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Arts for All Experience: Examining the experiences of individuals who receive SNAP benefits as they access arts through the Arts for All Program

Michelle deParrie

Portland State University

Jana L. Meinhold

Portland State University

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Purpose for This Research:



Symbolic Interactionism tells us that status symbols are used to communicate an individual's place in society (Goffman, 1950). A commonly noted status symbol is participation in the high arts. A recent study described types of music in categories ranging from high-brow, to middle-brow, and low-brow. It was found that consumers of music, particularly the high-brow, were most motivated to attend concerts for reasons relating to Social Capital (Roose & Stichele, 2010). Social Capital represents the value an individual or group places on intangible resources accessed through social connections and status.



Arts for All is a Portland, OR program launched in 2011 that offers access to high art performances providing five dollar tickets to those who qualify for SNAP (Supplementary Nutrition Assistance Program).



Method and Approach:

Surveys and in-depth one-on-one interviews will be used to answer two questions:

1. Are "the arts" in Portland accessible?
2. For those who have accessed the Arts for All Program, what did the experience mean to them?

A survey will ask SNAP Recipients about their access to the program, and interviews will provide insight into the identity issues that arise when individuals who are low-income enter a space historically reserved for the higher classes.



Arts for All?



-Voices from the Community-

Contact with SNAP recipients will be gained through a number of Department of Human Services Offices across Portland. Community members will be initially surveyed either in person or through an online survey. Survey questions will gather information pertaining to knowledge, access equity, and the meaning assigned to participation in "the arts" through the Arts for All Program.

-Project Partners-

Little is currently known about the experiences of individuals in accessing the arts and Arts for All Program. Insight will be gained through the voices of the community members and shared with research partners at DHS and the Arts for All Program to support improved accessibility and equity for all.

