MAY 2019

MayDay Celebration

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

JUXTAPOSITION ARTS | IMAGINE DELIVER + HOBT
Juxtaposition Arts (JXTA) worked with Imagine Deliver, Amplify DMC and In the Heart of the Beast Puppet and Mask Theater staff and board members to create a platform for engaging community members -- especially people who attended the 2019 MayDay celebration -- about the future of the festival. Engagement tools included a paper survey/conversation guide, an online version of this survey promoted through social media and the MayDay tabloid, and a station in the Resource Fair in Powderhorn Park to talk with festival goers. People who completed the survey in the park could have their picture taken in the Picture Wagon photobooth.
We collected 312 surveys from roughly over 350 people during May.

About 190 surveys were completed at Powderhorn Park during the MayDay 2019 celebration, and the rest (122) were completed online.

All raw data will be shared with Imagine Deliver and HOBT, along with this reflect-back piece.
Demographic Information

About 280 people shared their age:

Almost 40% of people who took the survey and shared their age are between 31 and 45 years old.

About 225 people shared their household income:

A third of people who responded make between $31,000 and $60,000.
We invited people to share their race and ethnicity in their own words:

We asked what languages are spoken at home.

The most common answers were:

91% (260 people) English
5% (14 people) Spanish

People also responded: French, Gaelic, Greek, Hindi, Hmong, Japanese, Russian, Somali, and Tagalog.
MayDay Participation

93% of people who took the survey said they have attended or participated in MayDay.

94% of those people have attended the celebration and over 50% have donated money.
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Over half of these people have participated for more than five years, and 36% for more than 10 years.
Over 280 people shared reasons why they attend and participate. A number of themes emerged, and many of these overlapped in what people shared.

A beloved community celebration & family tradition

It’s my favorite day of the year. All of my best friends who live elsewhere come back home for MayDay weekend. It’s so incredible to see all the beautiful people and communities come out to celebrate spring, art and communities with each other. May Day is the closest thing I have to a religion.

May Day is a magical day of community, justice, and future-imagining. It’s the best day of the year.

My parents took me starting when I was an infant, and I’ve tried to come every year since! Now I’m 26, so that’s quite a few May Days. It remains my most important yearly tradition. A time of peace, community, and the end of our long winter.

The themes of justice, activism and community

May Day is an important holiday to me and I love seeing it recognized - worker’s rights! The change of season also deserves a celebration - WE deserve a celebration after making it through the MN winter. It is such a great community celebration - there are so many people there. It’s not commercialized! It’s pure and real, and you can see the people that make it.

Welcoming spring, feeling hopeful

May Day is an important holiday to me and I love seeing it recognized - worker’s rights! The change of season also deserves a celebration - WE deserve a celebration after making it through the MN winter. It is such a great community celebration - there are so many people there. It’s not commercialized! It’s pure and real, and you can see the people that make it.

Art, creativity, puppets and beauty
In addition, for many people,

**MayDay is quintessential Minneapolis and Powderhorn**
- I stay in Minneapolis because of MayDay.
- I love community events and MayDay is the biggest, the best, and unique to Minneapolis.

**MayDay is fun!**
- Because it's an awesome time!
- It's a great community and a fun place to be. Lots of friends and family here.

**MayDay is both a place to be with like-minded people and a diversity of people**
- I love May Day - I'm connected to many of the artists involved, and live in the Central neighborhood. It's a Mpls tradition and crucial transformation and gathering place for community. I have loved the increased visibility and participation of BIPOC artists in the last 6 years and I increased my participation as a result.
- The May Day celebration brings me together with my tribe, and gives me the courage to do the work I need to do to make the world a better place.
The words people use to describe MayDay reinforce the reasons why people said they participate -
MayDay Participation

About 20 people shared reasons why they haven’t or don’t participate:

**Didn’t know about it**

Don’t know how to participate

*Never heard of it until this year.*

Schedule, crowds, health, and/or location make it difficult to participate

*In the past it has conflicted with my work or school schedule*

Lack of relevance/interest

*It’s not for me.*
Community Celebrations

About 280 people shared ways they love to celebrate with their community. Themes included:

- **Gathering with food and art, including singing, music and dance**
  Over 60 people mentioned celebrating with food and eating together

- **Festivals like MayDay, Open Streets, and parades, as well as block parties and smaller gatherings**
  Many people (about 50) mentioned MayDay specifically as a way they love to celebrate specifically

- **Being outdoors, with other people**
- **Listening, protesting, exchanging, learning**

**With puppets!!!!!! And generally, creative expression, rituals that allow for collective experience, food and music.**

**I love to participate in outdoor events like MayDay, Porchfest, Open Streets, and the farmers markets. I like these venues because of the variety of information and artistic expression in one place, the wealth of activities for all different tastes and ages, and the connection to our neighborhood. Being out with others in my city is inspiring.**

**By getting outside and celebrating love with my neighbors**

**Shared experiences that encourage exchange of ideas**
We asked what makes a community celebration truly inclusive:

**Welcoming everyone, extending an invitation to everyone**

Where everyone feels welcome. Where the event organizers reach out to the diversity of their community to make them feel welcome to participate in the event or as an attendee.

**Accessibility, in terms of cost (free), ways to participate, location, transit, attention to access for people of different abilities, etc.**

Accessibility for folks of all abilities, decentering whiteness and uplifting BIPOC, acknowledging the stolen land the celebration takes place on, having a range of food options for dietary restrictions, availability of public transit to get to event, having bike parking racks available.

**People also talked about diversity and inclusive planning** and, related to this, being genuine with your intention.

Honoring the stories + voices that are typically marginalize, equitable leadership.

This is a big question. An open heart. Not just being progressive and saying the right things, but genuinely going about it all with an open heart and creating conditions in which other people can also open their hearts.
Who is MayDay for?

Most people (about 150) shared that they feel MayDay is **for everyone**. Some people specified that it is for **people who love art and justice**.

Some people (about 35) mentioned geography, connecting MayDay more specifically to the **Powderhorn and Phillips neighborhoods or the city of Minneapolis**.

People called out race and class in who MayDay is for -- some people (about 25) called out that MayDay is for **marginalized people, people of color and indigenous people**, while several others (about 5) see MayDay as **being for white people**.

**Everyone that wants to come.**

**I like that MayDay celebrates the communities in South Minneapolis and especially Powderhorn, while remaining welcoming to all who want to be there.**

**MayDay is for kids and neighborhood folks and indigenous voices and POC and nonbinary folks and art weirdos and anarchists and anticapitalists and hippies and anyone willing to express their love/joy of living here right now in a big loud way.**
Who is MayDay not for?

People shared that MayDay is not for bigots or “haters” (about 20 people), ... or for close-minded people, ... or for politicians, capitalists or corporate interests.

- May Day is not for people who hate
- It is not for those who would oppress others in our community.
- May Day is not for corporations and capitalism. May Day is not for advertising.
- MayDay is not for those who can not listen to others, and is not for those who can not accept that discrimination exists.
- I love that MayDay does not have corporate sponsors who may want to influence the design and execution of MayDay.
Whose voices are missing?

The largest theme people shared here (about 30 people) is that the voices of communities of color are missing, in particular - East African, African American, Latinx, Asian, and Native voices.

I would love to see more space made for BIPOC communities, especially those living in the neighborhood.

People (about 15) also named disabled voices as missing.

I have seen many, many more white people at MayDay than people of color. I believe there are many voices of people of color and a variety of large Minneapolis communities missing. Even when Indigenous people and POC are more visible in the parade and/or the pageant, do large numbers of people from those communities come to be part of the day? Watch the parade? I don’t know, but I’m guessing not always. Also missing are voices of people with disabilities.

Several people (about 5) also named the voices of poor people as missing, and that the cost of food at the event is out of reach for some.

Missing are the poorest and most struggling in our community.

The festival needs more expansive black/poc/indigenous leadership.
What would you like to see in MayDay festivals in the future?

When thinking about future MayDay festivals, one of the top themes we heard was a desire for MayDay to continue.

Some of these comments focused on continuing MayDay as it is.

- Definitely a date for next year & very important that it keeps happening. Important to have a spring festival.
- I love it as it is. I love the continuity.

Some mentioned “more” in the context of continuing the festival.

- More puppets, more activities, more amenities, etc.
- ...I’d like to see more participatory things to do in the park that are free and accessible. Welcoming people to join in like I’ve seen in other festivals like Northern Spark and the Art Shanties in winter.
- Perhaps more explicitly child-friendly spaces?
- I would love to see more places people can get involved in the art.
What would you like to see in MayDay festivals in the future?

A second major theme people shared is a desire for more diversity and inclusivity, deep community participation, and more leadership by communities of color and indigenous communities.

I just want it to keep happening, and I want it to reflect the people who live here and create it. And I want it to stay radical and inclusive (whatever that might mean in the future).

I feel really open to it significantly changing, although I’m not sure quite how. What if it was even more strongly led by indigenous leadership? What if there was a collaboration of cultural groups, collaborating in a way I’ve never seen before, sharing ways to welcome spring. What if the audience was brought into deeper participation and connection and didn’t attend as much as consumers.

More black and brown folks and artists of color

Deep empathy, deep connection and community, diversity of income, diversity of religion
What would you like to see in MayDay festivals in the future?

Another theme was a desire to keep corporate money and influence out of the festival.

Some people also described ways that MayDay could change, including smaller MayDay celebrations or integrating with other festivals, or ending MayDay.

Would like to see community ownership and sponsorship without any corporate involvement.

Would there be a way to make it smaller and more manageable to sustain? A shorter route, keeping it closer to the park, etc.? I mean really I’d like to see some version of it continue because I think it’s the soul of Minneapolis.

A continued lack of corporate sponsorship.

Make Open Streets co-mingle with MayDay...

MayDay is over. Time to let it go and move on, and take the money you’ve raised and use it for new ventures. It’s been the same parade for years now. Same puppets, same style, same participants. Let it go!
What can you commit for MayDay 2020?

Approximately 265 people responded about what they can commit for MayDay in 2020.

Over 60% said they can donate money. Approximately 40% said they can donate time and skills, as well as gather support.
Additional Work and Next Steps

Additional engagement and meaning making work to do might include:

Engaging specifically with people who don’t attend

Analyzing responses specifically of people who have participated for 2-5 years and 6-10 years, and who have been in the parade and attended community workshops

Sharing responses and themes with community members to check themes and collectively reflect on what has been shared