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Southeast Kentucky Community & Technical College

Creating the next version of Harlan County, Kentucky

Art & Drama classes
Summer, 2013
Residency with
Chris Dockery and Paul Dunlap
University of North Georgia

Collecting photos for inkjet murals
Assembling murals
Murals in theater context
Junk art panels for community performance
Drama class writes scenes for Higher Ground 4
Stagebuilding class for Higher Ground 4
Rehearsal
August and September 2013

Performance
September and October 2013
Play grows community

Planning a new kind of art school and venue for Harlan County
Thank you,
ARC and ETSU
PRINCIPLES OF POSITIVE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

In our fall 2013 night class, Appalachian Studies students in Harlan County spent the semester thinking about how our community should develop its economy. At the end of the semester the students reached the following consensus on principles of positive community development:

1. Positive community development incorporates education
2. There is work for people at all levels of training and education, with opportunities for people to advance, grow, move up.
3. The development vision reflects the community as a whole. We stick together, work for the good of the whole.
4. We should support risk-takers, but make a place for risk-avoiders.
5. Think long-term—have a long-term economic concept.
6. The majority of things should be family-friendly—but not everything.
7. The place should not get so wealthy it’s not affordable for folks like us.
8. Focus on positive aspects rather than reversing negative aspects. Build on what we’ve got and the rest will follow.
9. Welcome change. Engage with the world—don’t hide from it.
10. Support small local family business.
11. Don’t negatively affect the environment.
12. Reward hard work.

Developed by the Fall 2013 Humanities 202/Survey of Appalachian Studies I class
Harlan campus, Tuesday nights, Southeast Kentucky Community & Technical College
STUDENT-DIRECTED HIGHER GROUND SHOW, BEREA APRIL 3, 2014

ATP students were among those who led a Higher Ground production for a Berea convocation in April. Students directed rehearsals throughout the winter and early spring.
In our spring 2014 class, we began work on place pieces that we will turn into public art and a GPS-driven phone app in classes this summer.

THE MARY HELEN COMMISSARY

by Geneva Rhymer

My mother was born into one of the most beautiful coal mining communities in Harlan County. Mary Helen Coal Corporation owned the houses and the commissary, the grill and the doctor’s office. The commissary was the company store. It still stands today, although it is in a shameful state of repair. My mother remembers the majestic red brick building as it was fifty years ago—the hardwood floors that creaked when you walked on them, the rows and rows of wooden shelves stacked with anything you would need. The commissary had its own butcher whose name was Lee Haynes but everyone called him "Butch." She can still see the huge butcher block table he used to cut the meat on, and the big knives he kept razor sharp. He was always sharpening them and scrubbing the butcher block with salt and a stiff brush. She can hear the scrub, scrub, scrub of the brush and salt against the wood; the sing of the meat slicer when he cut the meat and cheese. She remembers the fresh fruits and vegetables, and the sweet smell of oranges at Christmas.

Christmas in the store was very special because the second floor held treasures beyond belief. You had to have a parent go up stairs with you. It had all kinds of toys on display for the children of the community to look at. She can hear the creak of wooden stairs going to see the toys. According to her, you could buy anything from clothes to shoes and bedding. Fabric to make your own clothes. She remembers the glass showcases and shelves behind glass that you could only dream about buying what was held there. [What kinds of stuff did she dream of having?]

The miners were given script cards and they had to take that card to the office window to get script. That window was also the Coalgood Post Office. Ben Burger worked that window and chewed on a cigar. She was never sure if it was lit, but she sure knew it smelled bad.