

Expressions

WINTER 2013

Promoting the creative power in people with disabilities.

On the Cutting Edge...

Universal Design for Learning

Teaching artists are the backbone of VSA Wisconsin programs. It is their expertise and creativity that gives us credibility and in order to maintain our reputation, it is important for VSA Wisconsin to stay on the cutting edge of arts programming for people with disabilities. For the past few years, teaching artists have been learning new strategies and developing new teaching practices that enable people of all ability levels to experience success. They are now implementing Universal Design for Learning (UDL), a curriculum planning approach that emphasizes universal access, flexibility and inclusion.

People differ in the ways they learn. Some of us are visual learners; others learn best when they listen to instructions or manually try a task with their hands. In a nutshell, teaching artists who use UDL strategies will present information in multiple ways. They may use visual cues (letters, symbols or numbers on picture cards), sign language, charts or diagrams. When presenting verbal instruction, they will provide short, simple directions, vary the volume and speed of delivery and also use auditory cues for key concepts and transitions. To accommodate those who learn by doing, teaching artists may use tactile props/cues or physical activity to teach key concepts.

People also differ in the ways they express what they know. In addition to verbal feedback, UDL encourages expression through various forms such as assistive devices and drawings.



Finally, people differ in the ways that they can be engaged and motivated. UDL strategies provide opportunities that are personalized and relevant with respect to age, ability, culture, race and ethnicity. Complex activities are broken down into small manageable steps and teaching artists provide activities that can be completed with differing degrees of skill.

VSA Wisconsin is committed to teaching practices and philosophies that put people first. We want every individual participating in a program to be engaged and have a meaningful experience. By using UDL strategies, we are seeing very strong outcomes. Program participants are increasing their engagement in creative activities and their understanding of concepts and materials which ultimately makes it possible for them to contribute to the social, cultural and economic life of their communities.

To Our Donors...

A Heartfelt Thank You

Over the past year, your generosity and acts of kindness have changed thousands of lives. As you read through the following pages, you'll learn how your dollars have made a difference and helped fulfill dreams that were once thought impossible.

We've also asked some of you to tell us why you volunteer or provide financial support to VSA Wisconsin. These responses can be found throughout the newsletter. No matter the size of your gift, please know that we are honored to receive your charitable dollars and will work hard to merit your continued trust.

Kathie Wagner



Kathie Wagner
President

Vsa
WISCONSIN

The State Organization
on Arts and Disability

& News Events

Art Exhibitions

Creative Power

A traveling exhibition featuring 30 award winning works from across the state

Kruk Gallery
UW-Superior
Mar. 4 - 31

Alexander House
Port Edwards
May 31 - July 23

Visual Expressions

A Call for Art Exhibition
VSA Wisconsin Gallery
Madison
Mar. 16 - Apr. 10

A Closer Look

VSA Wisconsin's 2013
Purchase Awards
VSA Wisconsin Gallery
Madison
Apr. 17 - May 8

Events

Visual Expressions Reception

VSA Wisconsin Gallery
Madison
April 6, 3-5 pm

VSA Wisconsin
1709 Aberg Ave.
Suite 1
Madison, WI 53704
608-241-2131
www.vsawis.org

Successes and Smiles...

Early Childhood Residencies

A student at Madison Elementary School in Janesville exhibited speech, language and other developmental delays. As a result, he avoided eye contact and interaction with others. As the VSA Wisconsin residency at his school progressed, the teacher observed the student smiling continuously and demonstrating a willingness to participate. He began interacting with others during partner time and attempted to sing along which had rarely happened.



In Sun Prairie, classroom teacher Lydia Krueger found it exciting to see how music touches children. A student who had difficulty processing a direction or imitating a motor movement accomplished the task when music and rhythm was applied.



At Penfield Children's Center in Milwaukee, one session included printmaking using paint, foam pieces, a potato masher and flip-flops. Students shared tools and worked together successfully on a collaborative work of art. The activities encouraged exploration and expression, and also helped students learn to

work with more than one partner in class, to listen to one another, and to take turns.

K-12 Artist Residencies

Students at Riverside High School in Milwaukee were enthralled with the materials used in a mosaic artist residency. Each student exhibited concentration skills while laying down the mosaic pieces. It was especially interesting to see the various reactions from the students during the grouting process; some loved making the mess with their hands, while others did not want to get dirty at all.



Transition students with disabilities (ages 16-21) in several Milwaukee suburban schools explored a variety of percussion instruments, musical styles and/or creative movement in the creation of original musical recordings and/or collaborative dances.

During a puppetry residency at Wausau East High School, a non-verbal student with Down syndrome spent the early sessions sitting in her chair and not making eye contact. The teaching artist always included the student, bringing her materials, demonstrating for her directly and focusing on the puppets. Half way through the program the student began creating puppets in her art class. At the "dress rehearsal" for a performance, she chose to participate with her group and helped present a short shadow puppet show in front of her peers. She also performed at the final celebration and with a big smile on her face uttered, "Whoa!"

Art Center

Gary comes into the Open Door studio wearing a painters smock and a smile. He often tells the instructor that he doesn't know what he will work on, but he gets right to work. Gary's progress has been heartwarming to witness. He first came to class hesitant to give himself to his work. He would paint or draw an image and then declare the piece finished before he put much effort into it, but Gary did tell the instructor that he wanted to learn to think like an artist. Now, Gary enjoys critiques of his work and is incredibly receptive to feedback. His understanding of what makes for a harmonious painting has grown by leaps and bounds. The surfaces of his paintings are now colorful and beautifully done. Gary continues to blossom alongside other artists. What a transformation!

Participants in the "Hot Sounds of Summer" class played their favorite instruments and moved to the sounds of musicians such as Elvis, The Beatles, and Johnny Cash. While most could sing along, several were non-verbal so they used an instrument to follow the beat. They also learned hand movements for the chorus of a song which strengthened their fine motor skills. Participants were also encouraged to take on leadership roles. When Jeff led the group with the tambourine, everyone kept the beat in perfect time, a first for the class!

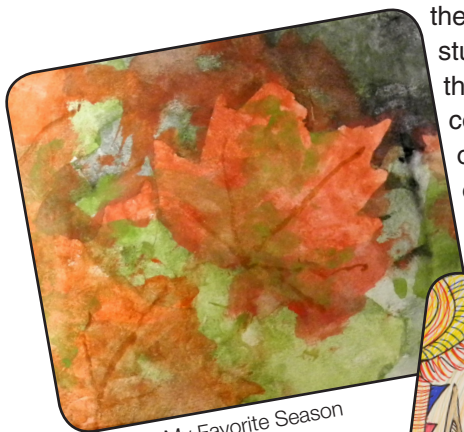


...To Remember

Call for Art

Laurie Fellenz, a Fine Arts teacher-leader in the Madison Metropolitan School District, considers VSA Wisconsin to be a very important community partner in the growth and development of our youth in arts. She says “It is through

the [Call for Art] for our students with disabilities that self-expression, confidence and a sense of accomplishment in one’s artwork are cultivated and grown.”



My Favorite Season
by Justin Benes

Brenda Olsen tells us that art seems to be a place where her son, Austin, can go to simply be who he is. There are no rules made by others that apply. Art is a place where Austin can create, express his moods, feelings and perhaps his interpretation of the world.

Romano Johnson tells us that he wants people to see that art is what he loves doing. He says, I want people to look at my paintings and drawings and say, “Wow!”



Red Blue Style Girl
by Romano Johnson

VSA Day



For some students, VSA Day is an activity that is very much out of their comfort zone. “Autistic children sometimes struggle with routine change, different environments, and loud noises. We had

students who were able to work

through these discomforts to participate. Just going out in public without a family member is huge for many of our students. Many of the students that participate in VSA Day talked about it for days afterward, loved seeing the pictures and video from the day.” ~ Carol Wieman, Medford Area Public Schools

“One new choir member had a great first experience with our group on VSA Day and has been a strong and bold singer since then in rehearsals where she frequently volunteers to sing prominent parts.”

~Jeff Stanek, director, VSA Choir of Madison



Choirs



Nearly 200 people with disabilities participate in VSA Choirs in cities across Wisconsin. Through regular rehearsals led by choir directors, participants learn about pitch, tone, rhythm, movement, basic music history, and composition, and share their accomplishments through public performances. Choir members show numerous positive benefits from the program. In the VSA Choir of Stoughton, Laura* can still be shy and nervous, but she is coming out of her shell more, and is even showing her sense of humor. Joe* is non-verbal, but very enthusiastic about using a maraca. He stands up in front of the rest of the group to shake it, and does so quite rhythmically. JoAnne* has come a long way, and her autistic behaviors are much more controlled. She has made friends with another choir member, and they are very enthusiastic about coming up in front of the others to make the letters for the song “YMCA”

*Names changed to protect privacy

REPORT ON GIVING - JULY 1, 2011 -JUNE 30, 2012

Thank you to the following individuals, businesses, foundations, and partners who responded to grant requests, direct mail, newsletter and email solicitations, and workplace giving campaigns to provide generous financial and inkind support. Due to printing deadlines, this report reflects cash and documented inkind gifts received from July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2012. Pledges made, but not received during this period will be included in the next fiscal year report.

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Alex Murtaugh, Almost Like High School

"We love supporting VSA Wisconsin. We first became involved to help our son Alex adjust to our move to Wisconsin from Indiana. We were encouraged because there were people within the organization who could help us. VSA Wisconsin treats people with disabilities like 'normal' people and age is no barrier. The organization helps instill self-esteem in the people they work with and that is very important. We love talking to the relatives and parents of other participants and knowing that we are getting good support. We're feeling more hopeful now because positive things are happening through VSA Wisconsin. It's also great to see the passion of the participating artists."

- Susan and Phil Murtaugh, donors and parents of Alexis Murtaugh

REPORT ON GIVING- JULY 1, 2011 - JUNE 30, 2012

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Manna Café



"I first got involved with VSA in 2009 by responding to an announcement for volunteers. I had been looking for a volunteer position in the art field and it was a perfect fit – better than I ever thought it would be! It is very rare to find a place like VSA with such open minds, open doors and accessibility to feedback, input and new ideas. My life would not be as fulfilled as it is today without VSA – especially on Monday nights during clay class!"

-Andrea Fredricksen, VSA Art Center Volunteer

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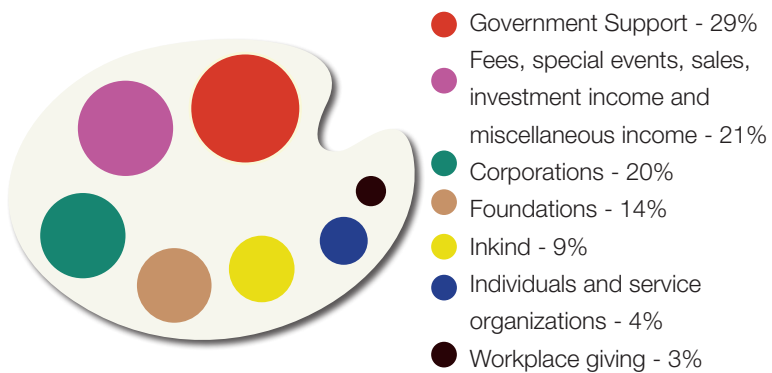
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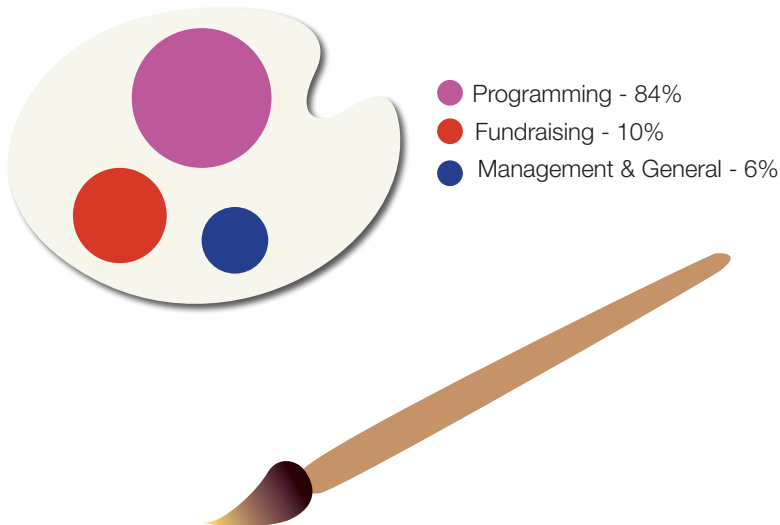
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Many thanks to PGA Tour golfer
Steve Stricker and Cherokee
Country Club; and the UW-
Madison Athletic Department and
School of Music.

Revenues



Expenses



FY12 by the numbers

Educational art programs directly served **2,051** individuals, most with disabilities

84% of annual expenses were devoted to programming

More than **305,345** people were impacted by exhibitions, concerts, and special performances by individual with disabilities

1,220 hours of programming were conducted by **37** teaching artists

130 volunteers provided 750 hours of support for administration, programs and events



"I first learned of VSA Wisconsin through my cousin who lives in Merrill. Every year she would come to Madison to participate in the annual VSA Day at a UW football game and it was always a special occasion for her. I then began volunteering with VSA Wisconsin in 2006 at their booth at Art Fair on the Square in Madison. After seeing a need for a photography class at the VSA Art Center, I was honored to make the Photo Town! class possible with the help of American Girl and the Center of Photography Madison.

I support VSA Wisconsin because it makes a difference for people with disabilities. The organization, staff and teaching artists are concerned for the whole person, not just their artistic skills. Their inclusive activities bring people together and break down barriers in the communities they serve. I'm not a very good artist myself, but can really appreciate the talent of those in VSA I am lucky enough to work with."

- Chris Spencer (at left), Volunteer and Donor





"We feel completely comfortable in the operation of VSA and know that our charitable donations will be used wisely. We also have great passion for the power of the arts to aid in healing or improving physical and mental issues. We therefore feel that we are donating to a group that is bringing joy, better physical health, better mental health, and new skills to a broad group of people.

We support VSA because we believe in the mission. We especially like the programs that involve children - and programs that could not happen if VSA was not involved. VSA helps bring music into the lives of all types of individuals with disabilities. We as a society must support the arts to maintain our creativity, to renew our spirit, to help us understand emotion and to better feel that emotion. All persons should have the opportunity to experience the arts - VSA expands the audience that has the luxury of experiencing new energy and joy from the arts."

-Drs. Elaine and Nick Mischler, Donors

You are invited! Visual Expressions

A CALL FOR ART EXHIBITION CELEBRATING THE
CREATIVE POWER OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES.

VSA WISCONSIN GALLERY
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SATURDAY APRIL 6, 3-5 PM

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The mission of VSA Wisconsin is to expand the capabilities, confidence and quality of life for children and adults with disabilities by providing programs in dance, drama, creative writing, music and visual art.

VSA Wisconsin is an affiliate of VSA, a program of The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. This newsletter is made possible in part through support from Advertisers Press and xpedx.

Transportation for VSA Wisconsin is provided by Kayser Automotive Group.

To receive this newsletter in an alternative format, contact VSA Wisconsin.

Additional copies can be requested by calling 608-241-2131 or downloaded from the website at www.vsawis.org



"Our classes have thoroughly enjoyed all the programs/activities that VSA has offered. We would take advantage of more if they were offered. VSA

has been flexible to work with and is always willing to adapt to our needs. I cannot say enough about VSA and all the artists involved. Thank you!!"
~ Ellen Buhrandt, Transition Educator at Muskego High School

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