

Re-stitching the Seams

Appalachia Beyond Its Borders



Re-stitching the Seams: The Urban Appalachian Community Coalition's Appalachian Conference placed community at its core

High School students and PhDs. City neighborhoods and coalmining towns. Gay activists and old-time musicians. Poets and scholars. Hip-hop and square dance. These are only a few juxtapositions of community and culture at the 41st Annual Appalachian Studies Conference held in downtown Cincinnati April 5-8, 2018 -- the first Appalachian Studies Association Conference hosted by a community-based organization rather than a university. Here is a sampling of what your support helped us do:

Raised awareness of urban Appalachians as well as the profile of the Urban Appalachian Community Coalition in the Greater Cincinnati Community and the Appalachian Region.

Publicity: Thousands were reached through public radio spots, articles in *CityBeat* and other local papers, radio interviews and use of direct mail, email, social media and our website.

Publicity efforts not only encouraged participation in the conference and related events, but also raised awareness of the UACC, Cincinnati's Appalachian community and our concerns and successes.

Attendance: Over 1000 people participated in the conference and related cultural events.

New participants: 42 students, professionals and other members of our community served as conference volunteers, giving us the opportunity to educate and excite people about our work. The majority of these had not participated in previous UACC activities.

Awards Ceremony: UACC leaders Michael Maloney and Pauletta Hansel were honored at the ASA's annual

awards ceremony, Maloney for exemplary contributions to Appalachia and Appalachian studies and Hansel for best Appalachian Poetry Book of 2017.

Showcasing urban Appalachian artists: Over 50 performing artists, from nationally known musicians to teen writers, were featured to appreciative audiences at eight cultural

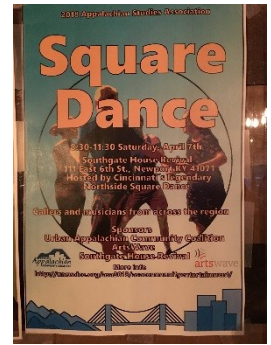
events in locations throughout Greater Cincinnati, including a Saturday evening Urban Appalachian Showcase at the Aronoff Center.

Telling the story of urban Appalachians: Two exhibits focusing on the experiences of urban Appalachian people and neighborhoods, *Perceptions of Home* and *My Self, My World: Through the Eyes of a Child*, were on view in the hotel lobby to more than 1000 conference attendees and hotel guests throughout the conference.



Tours to sites associated with urban Appalachian migration allowed us to tell the story of Appalachian people in Greater Cincinnati.

Developing new partners; deepening old partnerships: The conference provided new opportunities to engage the community in UACC's work. Over 100 individuals, organizations and businesses were sponsors, partners and/or helped to plan the conference, thus allowing us to reconnect with old friends and establish new relationships with populations not previously reached.



Provided opportunities for deepened engagement among urban and rural Appalachians.

Dialogue on critical issues: On Saturday, Community Day, local community members were invited to join in a day of dialogue about six critical issues -- Diversity and Inclusion, Economic Development, Education, Environmental Sustainability, Health, and Migration -- and what is working in our various communities to address these issues.

Spotlight on health: An intentional effort to invite and involve those working in health fields brought greater opportunities for discussion of health issues at the conference. A Thursday pre-conference, *Walking the Road to Health Together: Private, Non-Profit, and Community Partnerships* sponsored by the Cleveland Federal Reserve Bank, brought local and regional participants together to consider creative collaborations to address critical health concerns.

Oyler program: Preparation for the conference provided the opportunity for intensive work with young writers at Oyler High School, including a collaboration among young people at Oyler, Cincy WordPlay and Thomas More College.



Arts events: Cincinnati's Appalachian literary, bluegrass, old-time music, film and square dance practitioners took center stage at various events both at the Conference and in downtown, Over the Rhine and Northern Kentucky locations, resulting in increased connections between urban and regional Appalachian artists as well as increased local participation in these groups. Film festivals each evening provided opportunities for



filmmakers to present their new works, and the quilts of famous quilter Maxine Groves graced the Exhibit Hall and provided stage decorations at the Aronoff Center.

Panels and presentations: 66 Cincinnati area practitioners, artists, academics and activists participated in research-based, experiential and artistic presentations in 41 sessions focused on local interpretations of the conference themes.

Tours: Nearly 100 people took part in tours from Adams County's Edge of Appalachia Preserve to walking tours of communities where Appalachian migrants settled, including Over the Rhine and Lower Price Hill, to a Cincinnati Brewery Tour considering the social, economic, technical and political forces shaping the craft beer scene.



Youth voices. A host of young people from the High Rocks Academy and Spring Mills High School (West Virginia) and the Appalachian Media Institute (Kentucky) summer interns, engaged conference attendees in an interactive presentation of Appalachian issues, rural and urban, through performance, film, readings, and research. Young writers from Oyler High School were joined by teens from throughout Cincinnati to speak their truths about their communities through poetry at the Urban Appalachian Showcase.

Set the bar for community participation in the ASA Conference.

Community Day/scholarships: For the first time in its history, the Appalachian Studies Association offered local community members free attendance to its conference. 125 residents registered for participation in Community Day (Saturday, April 7), and our fundraising helped over 250 students and low-income community members from throughout Appalachia receive scholarships for participation in the full conference (more than at any previous conference).



Outreach: The conference provided the opportunity for intensive outreach to the local community, first as a call for participation as presenters, and later for conference, pre-conference, and Community Day registration, as well as for attendance at the many cultural events that took place over the three days of the conference.

Community support: In past conferences, primarily students associated with the host university volunteered for the myriad of tasks necessary for hosting. UACC proved the effectiveness of reaching further into the community to involve local residents in the work. In addition, over 100 sponsor and partner organizations/individuals were instrumental in providing funding and services that made the conference possible.

Bridging academia and activism: This year's conference included a two-part workshop on how to better connect scholars and activists in supporting each other's work.

