



# HARRISON CENTER

FOR  
THE  
ARTS

FOR  
THE  
CITY

WHAT?

The Harrison Center **FOR THE CITY** uses creative placemaking and place-based art to positively shape Indianapolis.

WE DO THIS BY:

- 1 CELEBRATING AND PROMOTING URBAN LIVING IN INDIANAPOLIS.
- 2 SPARKING CONNECTIONS BETWEEN PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES.
- 3 CATALYZING CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

Every day, the Harrison Center for the City connects people to culture, community, and place to strengthen core neighborhoods. Through arts programming, strategic partnerships, and unique cultural events, we work to invigorate those neighborhoods so their residents and families can live rich, connected lives.

WHY?

# Indianapolis has come a long way. But we're not satisfied.

In recent years, urban Indianapolis has seen property values rise and business activity surge. Yet many of its core neighborhoods continue to suffer in silence. In these places, poverty, vacant homes, and crime are persistent problems.

*The Harrison Center for the City believes that arts and culture can catalyze revitalization in our core neighborhoods in a way that is equitable and inclusive. Our goal is to bring about neighborhood stability, economic diversity, and a stronger tax base through arts-driven cultural development in a way that supports and includes existing neighbors.*

*By creating opportunities for neighbors to connect with and celebrate their shared cultural identity, history, and community—and by championing these neighborhoods to civic leaders—we envision a city where hope and prosperity are available to all residents.*

Creative placemaking is the convening and organizing of cultural,

HOW?

# The Harrison Center **FOR THE CITY**

financial, social, and human capital to support visionary ideas that

## connects people and community

positively impact the cultural and social fabric of a neighborhood or city.

## via creative placemaking.

It can happen on a large or small scale.

An example of a large-scale creative placemaking project is Herron High School, a public charter school we launched in 2006, and which filled a dire need for secondary education in Downtown Indianapolis.

We also recently launched a creative placemaking project in the northside neighborhood of Maple Crossing. It included pop-up storefronts and

professional artists working en plein air at neighborhood intersections. These artists created place-based art: work celebrating the neighborhoods in which they were created.

In 2016 and 2017, we produced multiple Hip Hoperettas—hip-hop inspired “musical history tours” that provide a fresh new way to explore our historical architecture.

In addition to our placemaking activities, we also provide city concierge services to incoming and existing residents. We connect incoming residents to resources like realtors and CDCs so they can find the right neighborhood for them. And we connect existing residents to cultural events, community events, and other resources, so they can participate in

their neighborhood’s social activities, traditions, and culture.

Working with youth through our Cultural Entrepreneurship Program, we are also developing the next generation of leaders to continue the work of caring for the culture and health of our city.

## THE IMPACT

Much of our work isn't "quick-win" oriented. On the contrary, it addresses root problems and plants the seeds for long-term change.

Ideally, our work will reverberate throughout neighborhoods for decades, and even generations, into the future.

Yet, in many cases, the results of our work are evident all over Downtown Indianapolis. In the Herron-Morton neighborhood, for example, we have generated a groundswell of cultural activity, revitalization efforts, and economic development. Projects like Porch Parties have strengthened the sense of unity not only in our neighborhood, but also in the many others that have adopted the event.

Meanwhile, the incredible success of Herron High School has been a boon to students and families in urban Indianapolis. The tuition-free school has consistently been ranked as one of the top high schools in both Indiana and the country. Its success has led to the launching of a sister school, Riverside High School, on the city's west side.

Creative placemaking projects like the one in Maple Crossing have brought more than art and a sense of community into underserved neighborhoods—they have brought the attention of civic and business leaders, who often follow our lead, to the area.

Finally, our concierge services have provided guidance and support to hundreds of new urban residents. It's no exaggeration to say that the Harrison Center for the City is playing a vital role in the ongoing renaissance in the neighborhoods of urban Indy.

THE FUTURE

# The Harrison

The Harrison Center for the City is always

# Center **FOR THE**

busy dreaming up new ways to transform

# **CITY** is committed

neighborhoods with arts and culture.

# to **creating a**

We recently launched one of our most

# **better city far**

ambitious creative placemaking projects

# **into the future.**

yet: Pre-Enactment Theater.

Pre-Enactment Theater aims to help revitalize disadvantaged neighborhoods through unique “performances” that envision more vibrant, economically stable, and equitable neighborhoods.

After a 12-month visioning process, actors and set designers from 11 theater companies will collaborate with community stakeholders and neighbors to “pre-enact” a thriving version of their neighborhood. Vacant lots will bustle with life. Empty storefronts will be open for business. People will experience, firsthand, what progress looks and feels like.

The Harrison Center for the City plans to bring this transformational event to neighborhoods in need throughout Indianapolis. And it will continue to use the power of creative placemaking to put bold ideas like this one into action to create real, lasting change.

Cultural  
development.  
Creative  
placemaking.  
And much more.

