaching Artist/Workshop Facilitators.

AmeriCorps*VISTA

In 2012, Voices UnBroken was awarded a service grant from the AmeriCorps*VISTA program that made it possible for us to host the following three AmeriCorps*VISTA Members:

- The Program & Development Coordinator is creating a program manual that documents the history of the organization, its programming, impact, and funding.
- The Creative Connections Coordinator is developing a formal system for making and tracking service referrals for participants in Voices UnBroken workshops.
- The Community and Outreach Coordinator is identifying a contact management system that will allow us to

These AmeriCorps*VISTA Members work full-time at our office and are paid and receive benefits through the AmeriCorps program.

Program Director Transition

In May 2012, Milagros (Mimi) Acosta resigned her position as Program Director of Voices UnBroken. Regina (Oyanike) Hutchins-Winstead was chosen to fill this position. Oyanike has 20 years of program and management experience and has worked at various youth and social service organizations, including the NY Martin Luther King, Jr. Center, Berkshire Farms, and the Greyston Foundation. Oyanike overlapped with Mimi during the month of June to ensure that this transition was as smooth as possible.

Since stepping into the Program Director position, Oyanike has developed strong relationships with Voices UnBroken's staff, and with the staff where Voices UnBroken's workshops take place. And she is currently working to expand Voices UnBroken's programming.

Artistic & Program Coordinator

This position was created to assist the Program Director with all aspects of workshop coordination. This position has been filled by Julia Taylor, an experienced workshop facilitator who facilitated Voices UnBroken workshops for two years before being offered this position. Julia assists Oyanike, Voices UnBroken's Program Director, with recruitment and training of Teaching Artists/Workshop Facilitators, and makes regular visit to workshops to observe and support Voices UnBroken's Teaching Artists/Workshop Facilitators.

Voices UnBroken's 2012 Program Report

LOOKING FORWARD ...

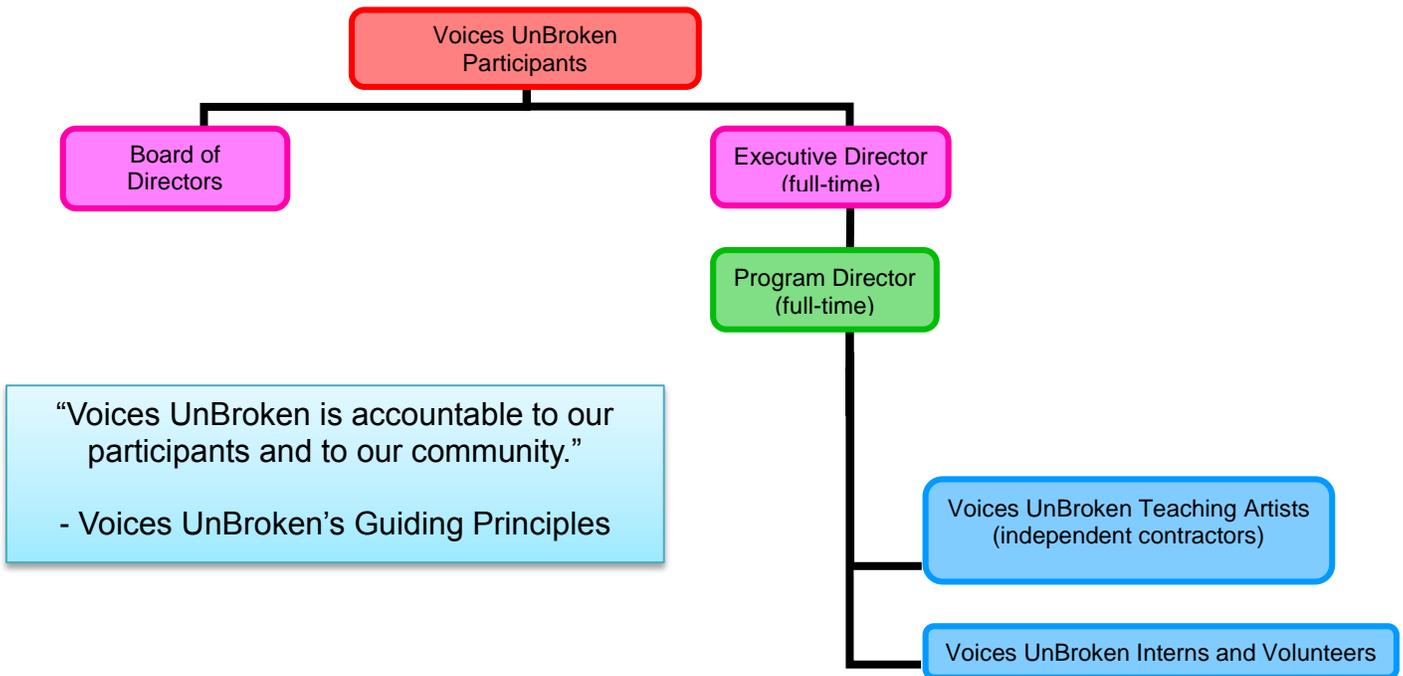
APPENDIX

Voices UnBroken's 2012 Program Report

Voices UnBroken Workshop Sites 2012-2013			
Site	Ages	Gender	Workshop Structure
August Aichhorn Center For Adolescent Residential Care , a long-term residential psychiatric facility for youth in the foster care system	12-18	Co-ed	1.5 hour per wksp session 1x per week 10-12 weeks 3 workshop cycles held
Good Shepherd Services' Euphrasian Hall , a residential diagnostic reception center for girls in the foster care system	12-18	Female	1.5 hour per wksp session 1x per week 8-10 weeks 3 workshop cycles held
Odyssey House Lafayette , a residential drug treatment program for girls and young women	16-25 (occasionally older)	Female	1.5 hour per wksp session 1x per week 8-10 weeks 3 workshop cycles held
Rikers Island – Robert N. Davoren Complex (RNDC) , the facility on Rikers Island that houses adolescent boys	16-18	Male	
Horizon Juvenile Center , a secure detention center for youth in the juvenile justice system	7-17*	Female Male	
Crossroads Juvenile Center , a secure detention center for youth in the juvenile justice system		Female	
Good Shepherd Services' Peter J. Sharp House , a non-secure detention facility for girls in the juvenile justice system		Female	
New Sites			
Good Shepherd Services' Shirley Chisolm NSP , a non-secure placement facility for girls in the juvenile justice system			Starting March 2013
Good Shepherd Services' Barbara Blum NSP , a non-secure placement facility for boys in the juvenile justice system			Starting April 2013
Rikers Island – Rose M. Singer Center (RMSC) , the facility on Rikers Island that houses women and adolescent girls	16-21	Female	Starting April 2013
* In NYS, young people who are arrested before their 16 th birthday are held in juvenile justice facilities. Young people who are arrested after their 16 th birthday are automatically tried as adults, regardless of the offense.			

Voices UnBroken's 2012 Program Report

Voices UnBroken's Organizational Chart (pre-2012)



Voices UnBroken's Organizational Chart (2012-Present)

