Report to the School Board
Depot Coffee House Partnership Update
March 17, 2011
Report Prepared by Katie Williams, Community Education director and Jo Clare Hartsig, Depot Coffee House Resource coordinator

Overview
The Depot Coffee House is a youth engagement project that continues in its efforts to be a successful student-run coffee house and youth performance and activity center for high school age students in a chemically free environment. It is a collaborative effort with the city of Hopkins; Hopkins Public Schools; Park Nicollet Foundation; Three Rivers Park District; The Depot Express (coffee business;) and west-metro high school students.

The Depot Coffee House has two distinct sides to its operation. On one side is the coffee house business, the Depot Express, and on the other is the Depot Youth Engagement Project. The school district leases the space from the City of Hopkins through a levy for lease arrangement. Under this arrangement, the Depot is regarded as educational space with classes at the high school using the Depot as a “learning lab.” This partnership with Hopkins High School continues to serve many students in marketing and advertising classes.

A new solar energy project at the Depot has the potential for science and technology teachers to partner with the Depot on solar education curriculum.

Primary Issues to Consider
none

Supporting Documents
Depot Coffee House Annual Report 2010
Depot Coffee House Partnership Update

It's official. There is no "down time" at The Depot Coffee House! The activity level of 2010 reflects the pace and energy of the Student Board and community-wide embrace of Depot programs and projects.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Friday Live Music</td>
<td>597</td>
<td>882</td>
<td>1054</td>
<td>1262</td>
<td>3795</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Mic Tuesdays</td>
<td>385</td>
<td>430</td>
<td>455</td>
<td>575</td>
<td>1845</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Events</td>
<td>789</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>1458</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Attendance</td>
<td><strong>1771</strong></td>
<td><strong>1652</strong></td>
<td><strong>1678</strong></td>
<td><strong>1997</strong></td>
<td><strong>7098</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
An emerging trend this year is having concerts/events for the benefit of a community group or a specific cause. Each event has had the approval of the entire Student Board. They have also been the volunteer staff for these events. In each case the Depot has either waived rental fees or donated the entire proceeds of the evening. Benefit organizations have included: Teens Alone Battle of the Bands ($800+), Haiti earthquake benefit for the American Red Cross ($1,200), Darfur Benefit Concert ($400), Empty Bowls ($350), Creaf Theatre Project, and Northstar Irish Dancers and the Twin Cities Sierra Club. Everyone associated with The Depot is very pleased to be able to "give back" in this way.

All of this adds up to many volunteer hours. The Board members and additional students who are part of Depot Event Corps (DEC) volunteered over 1000 hours on-site to staff all of this activity. The DEC was a new idea last year to help more youth be able to participate in running the operations at the Depot. Currently there are 15 trained DEC volunteers.

**MLK Weekend Board Retreat** - This year we all traveled to a Wisconsin YMCA camp for a weekend of team building activities and Depot business. One of the sessions was dedicated to understanding personality styles. We all took an Enneagram test and discovered what was helpful and challenging about each of our types. We learned that The Depot Board has an over-abundance of Type 7 - *The Enthusiast* - and is completely missing several other important types. This led to some thoughtful discussion about how to conduct a Board search process to engage a wider diversity of personalities in our programs and projects.
Winter Music Series Residency - The Depot was fortunate to have *No Bird Sing* as the resident Hip Hop artist this winter. Over a series of 4 evenings in January and February, these musicians and their guests played selections from their works and then talked about their creative process with interested students. On several of these evenings, an Open Mic segment gave attendees an opportunity to perform and discuss their work with the professionals. HCC One Voice selected the Depot for a mini-grant to support these events. The Depot Hip Hop series supports the growing number of local artists who avoid the sometimes typical hip hop celebration and encouragement of drug and alcohol use as well as other negative stereotypes. It is very exciting to see artists and their student admirers choose "better ways" to get their messages across. A special turn of events one evening found former Depot Board Member and Main Street School graduate **Aimee Renaud** sharing the spotlight as a guest artist!

Caring Youth Award 2010

In March all 12 of the youth Depot Board Members were honored with the Hopkins/Minnetonka/Golden Valley Caring Youth Award. The success of the Depot so far this year is due to the planning, creative spirit and hard work of this Board.
**Generation Solar** - Through the Depot partnership with Three Rivers Park District, funding has been secured from the MN Department of Natural Resources to install solar panels on the roof of the Depot building AND provide educational resources and opportunities for trail users, students of all ages, and other Depot customers. This is the next step after many activities of the past several years in "greening" the Depot. The solar panels will offset some of the utility costs at the Depot as well as provide a high profile place to educate the public about renewable energy. Panels will be installed this summer with hopes that everything will be in place to welcome field trip students in September. *Depot Board Vice Chair Peter Boisclair* speaks at Generation Solar Press Event.

**Board Transition** - In June our new Board recruits became part of The Depot while we said good-bye and thank you to graduating Seniors Elisabeth Spry, Tyler Gustafson, Peter Boisclair, Robert Wallant, and Nia Sotto.

**Open Mic Nights** - The Depot Open Mic Tuesdays have become a steady draw with all the spots full just minutes after opening. There is no other *weekly* Open Mic venue in the Twin Cities. Music, stand up, spoken word...anything goes! The supportive atmosphere is great for anyone trying out their talent. There is often an array of adults from
the local areas who come in addition to the students. This sometimes leads to some very fine intergenerational jamming! We have noted a steady rise in the popularity of this event. At least once a month Depot Coordinator Ted Duepner will extend the hours to include more participants.

**Project Greenfleet** - In June, the Depot hosted a press event for Project Greenfleet to show off a new diesel engine that idles at a much reduced level of noise, fuel consumption and emissions. The engine pulled right up to the Depot (just like old times!) and was open for visitors to climb aboard and see for themselves. This is especially important for Hopkins residents as the trains spend more time idling in the Hopkins switchyard than at other places along the route. *Greenfleet Principals and Mayor Gene Maxwell*

**Puppets!** - The Depot received a special grant from the Minnesota Regional Arts Council to sponsor a series of workshops to make Parade Puppets for the 2010 Raspberry Parade in downtown Hopkins. In typical Depot fashion, there were a number of partners involved in this project. The Hopkins School District offered the use of Ubah Academy for the puppet workshops to be held, Hopkins and Minnetonka Parks and Rec allowed the project to incorporate students in their Rectivity program, ICA donated snacks, Driskoll's lent us some shopping carts and In the Heart of the Beast Puppet and Mask Theatre was contracted to provide their teaching expertise. The parade entry was designed by students to lift up creativity and the Depot's symbolism of being a place where all can "get on board". In a nod to our growing green profile there was a giant sun puppet leading the group and bicycles decorated with sun streamers lending the alternative energy to the group!
The Raspberry Parade was deemed a great success for our Board members who participated and all of the students who helped with designing and creating the Depot entry. Also during July's Raspberry Festival the Depot hosted a 24 hr. music event called "Raspberry Jam" in which (mostly) live music was played at the Depot from 1 p.m. on a Friday for the next 24 hours.
Hopkins School District Participation
Depot Youth Engagement Project Coordinator Ted Duepner was in the classroom for Marketing and Advertising classes at the High School. He worked with Business Dept. staff to help teach the Marketing and Advertising classes over the course of the school year. The Depot serves as a “learning lab” for these students. The must learn enough about the project and the programs that are offered there to be able to design successful promotional pieces that are used for events, product (tee shirts and coffee cups so far), and recruitment of coffee shop customers and youth program volunteers. The Depot works in close collaboration with Community Ed to design and offer programs specifically for ages 13-18. The Depot Board currently has 8 Hopkins students (50% of the Board!) with both co-chairs Hopkins High Seniors. The Depot was part of the Face 2 Face planning and program held at Hopkins High in December. This was a collaboration of the Hopkins Police Dept. and Peace Jam Foundation and involved 35 or so Jr. High and High School students in creating an event to build relationships and do some role playing about youth and police interactions.

Hopkins High School student Sarah Washko designed this billboard displayed on Highway 169 in August/September. This is the 3rd year that the Depot has selected a student design for the billboard space donated for this purpose by the City of Hopkins. Thanks to Sarah, Hopkins High Art Dept. and City of Hopkins!
Funding Crunch - This year, like many other non-profits, the Depot felt the squeeze of a flat economy. Some regular sources for grant funding have designated their funds to go to emergency needs like food shelves and housing programs and not to youth organizations. As a result, the Depot staff has looked for ways to cut expenses (including a huge drop in utilities because of solar panels coming on line over the winter) as well as to diversify income sources. We will be conducting some "direct ask" fund-raising through our web site and at the coffee counter during the last months of the year. We have also begun the process of creating a sister 501(c)3 organization "Friends of the Depot" to be eligible for funding that will only be directed to organizations with 501(c)3 tax designation. Resource Coordinator Jo Clare Hartsig will continue to submit grants and nurture relationships with potential funders to help stabilize the funding base for the Depot. It is ironic that we feel the resources pinch at precisely the time we are providing more area youth with programs and opportunities than at any other time in our history!

The 2010 Depot Halloween Party and Costume Contest was huge success!

Depot Staff members Ted Duepner and Jo Clare Hartsig represent The Depot in various settings throughout the community. Ted is part of the Three Rivers Trail Safety Task Force and is on the City of Hopkins Green Team.
Jo Clare serves as the Community Chair of the Hopkins One Voice Community Coalition and is on the Hopkins in Motion planning team. They also attend community-wide networking meetings sponsored by Hopkins School District, Blake Corridor group, and other youth-focused groups.

Report prepared by
Jo Clare Hartsig, Depot Resource Coordinator
www.thedepotcoffeehouse.com
for more information and regular updates