

## Student Voices – Columbus, Ohio -- Milo-Grogan Arts Center

- COYA OSBORNE, Student:** We're studying Columbus neighborhoods – progress and promise.
- HOLLY HARRISON, Student:** We have talked a bit about local communities. Like the Milo-Grogan Situation.
- ERIN DEGNAN, Reporter:** Students at Columbus Ohio's Fort Hayes High School are getting both a history lesson and a civics lesson by studying their city's neighborhoods. The Milo-Grogan area is one of the city's oldest, but has suffered from a lack of investment, and the addition of a divided highway.
- COYA OSBORNE, Student:** Yeah, they built the neighborhood first and then they added the highway.
- HOLLY HARRISON, Student:** The community is actually split more than it once was. I do believe that the interstate has hurt the community.
- ERIN DEGNAN:** The Milo-Grogan Arts Castle is one of many neighborhood properties that the students found in decline. For 19 years it has provided local artists a place to live and work.
- TEACHER:** What they wanted to do is to creating an artists' commune. OK? And what will *happen is artist* need studio space, space to do their work. You can't paint an oil painting in your living room, you'll get paint all over your carpet. So, you need a place to do all of your work, and also, you want a place where you can be near your work -- to be immersed in your work, be around other artists.
- This way, artists can feed off each other's creativity. They can build off each other, and that was the idea, to create a place where they can live together.
- ERIN DEGNAN:** The Arts Castle is privately owned. To stay open it needs community support. But donations and silent auctions have not been enough.

**HOLLY HARRISON:**

The owner Rick Mann, he really couldn't afford it. He couldn't pay the bills and he kept losing money each month. The fact that he couldn't afford it any more he had no choice but to go bankrupt in order to give what little time he had to save the Milo-Grogan Arts Castle.

**ERIN DEGNAN:**

The Castle is still open while the owners and supporters search for ways to save it. For the students it's become an opportunity to get involved in a community while learning its history.

**TYLON FULLER, Student:**

So, what would the normal day be like for one of the artist who lives here? My name is Tylon. Today we're just here kind of learning about the place, trying to see what it's about and everything.

I know that they are trying to take the place away. They are trying to auction it off. We are going to try to be a voice and to say what we feel. Try to keep the place up. Keep the place running. Being a performance arts school at Ft. Hayes, a place like this is very good. It's exactly what we need.

**ARTIST:**

In Arabic this says, "May the people who live between the two rivers of fire have peace at last."

**LINOKI HUGHES, Student:**

Can you explain, I know it's religious...

My name is Lanoki Hughes. I don't know yet what I can do but, I think it would be real tragic for them to tear it down because it's a real good thing for teenagers and people my age to get involved in

**RICK MANN, Artist:**

This is a studio I always show new people coming because it has so much history here.

**ARTIST:**

This is my studio. It's also where I live. It's my favorite studio in the building. Any questions on space?

**STUDENT, Student:**

Do you think it benefits you to live here versus your own apartment in another place?

**ARTIST:**

Yes.

**ALAN GABRENYA, Student:**

My name is Alan Gabrenya. I think buildings like this attract more artistic minded people who are probably more concerned about the community than people who just can't afford anything better.

So, I think if a place like this were to close down it would negatively affect the community. Take away citizens who might be interested in keeping the community better.

**ARTIST:**

If anyone in this class in these two classes is in love with this building as much as I am please partner up with me...

Hopefully enough people will stand behind it and save it ... hopefully ... keep our fingers crossed.

**ERIN DEGNAN:**

I'm Erin Degnan for Student Voices and the News