

MPAC meeting #1, 7/15/18

As a group, we explored through a visioning exercise what we would like an equitable performing arts community to look like. We discussed fears about organizing, frustrations about systems in place that keeps certain voices from being heard. We then explored what kind of action based brainstorming could we adopt to make something happen to move the community in a positive direction.

We then studied documents from 4 different cities and discussed strengths from each doc and what we envision a Memphis version might look like:

- Chicago not in our house (notinourhouse.org)
- Royal Court Theatre in London
- Artist Bill of Rights from Austin
- We Have Voice from NYC –Wehavevoice.org

First meeting outcomes:

- We plan to organize a community-wide day of action in the Fall to begin creating a code of ethics.
- In order to create a document that promotes equity, we realize that we have to do the work ourselves and dig deep, the group is open to going through equity training and opening it up to the community and raising the money to do so.
- We plan to create a doc for elementary/ middle/ high school that is age appropriate that young people can use when making theatre/dance. (doc will discuss consent, systems in place to speak up if something is making them uncomfortable)
- Before our community day of action, we need to examine who is interested in this work and what other artists concerns are. We would like to create a community-wide survey to assess the following: Who is making work? Where are they performing? (How many shows a year/ What roles do they fill and what practices do they already follow) What is working? What isn't? What kind of actions would they like to see? What do they envision for an equitable and safer performing arts community? What tools can we provide to help? We are hoping the more people that fill out this survey the more we can show possible funders in the community that this is urgently needed.

We intend in the coming weeks to organize committees to begin this process. Once these goals are accomplished, we will assess what other local advocacy efforts need to happen in the community and if we should move forward on other projects. This issue has a sense of urgency.