

LEARNING FROM THE ARTS IN THE SMALL COMMUNITIES PROJECT

In 1969, Maryo Gard Ewell, for a college project for a statistics class, interviewed 40 people each in Spring Green (Arts in Small Community town) and Mazomanie (control town).

In 1973, Maryo Gard Ewell and Dr. Peter T. Ewell conducted a large-scale study with statistical significance in all 5 of the Arts in the Small Community towns and 4 control towns, considered to be “underserved” by the Wisconsin Arts Board.

In 2005, Maryo Gard Ewell and Dr. Peter T. Ewell replicated the study in the original Arts in the Small Community towns, the 4 control towns from the 1973 study, and 3 additional towns considered by the Wisconsin Arts Board to be as “underserved” as the 4 control towns in 1973 had been.

Executive summaries as well as the longer reports of each of these studies may be found on the Gard Foundation website.

Also in 2005, under the supervision of Miranda McClenaghan, then of the Department of Liberal Studies and the Arts at University of Wisconsin-Madison, three other projects were accomplished.

- With Dr. Michael Warlum, one of the original Arts in the Small Communities project managers, Maryo Gard Ewell revised and updated *The Arts in the Small Community*, now called *The Arts in the Small Community 2006*. This is available as a free download from this Gard Foundation website, or as a printed book for \$10.00 from Arts Wisconsin; contact akatz@artswisconsin.org
- UW-Madison Bowles Center for Arts Administration graduate student Heather Good revisited each of the 5 original towns, trying to locate at least 2 people who had participated in the original program, and then 2 newcomers or younger people currently in some “town overview” position – extension agent, newspaper editor, etc. The intent was to collect some anecdotal description of the projects, and the role of the arts in these towns today. Heather’s summary write-up is included on the Gard Foundation website as “Reflections on Arts in the Small Communities Interviews.”
- A team including Maryo Gard Ewell, Heather Good, Miranda McClenaghan of the Department of Liberal Studies & the Arts/Continuing Studies at UW-Madison, LaMoine Maclaughlin of the Northern Lakes Center for the Arts, Dr. Michael Warlum of the original project team, Karen Goeschko of the Wisconsin Arts Board, Steve Duchrow of the Raue Center for the Arts, and Anne Katz of Arts Wisconsin, reviewed all of the project materials and reflected on what we, as practitioners, can learn about best practices in community arts development work. The resulting paper, “What Can We Learn from the Past to Help Inform the Future?” can be found on the Gard Foundation website.