

The Community Consortium, Inc.

(Albany, NY)

Total Award: \$50,000 over 18 Months

Lost Cases, Recovered Lives: Suitcases from a State Hospital Attic

To support the development and production of two portable panel versions of the traveling exhibit, *Lost Cases, Recovered Lives: Suitcases from a State Hospital Attic*. In 1995 Willard State Hospital in upstate New York was closed after more than 125 years of operation as a state mental hospital. 400 suitcases were discovered in the attic of an abandoned building that belonged to individuals who were hospitalized between the 1890's and 1960's. In 1999, a doctor, a scholar and a photographer began to sort out the stories of the owners of these bags. They went to their homes, visited their graves, read their correspondence, studied the photographs, talked to their neighbors and caretakers and documented what they found. The resulting exhibition attracted more than 600,000 visitors and evoked a level of response that was unprecedented. Visitors came back, often seeking to engage in dialogue. Plays are being written about the subjects of the exhibition and members of the clergy have written sermons about the exhibition. Community Consortium will produce two portable, panelled traveling version of the exhibit, "Lost Cases, Recovered Lives: Suitcases from a State Hospital Attic;" produce a catalog with supplementary historical and biographical information; develop an educational website; expand the scope of an existing Power Point slide show; and disseminate the exhibition to host organizations that would include libraries, state and local government agencies, historical societies, local and regional museums, schools, colleges, hospitals, community centers and professional organizations.

Program Contribution Breakdown:

\$50,000 Arts and Culture Program: *Objective I, Strategy 1*