

MACON ARTS TASK FORCE PLANS CONFERENCE FOR EDUCATORS AND ARTISTS

The Task Force for Arts in Education met on November 28th at the NewTown Macon office to discuss plans for "The Arts and The Schools: A Class Act" conference to be held March 14-15, 2008. Designed to bring together educators from all 43 public schools and an equally numerous group of Middle Georgia arts resource providers including cultural institutions and individual artists, the conference will illustrate how integrating the arts into the core curriculum helps to deliver engaging instruction to all students.

The Task Force for Arts in Education was convened by Macon Arts – A Community Alliance last spring with funding from the Georgia Council for the Arts. The Task Force's vision is: *"All Bibb County students will have access to high-quality education in all of the arts."* To this end, the group has surveyed the community to discover untapped resources in the arts and has identified keys to successful arts resource programming in the schools.

The first tangible result of this effort is a *Resource Guide for School and Arts Partnerships*, which received an enthusiastic reception from Bibb County Deputy Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction Sylvia McGee. A copy of the *School/Arts Resource Guide* will be available in every public school media center and at Macon Arts new space at 486 First Street. Arts integration expert Dot Brown will present a tutorial for media specialists on using the *Resource Guide* during staff development in January, 2008.

Following up on publication of the *School/Arts Resource Guide*, the Task Force for Arts in Education is promoting both the conference in mid-March and a pre-conference workshop on February 2nd specifically geared for local artists and education staff of arts and cultural institutions. The workshop will help build connections between the visual, performing and literary arts presenters and the core curriculum subjects such as social studies, science, and language arts at various grade levels. The workshop will be presented by three master "teaching artists" whose skills have been affirmed by state and local arts councils and public school systems alike: storyteller and author Sherry Norfolk, visual artist Pam Beagle-Daresta, and Museum of Design/Atlanta education curator Randy Taylor. For registration information, please contact Macon Arts at 478-743-6940.

The Macon Arts Task Force for Arts in Education is co-Chaired by *Telegraph* Editorial Page Editor **Charles Richardson** and retired Miller Fine Arts Magnet Middle School Principal **Martha Jones**, with participation from the school system, area arts and cultural institutions and colleges and local artists.

Attending the November 28th meeting were Executive Director **Lynn Cass** and **Lisa Sloben** from Macon Arts, **Ben Bridges**, Fine Arts Program Coordinator for Bibb County Schools, **Dorothy Brown**, conference co-coordinator and director of the Bibb County Institute for the Arts, **Andy Ambrose**, Tubman Museum of African American Arts Director, **Jo Ann Green**, Midsummer Macon Director, **Suzanne Harper**, Museum of Arts & Sciences Director, **Natalie Bari**, new education director of the Hay House, and **Cary Cleaver**, Task Force consultant and former director of the statewide Artists in Education Program, which placed several artists-in-residence in Bibb County during her tenure.

Also contributing to the Task Force's initial achievements were artists **Chi Ezekwueche** and **Rudy Mendes**, parents **Cynde Busbee** and **Betty Cherry**, Hay House education coordinator **Susan Mays**, plus Principal **Paulette Winters** and **Mae Thurston** of Vineville Academy.