To explore the successful models of the HandMade in America region and to determine how to attract learners, expand entrepreneurship, foster business skills in artists, and increase appreciation and recognition of regional and heritage arts, and to examine effective models and practices of use of space for advancing artistic development and economic growth, creative placemaking in small, rural communities, and inform future design and utilization of the BBTCAC campus and Black Belt communities.
LEARNING JOURNEY DETAILS
June 1-8, 2014

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JOURNEY GOALS
To explore the successful models of the HandMade in America region to determine how to attract learners, expand entrepreneurship, foster business skills in artists, and increase appreciation and recognition of regional and heritage arts.

To examine effective models and practices of use of space for advancing artistic development, economic growth, and creative placemaking in small, rural communities, and to inform future design and utilization of the BBTCAC campus and Black Belt communities.
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INTRODUCTION

Through the support of the Center for Rural Entrepreneurship, the Black Belt Treasures Cultural Arts Center facilitated a trip to Western North Carolina to study the arts economy and creative placemaking in the region. Eight participants were selected from Alabama’s nineteen county Black Belt region. Selection was based on leadership, work experience, and commitment to the arts. Chosen for the initiative were: Sulynn Creswell and Kristin Law Cook from Wilcox County; Martha Lockett and Jo Taylor from Dallas County; Michael Sims from Lowndes County; Susan Brown from Monroe County; Candace Johnson representing Southwest Alabama Tourism; and Judy Martin from Perry County.

HandMade in America (HMIA) staff, Glenn Cox and Janelle Wienke, guided the group through diverse small towns where the core of community life and the economy is regional art. Melissa Levy of Yellow Wood Associates served as facilitator in her capacity as a consultant to Black Belt Treasures Cultural Arts Center for the WealthWorks planning process.
The goals of the trip were:

1. To explore the successful models of the HandMade in America region to determine how to attract learners, expand entrepreneurship, foster business skills in artists, and increase appreciation and recognition of regional and heritage arts.

2. To examine effective models and practices of use of space for advancing artistic development, economic growth and creative placemaking in small, rural communities, and to inform future design and utilization of the BBTCAC campus and Black Belt communities.
CREATIVE PLACEMAKING EXPLORATION

Under the tutelage of Melissa Levy of Yellow Wood Associates, Black Belt Treasures Cultural Arts Center (BBTCAC) has participated in WealthWorks planning for more than two years. As the value chain was created, stakeholders meetings held, and interventions developed, an awareness of the need for close examination of similar models became increasingly evident. The successful creative placemaking model thought to be most similar to BBTCAC is HandMade in America, located in Western North Carolina.

The Mission of Black Belt Treasures is...to foster, develop, and promote arts education opportunities and economic development initiatives aimed at creating jobs and increasing the income of local residents through the marketing of arts, crafts, literature, food products, and other items unique to Alabama’s Black Belt.
BBTCAC’s mission statement is similar to HandMade’s mission of using existing cultural heritage, crafts, and arts education to create an arts driven economy. The difference is HandMade’s years of experience with strong entrepreneurship and the creative placemaking components currently in place. As we plan for our continuing leadership role in the Black Belt region’s art economy, we can learn much from the successes of HandMade.

Learning journey participants were assigned to study through example the concept known as Creative Placemaking. Great examples of this were found in small towns surrounding Asheville, communities with populations of 4,000 or less, as well as within the city itself. Many of the places we visited have successfully created an arts economy of their own, such as that found in the Town of Marshall where multiple art forms coexist. These towns attract and capture people who both visit and relocate partially because of the energy exuded by the creative atmosphere. The variety of visual, temporal, and dramatic arts within this community offers inspiration and education for the “locals” as well.

The renovated high school, which housed artist studio space and an area (gym) for rent by other organizations, offered an economic alternative to a problem every small town has: abandoned schools and buildings. In Stecoah Valley, we witnessed yet another school that had become a visual arts center, housing a gift shop (indigenous arts & crafts), a dining area for catered events, and a restored theatre which provided the space for a community concert series and studio space for artists.
THE ROLE OF HANDMADE IN AMERICA

HandMade in America plays a major role in seeing that small communities have a partner and can access needed funding and expertise. From its beginning in 1993, the organization purposefully focused efforts on the twenty-five county region composed of many small towns. Former HandMade in America Executive Director Becky Anderson shared that, in the organization’s early work with communities, all entities agreed to be mutually supportive and to be there for each other in times of need. When the Town of Bakersville experienced major flood damage, other communities fulfilled that pledge by helping to restore the community. Anderson stated that as HMIA began its work in a community, three questions were asked: (1) What and where are sacred places in your community? (2) Where do you not want tourists in your community? and (3) What would you share about your community with a visitor? In these communities, about half of the residents wanted to see tourism growth and half did not. Every participating community project required at least one partner in addition to HMIA. The objective was to bring the region together around their culture with the arts being central. Therefore, there had to be more than a hobbyist approach.

Today, the impact on the arts economy of that area of Western North Carolina is significant. According to a 2007 study, ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE PROFESSIONAL CRAFT INDUSTRY IN WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA, the total annual economic impact of the professional craft industry is $206,500,000. Truly, the investment of
human and financial capital in the crafts industry has resulted in vitality, leadership, and innovation in Western North Carolina.

HandMade’s vision for Western North Carolina is to have a global reputation for high quality of life, extensive cultural offerings, and thriving, creative community industries, and where craft, heritage, and culture are seen as key investments and an engine for personal, community, and economic growth. Their program work combines their passion for handmade craft and asset-based rural creative placemaking into three main focus areas: entrepreneurship, economic development and education. The three areas work together to establish creative placemaking. [http://www.handmadeinamerica.org/](http://www.handmadeinamerica.org/)
INFRASTRUCTURE

The use of underutilized infrastructure, such as vacant buildings, was compelling in Western North Carolina. Enterprising people, organizations and communities saw opportunity in vacant buildings, spaces and infrastructure. In Western North Carolina, underutilized resources were being put to good use in the arts economy. In the Town of Marshall, an old high school was purchased by an artist to develop into art studios for other artists (Marshall High Studios). Minimal redevelopment was done to make this happen. The building seemed to be left in a state similar to when it was a high school. The gym is available for events. Classrooms are used as individual artist studios. The space serves as a community hub for artists in Marshall.

Jackson County decided to capitalize on unused land, a former landfill, to create a space for artist studios while utilizing the naturally occurring methane gas by-products underneath to power the studio equipment at Jackson County Green Energy Park. The park includes a blacksmithing studio, a glass studio and a pottery studio. The property is also home to a greenhouse, an art gallery that showcases the work created by artists using renewable energy, a sculpture garden, and more. Guided tours are offered a few days a week. Not only are studios rented by artists on an hourly basis, but also artists offer private classes to those interested in learning to work in a particular medium.
In Stecoah, a group of concerned citizens formed a nonprofit, the Stecoah Valley Arts, Crafts and Educational Center, to restore the historic school to its original role as the center of the community. Not only does the center host arts and crafts activities, an art gallery, and music performances, but it is home to meeting and banquet spaces, a commercial kitchen (the old school cafeteria) available for public use, an after school program and more. These stories were particularly exciting as the Alabama Black Belt is home to a variety of underutilized assets, especially buildings. Black Belt Treasures Cultural Arts Center’s (BBTCAC’s) space is a perfect example of reuse of a vacant building (a former car dealership). Possible partners for beginning to think more about this include municipal and county governments, educational institutions, and other community and county oriented nonprofit organizations.

**TAKE AWAY:** Next steps might include: engaging partners in each county to inventory vacant buildings in BBTCAC’s service area; have county wide working groups to think about uses for underutilized infrastructure; partner with area colleges and universities to inventory existing areas in the region for potential reuse of renewable energy and resources.
ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Entrepreneurs abound in the twenty-five county region of Western North Carolina, and the Black Belt Learning Journey participants visited a notable cross section of examples. Commonalities for all entrepreneurial sites were commitment to hard work and creative placemaking, good business practices and training, and partnership with HandMade in America.

The Asheville River Arts District, located in aged, industrial buildings adjacent to an active railroad track, houses art studios and residences for entrepreneurs, coffee shops and restaurants creating an active, engaging place. Murals on exterior walls, sculpture, and landscaping offer affordable, aesthetic improvements in the area. Three buildings, called “Curve Studios and Garden” were purchased by fiber artist Patti Torno and are used as home and shop for her, and also provide additional income from studio and showroom rental space for other artists who in turn sublet space on their floors on a price-per-square-foot basis. Potter Karen Newgard has been an occupant at Curve for four years, supporting herself by making pottery while sharing space with two other potters. Newgard credits the Penland School for attracting a large percentage of the artists who are active in Asheville and emphasizes the education component,
particularly in business as an important part of growing viable art businesses. Weaver Suzanne Gernandt rents and shares studio space at Curve Studios with four other artists. Each year a local fiber cooperative presents a fashion show for which local fashion designers are asked to produce garments using locally woven fabrics made from regionally produced yarns.

Also, in the River Arts District is Cotton Mill Studios, home to a gallery and studio shared by three painters; Mark Henry, Bill George and Bernadette St. Pierre-George. In addition to making studio and gallery space more affordable, sharing the responsibility for gallery operation hours is an added advantage. Textile artist Barbara Zaretsky, runs Cloth Fiber Workshop and BZDesigns. Her work in hand dyed and printed fabrics is captivating but she was not initially welcoming. This is a reminder that while each artist benefits from the tourist economy and open studio experience, the constant influx of guests during the creative process can be distracting and invasive at times. Japanese ceramic artist Akira Satake and his wife opened Gallery Mugen (which means infinite) and Yuzu Patisserie. Satake, originally trained as a musician, took up pottery after moving to the United States in 1983. He relocated to North Carolina in 2003 to concentrate on his art. Satake recently moved his gallery from Curve Studios to the Cotton Mill Studios, for financial and
spacial growth. The addition of his wife’s pastry and coffee shop has increased visitors, has added to the cultural exchange, and ultimately has made The Cotton Mill Studios a more complete destination (which leads to longer tourist visits and a greater chance they will purchase artwork and food).

A visit to the Echoview Fiber Mill offered a striking contrast to the River Arts District site. The modern Gold Level LEED certified facility, includes an underground cistern for collecting rainwater and runoff for irrigation at the mill and on the farm. Echoview is a textile manufacturer that in part receives raw wool directly from a system of independent farmers needing custom processing. Ninety percent of production is returned directly to the farmers. The remainder is finished onsite by the mill owner into retail goods for Echoview’s store and website. Echoview has just purchased new spinning equipment that will allow it to supply finished yarn to various designers and clothing manufacturers. Expanding also will allow for additional processing of fiber from other states. Additional crops produced at Echoview are hops for the local craft-brew beer industry, chickens, goats, bees, and organically grown vegetables. The agricultural aspect is particularly relevant to Alabama’s Black Belt region and its potential.
Mangum Pottery in Weaverville, operated by successful potter and businessman Rob Mangum is both a studio and gallery. Mangum, an Alabama native, chose Weaverville because of the availability of affordable property. As a result of a thriving arts economy, the growth of the main business area has brought about a dramatic increase in property values resulting in properties which many artist entrepreneurs can afford to neither buy nor rent. Mangum’s advice to any artist who plans to start a business and fix up a distressed building is to get a LONG lease, fifteen years or more. For those who are worried that they may not be able to succeed enough to pay rent for fifteen years, Mangum advises them to reconsider opening a business.

**TAKE AWAY:** *Artists need and want cheap rent and are willing to make improvements themselves in order to keep costs low and make the space adaptable to their craft.*

Flow, a four-year-old retail gallery in Marshall, operates as an LLC. Flow has eight owner members and represents fifty artists. New artists are identified by reference and research or by a jury that reviews applications and work. Consigning artists are required to put in work hours at the shop.

Marshall High Studios, a non-profit managed by Rob Pulleyn, was previously a public school and is located on a river island accessed by a bridge. Studios, available for rent, are closed to the public and open only on special occasions. Studio and event rental income supports the upkeep of the building.
The YMI Cultural Center, located in the historic Young Men’s Institute Building, is the oldest cultural center created for African American youths in the United States. It was founded in 1893 by Dr. Edward Stevens with the financial support of George Vanderbilt for the moral improvement of young black men. The YMI Center now offers arts education opportunities for youth in the area, including an exhibition space/gallery, and also is an anchor for the revitalization of the Eagle Market Street District which will engage approximately twenty-five African American owned businesses in downtown Asheville. The Eagle Market Street District also will host a destination hub meeting space. Dr. Darin Waters, a history professor at a local university, explained that Asheville built itself on tourism as a vacation spot for wealthy industrialists. African Americans have traditionally been a small minority, approximately thirteen percent of the population. Ms. Stephanie Twitty, actively involved in the Eagle Market Street Community Development Center (CDC), led a tour of her industrial sewing shop, Block by Block Industries. This organization does business analysis and implementation for proposed textile design projects.

**TAKE AWAY:** *Block by Block is a great model for a collective of textile artists such as Freedom Quilting Bee or Gee’s Bend Quilt Collective.*
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Two economic impact studies, the first in 1995 and second in 2007-2008, offer statistics to support what is evident across the twenty-five county region. A healthy, prosperous professional crafts industry is engaging community and has not only created employment for locals, but also attracts artists relocating from other places to become part of the arts industry in the region. The total annual economic impact of the professional craft industry has grown from $122 million in 1995 to $206.5 million in 2008.

The studies show that tourism is the region’s main source of revenue. While tourists are attracted to the scenic beauty of the mountains, they also shop, dine, and rent lodging. There are more than 130 galleries in the region and $642 per visit is the average amount spent by craft consumers coming to Western North Carolina. Seventy percent of the gallery merchandise is made in the region. Sixty-two percent of the sales are to tourists. Many of the galleries represent numerous consignors as is the case in the Oaks Gallery in Dillsboro, which represents 125 craft artists and the Bakersville Gallery that represents 90 area craft artists.

Echoview Fiber Mill employs eleven people. The textile workers, currently all women (echoing the historic role of women as weavers in Appalachia), are paid living wages and there are no education requirements.

In Marshall, the Madison County Arts Council is staffed by Laura Boosinger and Eric Hubner, and is part of the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area. The Arts Council has been in existence for about 35 years. They have been located in their current space, a former Belk’s department store, since 2007. The organization cross-promotes with other organizations in order to stretch advertisement dollars.
TAKE AWAY: Cross-promotion is essential to success especially in rural areas. We must continue to increase cross-promotional partnerships in the Black Belt region.

Marshall is the county seat of Madison County. The county is 450 square miles in size, most of which is rural, and it is home to roughly 20,000 people. Tobacco was the historical cash crop, but now the county raises large quantities of shiitake mushrooms. The county is rich in biodiversity and the natural hot springs have attracted visitors to the area for many years. Manufacturing of hooked rugs is a large local industry. Madison County was the birthplace of the Allenstand Cottage Industry movement, which was the forerunner of today’s Southern Highland Craft Guild. The county has a rich music heritage in ballad singing and folk or string band music. Important musical instruments are fiddles and banjos. A majority of the programs of the Madison County Arts Center revolve around musical performance. Programming includes a children’s class in performing traditional instrumental music, a children’s class in clog dancing, and an after-school theater program for children in grades four through eight. There is also a major fall festival held on the town square, and an additional festival called “Mermaid on the Mountain.”

TAKE AWAY: Marshall County has found a variety of ways to utilize its cultural heritage in economic development opportunities while maintaining their cultural integrity.
The work of the Arts Council has gone a long way towards building a rich community life. Natives are proud to see previously abandoned buildings full of activity, recalling prosperity that has been absent for decades. Bed and breakfast establishments have opened, and there is a business in vacation cabin rentals.

Toe River Arts Council (TRAC), under the leadership of Denise Cook, serves two counties with a combined population of 32,000, including 500 craftspeople. The two main towns are Burnsville and Spruce Pine. TRAC has facilities in both towns. TRAC purchased their facility in Spruce Pine in 1999 and have been working continuously to renovate it. They have rented their building in Burnsville since 2005, and they are now putting together a proposal to purchase a former county library building in Burnsville, the location of the council administrative office. Both towns have experienced economic decline and there has been a push to expand the role of the arts in improving the quality of life. The Town of Burnsville has received a grant through the Smart Grant program to widen the highway that runs through town, to erect “gateways” to create a sense of
arrive and place, and to support various historical preservation projects. The goal is to
make it easier for visitors to recognize that they have arrived in a special place.

**TAKE AWAY:** *The Black Belt region should work together to create strategic
gateway entries to welcome tourists and residents highlighting the creativity
and community. Pride of place was evident in every community we visited.
There was a cultural pride among all socio-economic groups encountered.
Everyone seemed to know about and appreciate the importance of the arts to
the economy, the quality of life and success of their communities.*

TRAC has a spirit of willingness to explore unusual programming ideas and
community partnerships. It receives support from a wide range of community partners,
from state grant-making organizations and twenty to thirty small community funding
sources. About 50% of their funding comes from grassroots sources. TRAC also co-
writes grants with local schools. In addition, in order to address the need for local
lodging, TRAC established a “sleep with the artist” alternative lodging program.

**TAKE AWAY:** *Explore home-stays and Airbnbs to address lodging deficits in
some areas of the Black Belt.*
TRAC helps individual artists by providing free classes through the small business centers at the local junior college. Those classes teach artists concepts such as setting prices for work, taking advantage of exhibition opportunities, developing a portfolio, navigating social media and understanding tax laws, among others. The organization is the fiscal agent for small performing arts groups in the area and the local literature festival. There are at least two small theater groups in Burnsville, including a long-standing community theater that has paid staff. TRAC is the regional coordinator for state grants. From the money it receives from the state arts council, TRAC awards an average of ten individual artist grants annually in the amount of $1,200 for special projects, new equipment, travel, research, etc.

Programming includes an annual blacksmithing festival, a residency program to place artists in K-5 classrooms five times per year, and an after-school program which teaches students to perform and appreciate traditional vocal and instrumental music. They have a performance program that aims to give every child in the local school system the opportunity to see two performances of various kinds each year. These programs are funded through United Way, Smart Start Initiative, and the North Carolina State Arts Council.

Work is sold by local artists in both of its locations, with a 40% commission on all sales. They compete somewhat with the two commercial galleries in Burnsville. There are, on average, twelve to fifteen commercial galleries in the two counties at any given
time. Instruction is offered for gallery owners and local arts organizations in business concepts and business language. The TRAC galleries are host to a diverse and full menu of art exhibitions. There are shows for professional artists and craftspeople, shows for amateur painters (such as Paint Out, a one-day plein-air painting competition), and student shows and local showcases during the off-season for tourism. The gallery space in Spruce Pine is the venue for large exhibitions.

TRAC requires those who wish to take part in the Toe River Studio Tour to participate in the preparation for the anchor showcase at the Spruce Pine headquarters. Participants are asked to contribute two pieces of their own choice so as to demonstrate a range in their products and in their pricing. In this way, the show becomes self-juried. Work in the show is grouped by localities within the two county region to help visitors identify those areas they wish to visit, and there is a friendly competition among the localities to present the best and most attractive work their locality has to offer. TRAC presents two widely attended studio tours each year.

TRAC received a $250,000 grant from a regional tobacco production company for renovations in 2011 to remodel the second floor of their building at Spruce Pine. To this was added $50,000 from the Town of Spruce Pine and $50,000 from a private family foundation. The renovated space is completely ADA compliant, and meets requirements for fire protection and emergency egress that were put forward by the local fire marshal. TRAC now has handsome, accommodating spaces for large group
assembly, artist workshops and demonstrations, and administrative offices. The multi-functional assembly room has already become a routine venue for use by a range of events and programs by community groups and the local junior college. Workshop space is the venue for multiple art classes each week, providing a place for artists to earn money through teaching. It is becoming the event center of downtown Spruce Pine. The TRAC galleries, both in Burnsville and in Spruce Pine have a polished, professional, attractive look, adding to the visitor’s impression that TRAC has its act together and knows how to put its best foot forward.

**TAKE AWAY: Obvious to the observer was the level of exhibited art was of high quality whether more contemporary or traditional/folk in style. TRAC found a way to make all styles flow well together.**

An Arts Apprentice Program offered by TRAC consists of nine apprentices and one program coordinator. The apprentices are between nineteen and twenty-nine years old. They receive a small stipend and free access to classes at TRAC. They also are taken on field trips to gain familiarity with the art activity in the region, and they are required to accumulate two hundred hours of work in various studios of professional artists. The older artists who use the apprentices gain not only labor support, but the opportunity to make a connection with the younger generation. The apprentice program is funded by a community foundation grant at the maximum grant level of $20,000 per year.

Of particular importance at TRAC is the idea of always paying artists and personnel something for their work in order to consistently convey the idea that “Arts is
Business.” Denise Cook stated that it is imperative to “speak the positives of the impact of the arts” when speaking to community leaders and local citizens - emphasizing the number of artists impacted by your organization, that the artists bring jobs to the area which cannot be outsourced, and the arts add vibrancy to the community.

TAKE AWAY: NEVER stop “tooting your own horn!” Throughout the region, artists and arts organizations promoted each other. Rack card and bulletin board systems were utilized in many different types of spaces from arts galleries to coffee shops, and were accessible even after business hours. Artists promoted each other without hesitation.

The Village Potters houses the working studios and gallery for seven professional ceramic artists, working in functional and decorative wheel work, hand building, sculpture, stoneware, and raku. The three showrooms/gallery spaces and the entire facility are maintained by the artists as a collective, and at least one is always available in the gallery. In addition to individual studio spaces and the galleries is a Teaching Center, which offers ongoing classes for adults and youth, collective equipment and work space (kiln rooms, glazing areas, outdoor kilns), and business center area. The space has led to successful cross-collaborations among the artists, and has proven successful for both inspiration and motivation and in building a successful tourist
destination. The collective holds monthly meetings to review business plans and future classes and events. The artists noted that the collective inspires both their work and personal deadlines – “all have to prosper in order for me to succeed.” Each artist brings their own strength and supports each other where they can. Financially, each artist has work for sale in the gallery (which helps to pay for the collective, along with the Teaching Center profits), but also does their individual work through craft shows, commissions, and wholesale to other galleries. Because many had already established themselves as recognizable artists before they came to the collective, they agreed to keep their ‘gallery names’ but add ‘At the Village Potters’ to their individual marketing materials. This helped them to maintain their individual and collective identities. The collective utilized HMIA’s incubator services during their start-up period, and continues to participate in their workshops, programs, and support services. They credit the support of HMIA for much of their success. Four of the seven members are active in the Southern Highland Craft Guild, as is the Teaching Center.

The Asheville Arts Council (AAC) is led by Executive Director Kitty Love, who was trained as a professional tattoo artist. The council hosts a highly trafficked gallery for regional artists, and is a conduit for funding in a curating process; they receive
funding from grassroots and local grants, state art grants, regional artist grants, creative placemaking grants and re-granting program, and through recreational funds. AAC participates in Buncombe County’s Creative Sector Summit, which conducts an annual State of the Arts Audit – What is happening in the Arts? Love noted that from this audit it became apparent that there is an ecosystem of art. She explained how the arts council serves as a bridge between the ‘systems’ (funders, governance, policy makers, and programmers) and the artists, and works closely with the smaller regional arts districts within Asheville. AAC is actively involved in a dynamic governance process, which helps to bring about greater discussion to inform its planning. The AAC hosts a successful after school art program for area youth, and utilizes the NCReal curriculum.

**TAKE AWAY:** **BBTCAC should revisit these models during strategic planning of Black Belt Art House and other future ventures.**
EDUCATION

The State of North Carolina has wisely invested in comprehensive, multi-faceted educational programs for training in arts and crafts. According to a 2007 economic impact study, the professional craft industry of 25 counties in Western North Carolina provides jobs and new business with a total annual impact of $206.5 million. Seventy percent of the galleries’ inventory is produced in Western North Carolina and sixty-two percent of sales are to tourists/visitors. The successful growth of the region’s flourishing crafts economy is supported by a system that trains and prepares artists for business management, product development and improved artistic skills.

Ashville-Buncombe Technical Community College (AB Tech), like all North Carolina community colleges, has a small business center; regardless of the size of a community or the entity, the colleges offer the use of their facilities and expertise to enable success. One can earn an Associate Degree or acquire a certificate in business with emphasis on crafts. Personal and professional enrichment courses are available. A Pre-K-12 program called ESTEAM (Entrepreneurship Science Technology Engineering Art Math), which adds entrepreneurship and art to the typical STEM (Science Technology Engineering Math) focus, advocates entrepreneurship through a young entrepreneur’s camp for scholars and sets the stage for success at an early age.

AB Tech is located in Candler in a former BASF manufacturing facility. It includes a complete incubator service that offers assistance in business planning, product development and testing, label and packaging development, space for creating packaging for the product, and some warehousing. The AB Tech BioNetwork plays a major role in preparing the products for the marketplace. Additionally, the institution
offers an initiative that helps taxpayers who are in arrears due to business difficulties. They meet with clients and review financials for solutions and recommendations that are confidential. Free seminars are offered. HMIA partners with AB TECH for craft labs and evening space when needed.

Blue Ridge Food Ventures, located on the AB Tech campus, is an agribusiness incubator where artisan food entrepreneurs, producers of natural products, manufacturers, farmers, chefs, caterers, and bakers can find the equipment and resources they need to make and market their products. Reasonable fees are charged for the use of the incubator facilities. More than 170 businesses have been launched there since its beginning in 2005. Fourteen businesses are now in the incubator system and can remain for a maximum of four years. Currently, there is a strong interest in natural products and brewing testing which are supported in development stages by the BioNetwork Center.

Haywood Community College offers a two-year intensive course of study in a professional crafts program. A Dual Enrollment program allows students to acquire a high school diploma while pursuing an Associate Degree in their choice of wood, fiber, clay, or metal. Continuing education is also offered. The rural campus centerpiece is a 38,000 square foot, state of the art LEED platinum certified facility where classes and
labs are housed. Some funding related to retraining of veterans has been utilized at Haywood. Each medium has its own highly organized lab space and students are assigned lockers for tools, small equipment and certain large pieces of equipment for the duration of the course they are taking. Graduation requirements include an exhibit of work, writing the program, and a synopsis of the work. In addition to the Haywood campus, the college includes the Golden Leaf Advanced Machining Center and the West Waynesville Center. The college has three tracts of forestland that serve as a teaching resource and outdoor laboratory.

Of major importance to the development of Western North Carolina’s place in the arts is the presence of the Penland School of Craft and the John C. Campbell Folk School. Each of these schools has played cumulative roles in drawing artists and craftsmen to the region to learn and allowing many to establish roots in the area. Additionally, both schools have brought numerous experiential tourist/learners who vacation while spending time in art and craft labs. Ultimately, these schools have affected the culture, economy and reputation of Western North Carolina.

Penland School is a 75-year-old non-profit institution located in Mitchell County. Their campus draws numerous visitors each year with approximately 1,400 people enrolling for instruction and around 14,000 visiting the campus and gallery. Penland’s annual operating budget is $3.9 million. Student tuition and fees cover 43% of their operating expenses. The balance is paid through a combination of earned income,
donations and investment income. Their current endowment totals $12 million and is mostly undesignated. Penland employs five full-time development employees.

Penland was established in 1929, to revive vanishing traditions and help residents supplement their incomes through craft production. With the foresight of maintaining a rural setting and environment, the 40-acre core campus is nestled in the center of a 400-acre tract.

Today Penland holds classes in books and paper, clay, drawing, glass, iron, metals, photography, printmaking, letterpress, textiles, and wood. Summer sessions are one, two, or two-and-a-half weeks long. Eight-week concentration sessions, as well as one-week short courses, take place in the spring and fall. Full capacity is actually 90% or 190 students with fourteen classes running consecutively and almost half of the students receiving some financial aid. College credit can be obtained for Penland classes. Each year, over 120 instructors from across the United States and occasionally other countries teach at Penland. Instructors are practicing studio artists and craftspeople and, in many cases, are also professors from MFA-granting university programs.

Penland’s core student fellowship program, unique in the United States, integrates nine students into every aspect of the school during their two-year stay. Core students work twenty-five hours a week and receive room, board, and tuition. The program gives them access to over 120 instructors in fourteen studios during the course of a year. Core students play a vital role in the operation of the school and serve as ambassadors to students, instructors, and visitors. Week-long business development classes are implemented in collaboration with the community college system.
Additionally, Penland provides living and working space at a modest cost to seven resident artists for a period of three years each. These full-time, self-supporting artists are selected through a staff and community review process. Residents may work in book arts, clay, glass, iron, metals, photography, textiles, wood, or mixed media. Coming to Penland at some transitional point in their careers, artists may use the resident program for artistic growth, to gain professional recognition, or as a step towards establishing a studio career.

Work-study scholarships are the largest student assistance resource, but some full merit-based scholarships are available. Students must be at least eighteen years of age but enrollment includes a range of ages. An open studio policy is part of the ambassador experience and there is a balance of media. A core program for youth is offered for those who are not sure about a career direction.

An economic impact study conducted in fall of 2000 showed that the Penland School’s annual economic contribution to the local community is between six and eight million dollars annually. The school’s total annual contribution to the economy of Western North Carolina is estimated to be more than $40 million. The study reviewed employment, retail craft sales, and the spending by students and instructors. The impact of student expenditures in the county per year totals $315,000. The impact of Penland visitors to the county per year was estimated to be $646,000.

John C. Campbell Folk School, a non-profit located in scenic Brasstown, North Carolina, offers year-round weeklong and weekend classes for more than 800 adults in
craft, art, music, dance, cooking, gardening, nature studies, photography and writing. In addition to classes, John C. Campbell has an exceptional gallery, beautiful campus, history center and strong programming in musical arts and folk dance. Because our visit here was scheduled late on a Friday afternoon, Learning Journey participants were unable to tour all the buildings, observe classes, or learn of operational details of the school.

TAKE AWAY: While we do not have a whole campus, across our region we can establish pieces and parts of a system that nurtures the arts. By working regionally to accomplish this, the voice of the arts and its economic impact in Alabama’s Black Belt will be strong. Success in our region begins with a strong arts educational foundation.

In time and with the right partnerships, foresight, and leadership, Alabama’s Black Belt could be the home of an arts and crafts school which potentially could have the same impact upon the local economy and culture.

On entering the fenced compound at Cherokee Central “Sacred Path” School, the immersion of cultural history and pride is immediately evident. From the landscaping and architecture, to the sign that each child must walk under as they enter the school - “Walk the Sacred Path With Us…” Reminders of their rich cultural heritage are present around every turn.
The mission of the Sacred Path School is “to build a classroom and school-wide community and to empower students by providing leadership opportunities and conflict resolution skills while teaching the values and traditions of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians.” Their cultural traditions are at the center of every lesson and are woven into everyday life.

Architecturally, the site, which has had continuous Cherokee habitation for over 500 years, continues to integrate their traditional arts forms and symbols. In addition, the new school is the largest green building project in the region and received Silver LEED Certification. Some of the more significant figures repeated to us included: 90% of construction waste was recycled, the trees cut down to clear space for the school buildings was incorporated into the construction and design of the architecture, the site includes a geothermal heating and cooling system made up of 290 wells, solar panels and specially designed windows/skylights provide natural lighting in over 75% of the occupied spaces, occupancy sensors keep light use to a minimum, gardens are planted around property to capture and filter rain water and filter run-off, bio-retention areas capture stormwater for absorption and slow release, and rainwater is harvested for irrigation and bathrooms (60,000 gallons of rainwater is stored in underground cisterns). Recycling stations were placed strategically throughout the school, for easy use by students.

The impressive integration of Cherokee culture and artwork into every space and curriculum provides a holistic education experience. Because Cherokee students and residents battle a multitude of health and weight problems, the school includes food and
TAKE AWAY: From the youngest of age, students are immersed in cultural heritage, integration of the arts and a sense of responsibility which invokes a great sense of pride.
Vision

Our Vision is to serve as a leader of the Black Belt’s growth as a nationally recognized vibrant arts region accessible to the entirety of its diverse population. Entrepreneurism, economic vitality, and arts education programming are integral to this growth and primary to the work of BBTCAC. Ultimately, Alabama’s Black Belt is an extraordinary model for creative placemaking utilizing the region’s built capital, plethora of natural resources, cultural heritage, and ingenuity of its people to drive economic vitality and enhance quality of life.
APPENDIX A: BBTCAC MISSION & GOALS

The mission of Black Belt Treasures Cultural Arts Center is to foster, develop, and promote arts education opportunities and economic development initiatives aimed at creating jobs and increasing the income of local residents through the marketing of arts, crafts, literature, food products, and other items unique to Alabama’s Black Belt.

With this mission in mind, BBTCAC has the following goals:

(1) an enhanced regional economy with arts-related jobs and tourism stimulated through BBTCAC’s emphases on showcasing the creative spirit and marketing the heritage arts and culture of Alabama’s Black Belt;

(2) a region-wide venue for arts education revolving around the preservation of the region’s heritage arts and culture, with area residents and visiting artists active in a flourishing arts environment incorporating exhibits, workshops, demonstrations, and celebrations.
# APPENDIX B: LEARNING JOURNEY ITINERARY

**HandMade in America**  
**Alabama’s "Black Belt" Learning Journey**  
**June 2 - 8, 2014**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Contact</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
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<tr>
<td>2-Jun</td>
<td>Pre 7:00</td>
<td>Tour Downtown at Your Leisure</td>
<td>Asheville</td>
<td></td>
<td>After arriving, group has free time to explore Asheville. The hotel is very centrally located to the galleries and shops of Biltmore Avenue, Lexington and Broadway. <a href="http://www.ashevilledowntowngalleries.org/">http://www.ashevilledowntowngalleries.org/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-Jun</td>
<td>7:00</td>
<td>Strada Walk Over</td>
<td>27 Broadway, Asheville, NC 28801</td>
<td>(828) 348-8448</td>
<td>Dinner at 7:00 with Becky Anderson (HandMade founder), Greg Walker-Wilson (Mountain BizWorks) and David Quinn (Creative Placemaking consultant)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
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<tr>
<td>3-Jun</td>
<td>10:00</td>
<td>Echoview Fiber Mill</td>
<td>76 Jupiter Rd, Weaverville, NC</td>
<td>Ken Simpson Mill Manager 855-693-4237</td>
<td>Sustainable, LEED Certified fiber mill. (<a href="http://mill.echoviewnc.com/">http://mill.echoviewnc.com/</a>) <a href="mailto:ksimpson@echoviewnc.com">ksimpson@echoviewnc.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-Jun</td>
<td>11:15</td>
<td>Mangum Gallery</td>
<td>16 N Main St, Weaverville 28787</td>
<td>Rob &amp; Beth Mangum</td>
<td>They are very involved in Weaverville’s successful Arts Safari and Merchants Tour plus Rob and/or Beth can discuss their craft business (<a href="http://www.mangumpottery.com/">http://www.mangumpottery.com/</a>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-Jun</td>
<td>leave by 12:30</td>
<td>Well Bread Bakery Walking distance</td>
<td>Weaverville</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-Jun</td>
<td>1:00</td>
<td>Madison County Arts Council</td>
<td>Marshall</td>
<td>Laura Boosinger Arts Council Director</td>
<td>Large studio in former Marshall High School on an island in the French Broad River (<a href="http://marshallhighstudios.com/">http://marshallhighstudios.com/</a>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-Jun</td>
<td></td>
<td>Flow/ Marshall Container Co. / Marshall High Studios/ Walking distance</td>
<td>Marshall</td>
<td>Connie Molland Emily Reason</td>
<td>Flow is a cooperative gallery owned, operated and curated by artists, offering for sale the best of local and regional crafted objects and arts, traditional and contemporary Marshall Container Co., An American maker of quality ceramic containers. Also serving craft beer, snacks, and wine on the shop floor in beautiful Marshall, NC Marshall High Studios OUR VISION: To facilitate the development of a creative community of artists, craftspeople, arts organizations and individuals in spaces that are both attractive and affordable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-Jun</td>
<td>6:30</td>
<td>Asheville Modern Quilt Alliance</td>
<td>HandMade Offices</td>
<td></td>
<td>View exhibition in our space and talk with staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-Jun</td>
<td>7:30</td>
<td>Green Room Walking Distance</td>
<td>12 Church St, Asheville, NC 28801</td>
<td></td>
<td>Dinner with HandMade Staff: Glenn, Janelle, Helene Herbert, Lindsey Mudge, Linda LaBelle</td>
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<td>Wednesday</td>
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<td>4-Jun</td>
<td></td>
<td>Toe River Arts Council-Burnsville</td>
<td>102 W Main St, Burnsville, NC 28714</td>
<td>Denise Cook Burnsville Gallery 828.682.7215</td>
<td>They have two locations. Start in Burnsville before driving to Spruce Pine with Denise. Very successful arts council covering Mitchell and Yancey Counties, which includes the Penland School of Craft and the surrounding galleries/studios. They have a spring and fall gallery tour. The Spring Tour begins June 6. (<a href="http://www.toeriverarts.org/">http://www.toeriverarts.org/</a>)</td>
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<td>Date</td>
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<tr>
<td>4-Jun</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td>Toe River Arts Council-Spruce Pine</td>
<td>Lunch in Spruce Pine. Denise will share options.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>25 minute Drive</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>269 Oak Ave., Spruce Pine, NC 28777</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1:30</td>
<td>Penland School of Craft 15 minute drive</td>
<td>Old and very successful craft school. Annual fundraising event raises huge sums for the school. Focus on craft art but all art is taught/practiced. (<a href="http://www.penland.org/">http://www.penland.org/</a>) Rob Pulleyn (<a href="http://penland.org/blog/2010/05/penland-gallery-artist-of-the-week-rob-pulleyn-ceramist/#sthash.R3MwQ5ac.dpbs">http://penland.org/blog/2010/05/penland-gallery-artist-of-the-week-rob-pulleyn-ceramist/#sthash.R3MwQ5ac.dpbs</a>)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4:00</td>
<td>Bakersville 15 minute drive</td>
<td>One of HandMade’s successful Small Towns that has embraced asset-based CED through creative placemaking. Bob is a HandMade Board Director</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6:00</td>
<td>Helen’s Short Drive</td>
<td>Dinner in Bakersville with Bob Hensley and maybe others.</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>90 N. 226 Highway, Bakersville 828/688-9999</td>
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**Thursday**

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5-Jun</td>
<td>Depart 9:45</td>
<td>YMI Cultural Center 15 minute Walk</td>
<td>YMI is next door to the redevelopment activity. Built by Vanderbilt to serve minority residents in 1893. (<a href="http://www.ymiculturalcenter.org/">http://www.ymiculturalcenter.org/</a>)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11:00</td>
<td>Eagle-Market Street CDC Walking distance</td>
<td>Historic African American commercial section of Asheville. Undergoing a multi-million dollar mixed-use redevelopment. Stephanie is HandMade’s Board Chair. (<a href="http://www.eaglemarketsts.net/">http://www.eaglemarketsts.net/</a>)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12:00</td>
<td>Pack Tavern walking distance</td>
<td>Lunch with Stephanie Twitty - Discuss &quot;Block by Block&quot; a heavy needle sewing business she started.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-Jun</td>
<td>1:30</td>
<td>AB Tech Small Business Center 17 Minute Drive</td>
<td>1 of 2 Afternoon Tracks. Glenn will take those to this venue. Very successful community college with long history of entrepreneurial development. This group may catch-up to the other group before dinner. (<a href="http://www.abtech.edu/sbc">http://www.abtech.edu/sbc</a>)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1:30</td>
<td>Village Potters 9 minute drive</td>
<td>2 of 2 Afternoon Tracks. We house the working studios for seven professional potters - working in functional/decorative wheel work, hand building, sculpture, stoneware, and raku. Our three showrooms that feature our work are maintained (as is the entire facility), by us as a Collective, so one of us is always on Gallery duty. We also run a Teaching Center, offering ongoing classes in 6-week sessions for adults in wheel, handbuilding, and sculpture. Four of our members are active members of the Southern Highland Craft Guild, as is our Teaching Center. Future plans for the teaching center include building a fast fire wood kiln and a soda kiln, which we plan to use for our studio potters, our classes, and as community kilns for neighboring potters who might not otherwise have access to those kilns. A key factor in what we’re doing to build our businesses, be it in the Gallery or in the Teaching Center, is our weekly meetings, where we discuss the ongoing activities of the facility as well as what we’re individually working on. Ongoing support, mentorship, and collaboration are as much a part of what goes on here as actually getting the work done!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-Jun</td>
<td>2:30</td>
<td>Cotton Mill Studios-Akira Satake Ceramics BZ Designs and Cloth Fiber Workshop 2 minute Drive</td>
<td>2 of 2 Afternoon Tracks. Akira Satake (佐竹晃) was born in Osaka, Japan and has been living in the U.S. since 1983. In 2003 he relocated from Brooklyn, New York to Swannanoa, North Carolina, where he has a wood-fired kiln and a gas kiln. Cloth Fiber Workshop is a textile arts learning center that</td>
</tr>
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offers a variety of classes and workshops for students of all experience levels. BZDesign textiles are hand-dyed, block-printed and embroidered. Made with organic and sustainable fabrics and plant dyes, each piece is unique.

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<th>Date</th>
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<th>Location</th>
<th>Organizer</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5-Jun</td>
<td>4:00</td>
<td>River Arts District (RAD) and Asheville Area Arts Council</td>
<td>Kitty Love</td>
<td>2 of 2 Afternoon Tracks; Meet with Kitty Love of the Asheville Area Arts Council. [<a href="http://www.riverartsdistrict.com/">http://www.riverartsdistrict.com/</a>]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-Jun</td>
<td>5:30</td>
<td>New York Foundation for the Arts</td>
<td>Lindsey</td>
<td>Optional event at HandMade in America; NYFA will be discussing their fiscal sponsorship program and other fundraising/support opportunities that are available for both individual artists and arts organizations (for profit &amp; nonprofit) across the nation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-Jun</td>
<td>7:00</td>
<td>White Duck Taco</td>
<td>Franzi Charen</td>
<td>2nd site just opened. Original is in RAD. Dinner with Franzi Charen, leader of Buy Local movement &amp; owner of Hip Replacement. [<a href="http://ashevillegrown.com/">http://ashevillegrown.com/</a>] &amp; [<a href="http://hipreplacementsclothing.wordpress.com/">http://hipreplacementsclothing.wordpress.com/</a>]</td>
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**Friday**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event Name</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Organizer</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6-Jun</td>
<td>8:30</td>
<td>HandMade in America Coffee Networking Event</td>
<td>125 South Lexington Ave. Suite 101</td>
<td>HandMade Staff</td>
<td>Please join us! Great opportunity to meet craft artists, partners and supporters of HandMade.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-Jun</td>
<td>10:00</td>
<td>Haywood Community College</td>
<td>185 Freedlander Dr. Clyde 28721</td>
<td>Kari Rinn; Director of Creative Arts &amp; Workforce Development</td>
<td>1 of 2 Morning Tracks; Glenn will coordinate this visit. Very successful community college with long history of entrepreneurial development for craft artisans in their Professional Crafts curriculum. Very unique craft artist program. Kari is a former HandMade employee. [<a href="http://www.haywood.edu/creative_arts/professional_crafts">http://www.haywood.edu/creative_arts/professional_crafts</a>] NOTE: Kari will drive those wanting to see the college, which will provide over 30 minutes of direct conversation. We'll tour their craft facilities after arriving.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-Jun</td>
<td>10:30</td>
<td>Tunnel Mountain Crafts</td>
<td>94 Front Street</td>
<td>Connie Hogan (954) 707-2004</td>
<td>2 of 2 Morning Tracks; Tunnel Mountain Crafts hosts a collection of handmade crafts from local North Carolina artists. CUSTOM BAGS, POTTERY, SOAPS &amp; BOTANICALS, JAMS, JEWELRY, GOURDS, GREETING CARDS, WOODWORK, BASKETS, WOODEN TOYS, PHOTOGRAPHY, HERBS in downtown Dillsboro. She is truly an AWE success story!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-Jun</td>
<td>11:45</td>
<td>Dogwood Crafters</td>
<td>90 Webster Street P.O. Box 604 Dillsboro, NC 28725</td>
<td>Brenda Anders and Linda 828-586-2248</td>
<td>2 of 2 Morning Tracks; Janelle will take those interested in this venue. Heavy craft arts focus and integration of creative placemaking principals. Showcasing mountain crafts since 1976, this cooperative features over 80 artisans in the Smoky Mountains. Crafters invite visitors to explore and learn all about the shop's offerings. The shop offers a constantly changing mix of handcrafted treasures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-Jun</td>
<td>12:45</td>
<td>Both tracks will reconnect here.</td>
<td>518 Haywood Rd, Dillsboro, NC 28779</td>
<td>Marie Cochran, Jarrett House Phone:(828) 586-0265</td>
<td>Marie is Director of the Affrilachian Artist Project. The Affrilachian Artist Project (AAP) is establishing a sustainable community-building platform for artists of color from and inspired by the Appalachian region. AAP is dedicated to: Reinforcing cultural anchors, Providing youth with creative role models.</td>
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and mentors & Enriching the Appalachian Region with a diverse creative network. (www.affrilachianartistproject.com)

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<th>Location</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6-Jun</td>
<td>3:00</td>
<td>John C Campbell Folk School</td>
<td>Similar to Penland (<a href="https://www.folkschool.org/">https://www.folkschool.org/</a>), One Folk School Rd Brasstown, 28902</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-Jun</td>
<td>5:00</td>
<td>Hayesville</td>
<td>One of HandMade's successful Small Towns that has embraced asset-based CED through creative placemaking. Rob is a HandMade Board Director. They have raised over $100,000. They have had great success establishing a volunteer Board and sub-committees. They put on a wide variety of events. music concert on the square.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-Jun</td>
<td>6:00</td>
<td>Dinner at The Copper Door Walk</td>
<td>After dinner, we will walk over to the Court Square for an evening concert.</td>
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Saturday

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7-Jun</td>
<td>10:00</td>
<td>Cherokee K-12 School</td>
<td>1 of 2 Morning Tracks. Glenn will take those to this venue. Tribal school that integrates traditional Cherokee Arts and the Cherokee language throughout all grades. Yona is a HandMade Board Director. (<a href="http://cherokeecentral.sharpschool.com/">http://cherokeecentral.sharpschool.com/</a>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-Jun</td>
<td>10:00</td>
<td>Qualla Arts</td>
<td>2 of 2 Morning Tracks. Very high-end Cherokee Craft Gallery and host to AWE Program there. (<a href="http://www.quallaartsandcrafts.com/">http://www.quallaartsandcrafts.com/</a>)</td>
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<tr>
<td>7-Jun</td>
<td>11:30</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lunch - TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-Jun</td>
<td>1:30</td>
<td>Stecoah Valley Cultural Arts Center</td>
<td>Stecoah Valley Arts, Crafts &amp; Educational Center, Inc., a non-profit corporation, was formed by a group of concerned citizens dedicated to restoring the historic school to its original role as the center of the community. (<a href="http://www.stecoahvalleycenter.com/">http://www.stecoahvalleycenter.com/</a>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-Jun</td>
<td>3:00</td>
<td>Bryson City</td>
<td>One of HandMade's successful Small Towns that has embraced asset-based CED through creative placemaking. History of good design partners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-Jun</td>
<td>7:00</td>
<td>Asheville Grown Dinner at Sunny Point Café</td>
<td>West Asheville is a rising center of art. Located just across the river from the RAD. Home to music venues, restaurants, galleries &amp; residences.</td>
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Sunday

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8-Jun</td>
<td></td>
<td>LEARNING JOURNEY TEAM DEPARTS FOR HOME AT A SELF-DETERMINED TIME.</td>
<td></td>
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 Lodging for the week:
Asheville Renaissance Hotel
31 Woodfin Street
Asheville, NC 28801
828/252-8211