

MIGHTYVISION

At Mighty Writers, we've learned the best way to inspire students (especially boys) to write, create and tell stories: hand them a graphic novel or, similarly, a comic book.

Through our MIGHTYVISION project, we will create a graphic novel and comic workshop programming space for local kids (elementary through high school), located on Philadelphia's South Street.

At MIGHTYVISION, we'll connect kids with professional writers to develop storylines, enlist professional artists to help them design and illustrate their stories, and turn the stories into comic/graphic art, comic books, graphic novels and serialized comic strips. Many students will also be trained to scan and manipulate their work digitally.

We'll exhibit the resulting work at MIGHTYVISION as books and framed art (along with work from other comic/graphic artists—many of whom will be local), host talks by graphic novelists and comic book writers and illustrators (both acclaimed and amateur) and hold readings, workshops, exhibitions and events featuring the kids.

Why & How We'll Do It

MIGHTYVISION will open in July 2011, with in-kind space provided by Arts on South, a local nonprofit that provides rent-free storefront gallery space. The project is a direct response to two common misperceptions of youth in Philadelphia: (1) they don't want to read or write; (2) they head to South Street looking for trouble. MIGHTYVISION will disprove both.

We'll use MIGHTYVISION as a workshop space and "working gallery"—where people can drop in and watch kids and artists at work. We also plan to have music and comic-inspired movies and videos playing to attract people (especially kids) into the space.

A key reason we will make the space public is the fact it will position kids at MIGHTYVISION to be viewed in a positive light (by peers, city residents, adults, tourists) as creators of art and literature who are contributing to our city's creative scene and to South Street (where teens are often viewed in a negative light).

During workshops and working hours, we anticipate that comic and graphic novel programming at MIGHTYVISION will serve 250 kids annually (ages seven to 17), in addition to generating foot traffic from thousands of people from (or visiting) South Street who stop by to see the art, completed works and works in progress.

To attract kids to MIGHTYVISION, we'll start by engaging our current Mighty Writer kids (after all, they inspired this project) and put the word out within local school systems and through marketing efforts. Some kids will find us on their own on South Street—especially since a popular comic store, Atomic City Comics, is nearby.

MIGHTYVISION & Mighty Writers' Mission

Philadelphia is at the forefront of a bleak literacy crisis that extends to millions across America. **In Philadelphia, 550,000 working-age city residents (52 percent of residents—compared with 37 percent statewide) are functionally illiterate.** That means they lack the literacy skills to follow simple instructions, complete job applications or properly read bank statements and news articles.

Philly's high school dropout rate hovers at 50 percent, and for the 2009-10 school year, just **31 percent of all students met standards in reading.**

Our goal is to create a city of children and youth who know they can use writing and clear communication as a tool to *confidently* get where they need to go—be it high school graduation, college, a job, a new business or a creative venture.

As we said, **the idea for MIGHTYVISION came from our recognition that many students gravitate toward graphic novels and comic books.** It's a genre in which they want to excel (without nudging from us—so the obstacle of getting their interest is already eliminated!) and, most importantly, something they can own.

What's more—reading, writing and comprehension is a critical component of understanding and creating graphic novels and comics.

At MIGHTYVISION, we will be able to work with local kids on graphic novel projects, which will incorporate writing and storytelling skills (our organization's mission) in addition to art. This programming space will help us tap into this creative, artistic and literary genre and engage more city kids in our literacy programs.

About Mighty Writers

Founded in March 2009 by journalist and editor Tim Whitaker, **Mighty Writers teaches city kids that writing with clarity leads to a lifetime of success.**

Our free writing programs help city students develop the literacy skills they desperately need to advance through school and succeed afterward—in college, trade school and a competitive and ever-changing job market. Everything we do is designed to help combat Philadelphia's literacy crisis, and **our foremost belief is that literacy skills lead to success.**

In our center at 15th and Christian streets in South Philadelphia, the city's best creative minds volunteer to teach and mentor local students. Our programs serve more than 500 elementary, middle and high school students annually in a daily Afterschool Program, long- and short-term Writing Workshops (interactive, themed classes) and SAT Prep courses.

Project Budget

Expense	Secured In-Kind Income from Arts on South	Income from Other Sources (incl. through GlobalGiving)	Total Program Expense Budget
Program Expenses			
Supplies and Materials		\$1,250	\$1,250
Talks, readings, exhibitions, events		\$1,500	\$1,500
Publication (print, online) of completed works		\$2,000	\$2,000
<i>Subtotal Program</i>	<i>\$0</i>	<i>\$4,750</i>	<i>\$4,750</i>
Capital Expenses			
Rent	\$10,000		\$10,000
Utilities		\$1,250	\$1,250
2 iMac computers plus software and printer		\$4,000	\$4,000
Lighting & Renovation		\$3,000	\$3,000
Decoration & Framing		\$2,000	\$2,000
Furniture		\$2,500	\$2,500
<i>Subtotal Capital</i>	<i>\$10,000</i>	<i>\$12,750</i>	<i>\$22,750</i>
TOTAL	\$10,000	\$17,500	\$27,500