# Expressions

Promoting the creative power in people with disabilities.



### To All Stakeholders...

# Thank You

January is the month when we traditionally publish our annual report. You've become accustomed to a 4-page insert found in the winter newsletter, but this year there is so much more to report. Thanks to your gener-



ous gifts, thousands of lives were forever changed so we are using a new format to summarize our programs in pictures and short stories. The facts and figures are strong, but the impact on the lives of those we serve is beyond measure. We are grateful for the support you have provided and look forward to working with you again in 2012.



Kathie Wagner President



# Research Results... Art is Good for Students

In fall 2010, Northwestern Mutual Foundation, who generously supports many arts programs in greater Milwaukee, selected VSA Wisconsin and six other "best in class" organizations to participate in a study conducted by Reinders Research. The evaluation process began with a simple question: How do arts education programs impact emotional intelligence levels of participating students?

What is emotional intelligence (EQ), you ask? Briefly it can be described as the effective blending of thinking and feeling to make good decisions. Data was collected through a survey conducted at the beginning and end of VSA artist residencies, conducted in partnership with Wauwatosa, Whitnall, Hamilton Sussex, Muskego and Templeton Schools.

Post-test results presented in October 2011 indicated that nearly half of the sample (students with disabilities ages 11-20) experienced positive growth in overall EQ levels. Growth was directly attributed to VSA program exposure. Among those who experienced change, exactly half made significant gains and the remaining half made average gains. Comparative surveys showed that students with the lowest pre-test scores improved the most. Overall gains made by the group point to observable improvement in self-awareness and management, improved reasoning and self-guidance and better teamwork and cooperation.

Students who experienced positive EQ growth from exposure to VSA Wisconsin programs made significant gains in every single category measured through the emotional intelligence survey. We were delighted that the data collected confirms the strength of our programs and makes a strong case for bringing VSA Wisconsin programs to students with disabilities throughout the state.

Six Seconds, a global organization supporting people to create positive change, defines EQ as being smart with feelings so one can develop optional relationships with themselves and others. EQ is a learnable set of practical, measurable skills that make a transformational difference at work, at school, and at home.

# News Events

#### **Art Exhibitions**

#### **Creative Power**

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

Miller Art Museum Sturgeon Bay Jan. 28 - April 16 Artist Lecture Feb. 9 10:30 am

#### **Intersections**

works by Seth Albertson and Alex Murtaugh

VSA Wisconsin Gallery Madison Jan. 11 - Feb. 29

#### **Visual Expressions**

A Call for Art Exhibition

VSA Wisconsin Gallery Madison Mar. 17 - Apr. 7

#### **Events**

# Visual Expressions Reception

VSA Wisconsin Gallery Madison March 24, 3-5 pm

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

# Stories and Smiles...

# **Early Childhood Residencies**



During the artist residencies at Lowell Elementary School in Madison, Andy\*, a student with autism, began to demonstrate new behaviors. His teacher Andrea Bailey observed that "prior to the VSA program he would mainly sit on the perimeter of large group activities, not paying attention to his peers. By the end of the VSA residency, Andy was successfully imitating the movements of his peers and even cheering for them during "spotlight" dances. His participation in VSA Wisconsin has encouraged him to imitate and compliment his peers in the classroom setting as well."

### K-12 Artist Residencies

"The students in my program enjoy the VSA projects and artists every year that we participate. Meeting new people and



is important. With
[Community Threads
residency] ... the students were proud of
their cutting and sewing skills. They took
pride in their individual creative products and told their
parents about the
creatures at home.
VSA has provided
my students with
worthwhile projects to

participate in and create. I plan to continue working with any artist who is willing to provide instruction and activities for the benefit of my students!" ~ Kathi Christensen, John Muir Middle School

### **Art Center**

As you walk through the doors of the new VSA Wisconsin Gallery, unique works of art that stimulate your imagination and stir the senses will greet you. Since moving to a new home in January 2011, VSA Wisconsin has hosted numerous art exhibitions, including Visual Expressions: A

Call for Art Exhibition; Uncontained: Larger than Life; Windows of Genius: The Art of the Prodigious Savant and Intersections.

> A few steps beyond the gallery is the VSA Wisconsin Art Center, where individuals with disabilities gather to develop their skills in ceramics, painting, drawing, singing, dancing and more. The center is a beehive of activity Monday through Thursday evenings, and due to the new location which provides greater visibility, more than 30 new registrants have signed up for classes in the last year.



# **Choirs**

According to a parent of a member of the VSA Choir of Fond du Lac: "Being a member of the choir is not only important to our son, Tom, but, a thrill for us, as parents, to attend the concerts and see the joy on all the participants faces as they sing their hearts out. Tom has had several opportunities to sing solos, and is he a proud young man! He is also proud to watch his friends in the choir as they perform. There is a real sense of unity and support there. Music is an important part of Tom's life, always puts a smile on his face. Thank you for this special outlet."



VSA Choir of Wisconsin Rapids

# ...To Remember

# **VSA Day**

Maggie\*, a VSA Wisconsin choir member, is a very social young woman who also has behavior challenges. Her mother tells us, "when Maggie feels stress she sometimes hurts either herself or others. VSA has been a wonderful way

for Maggie to develop positive friendships with the other choir members. The choir director has the unique gift of making each person feel special. The volunteers who



come to praging gives of Mag

practices have
also gotten to know Maggie and help her when
she needs it. During
VSA Day at Camp
Randall Stadium in
Madison, one of the
volunteers stayed
with us so that each
of us could hold one
of Maggie's hands. Maggie

had some rough times, but she was able to get through them and stay with the group. Because of her behaviors, Maggie has not been welcome with very many groups. When she got out onto the field, she sang her little

heart out. She's a bit of a show off and loved the audience. Maggie's attention span is generally quite short, but she participated in the whole day without wanting to leave. She had a memorable day



with friends who enjoyed her company. Maggie could get though life without those experiences, but they offer her opportunities to live the kind of exciting life that most of us live."

# Call for Art



Blue Flowers by Lavontay Basley

George\* a happy, energetic, motivated young boy, had a very positive experience through the annual Call for Art

program. He spends his free time at school and at home using different mediums to express his artistic side. His teacher says, "Through his art pieces, he is communicating with us, and the world." George's mom tells us, "[George] is nonverbal; he can't speak. He speaks in pictures and colors. It's his way of fitting into the world. It's his escape...[The VSA award] is very exciting. It's an honor for all of us. I was pretty emotional when we got the phone call that he



Goblin Face by Andrew Holschuh

won. I want to get him an easel with the gift card he won. I thought it would be fun for him to explore paints and canvas."

Sarah Winkler, a student at New Holstein High School, received recognition for her acrylic painting "Not That Dark." She says, "Art makes me feel safe, like nothing can touch me. My art is my own. It is the one thing no one can tell me I'm doing wrong. It is the thing I can do my way . . . When I paint, I feel everything; every emotion one can experience. I feel anger, sadness, happiness, frustration, and even laughter. . . When I paint, I express myself."

\*Names changed to protect privacy

# K-12 Artist Residencies

"The very first class, a young student refused to participate. Once the scarves came out, I learned of his love of belly dancing and east Indian culture. I was sure to incorporate music from that genre, as well as bring a specific drum and ankle bells for him as well as continue to use the scarves. Initially, he would sit outside the circle, and only participate when the scarves came out. It wasn't long before he began in the circle with us and participated the entirety of the class."

~ Michelle Hatfield, teaching artist

### REPORT ON GIVING - JULY 1, 2010 - JUNE 30, 2011

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, 2010 through June 30, 2011.

Pledges made, but not received during this period will be included in the fiscal year 2012 report.

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#### Special Events

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

#### FY11 by the numbers

Educational art programs directly served 3,163 individuals, most with disabilities

84% of annual expenses were devoted to programming

More than 577,255 people were impacted by exhibitions, concerts, and special performances by individual with disabilities

27,494 hours of programming were conducted by 41 teaching artists

Nearly 140 volunteers provided support for administration, programs and events

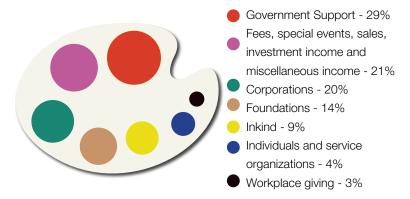
350 square feet of space was devoted to exhibitions at the new VSA Wisconsin Gallery in Madison

#### Help VSA Wisconsin continue to grow

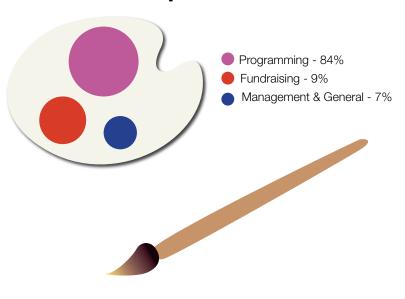
- Tell one new person about VSA Wisconsin in 2012
- Send us a note about how your involvement with VSA Wisconsin has touched your life or the life of a friend/loved one
- Make a first-time financial gift to VSA Wisconsin or try to increase your giving this year
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Please call us at 608-241-2131 or visit our website: www.vsawis.org

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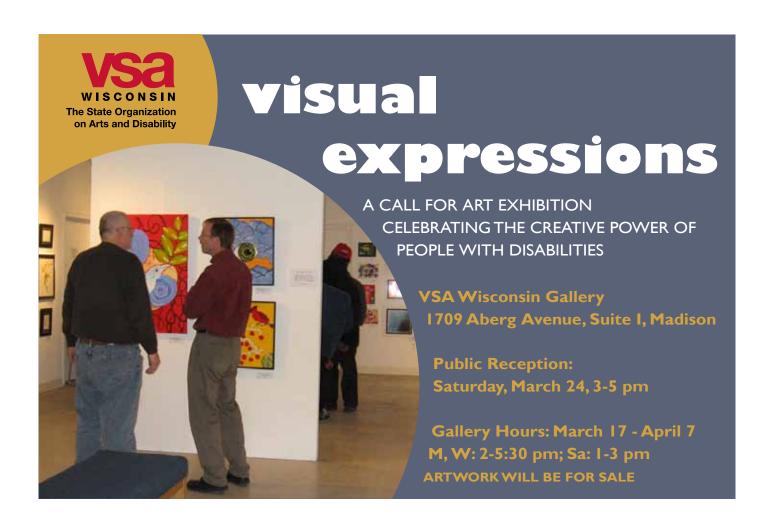


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# **Save the Date**

15th Annual
VSA Wisconsin Golf Exhibition
with Steve Stricker
June 18, 2012
Cherokee Country Club, Madison

www.vsawis.org

# **Art Is Good**

We all have our talents, Art is good, Chasing your dreams, As you should.

Paint a picture, Or mold some clay, Art is for all, Every day.

Never stop trying, Keep to your goals, Art is precious, To our souls.

So enjoy yourself, When doing art, Just pick a time, And then you start.

~Dylan Abraham

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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.

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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

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- Advertising and/or Promotional Space
- Office Supplies (copier paper, Post-It notes)
- Printing Services
- Portable navigation device
- Art supplies (canvases, brushes, buttons)
- Digital Photo Frame (5" x 7" minimum size)

Contact VSA Wisconsin's development office at 608-241-2131

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