

# Expressions

Promoting the creative power in people with disabilities.



**WISCONSIN**  
The State Organization  
on Arts and Disability

## & News Events

### Inspired artists submit wide range of work... **Visual Expressions: A Call for Art Exhibition**

Sophisticated, whimsical, exotic, and dramatic are just a few words that describe the exquisitely expressive works that were submitted to VSA Wisconsin's 2012 Call for Art. More than 240 artists submitted 357 two- and three-dimensional works and the resulting *Visual Expressions* exhibition was a kaleidoscope of color, shapes and themes. All works were on view at the VSA Wisconsin Gallery in Madison from March 17



*Dream Wedding Cake*  
by Kristiana Shiko

through April 7, allowing visitors ample time to enjoy the artists' creative expressions in watercolor, pastel, ceramics, sculpture, photography and mixed media.

Independent arts professionals reviewed the entries and selected

ten works which will be added to *Creative Power: VSA Wisconsin's Traveling Exhibition* in June. Ten additional works received honorable mention awards and six entries received merit awards. A ceremony recognizing the artists was held on March 24. Artists whose work will be added to the traveling exhibition include: Carter Haderly and Brittany Vernoski, Mellen; Jordan Horn, Ripon; Katherine Suazo, Boscobel; Jacob Dewhurst, New Holstein; Kristiana Shiko, Fitchburg; Dan Sullivan, Wausau; Ryan Ratzlaff, Cleveland; Dan Stace and Romano Johnson, Madison.

Award recipient Dan Sullivan is an advocate of folk art with its emphasis on shapes, contrasts, and colors which quite literally reflect the way he sees life. He focuses on transforming

something as ordinary as old fence posts into not-so-ordinary duck decoys. Shying away from power tools, all work is done with just a handsaw, rasp and hammer. Dan says, "Being cracked, splintered and rough-edged does not make a weathered fence post useless. These things only add to its character. With some persistent crafting and a touch of imagination, even an old piece of wood can be transformed. Perhaps this is how those of us with disabilities need to be perceived. Once given the opportunity to adapt, we each have the potential to evolve into a work of art."



*Bird on A Stick*  
by Brittany Vernoski

Carolyne Roepke, who also submitted art work, says, "Art helps me escape from everyday struggles with reading. Art allows me to not focus on words, allows my words to be expressed through my creativity and imagination in art."



*Eye See You* by Jacob Dewhurst

*To me, art is a way to express myself. When I create, my disease doesn't limit me, and I am free to do whatever I want. ~ Jacob Dewhurst*

### Art Exhibitions

**Creative Power**  
30 award-winning works from across the state

Betty Brinn  
Childrens Museum  
Milwaukee  
Aug. 1 - Sept. 18

**Lyrical Musings:**  
Paintings by Joe J. Arts

VSA Wisconsin Gallery  
Madison  
through June 20

**Uncontained: Larger than Life**  
large scale works by selected artists

VSA Wisconsin Gallery  
Madison  
June 27 - Aug. 27

**Frames of the Northside**  
PhotoTown photographers

VSA Wisconsin Gallery  
Madison  
Sept. 10 - Jan. 2

### Events

**15th Annual Golf Exhibition**  
featuring Steve Stricker  
Advance tickets required

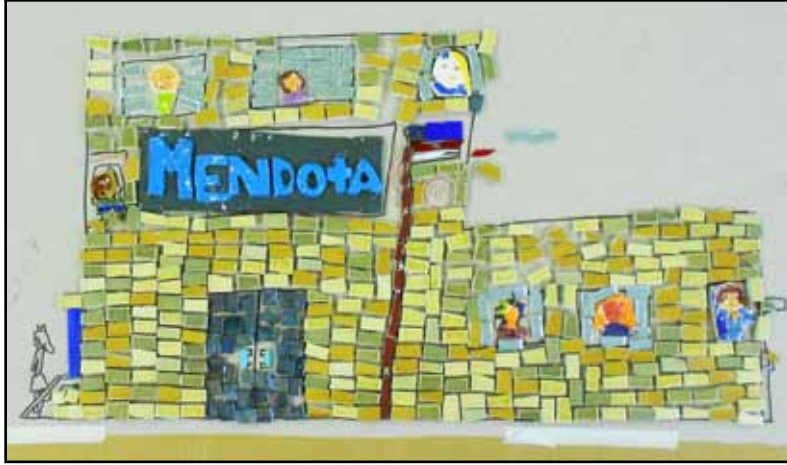
Cherokee CC, Madison  
June 18

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

## Mosaics and Murals...

# Reflecting School and Community Pride

This spring, more than 450 Madison-area students learned the process of mosaics and created beautiful works of art to enhance the walls of their schools. Though the final works differ in content and style, the overarching themes are the same: connecting students with one another and their community.



### Mendota Elementary School

*"The whole project has been amazing. Marcia [teaching artist] is incredible. From initial planning to design to production, she is incredible. Not only has Mendota been lucky to have her, but I count myself very fortunate to have worked with her. Talking with Marcia today, our biggest dilemma is how to top it in the years to come. A huge thank you to VSA for making this happen. I cannot wait for everyone to see this."*

~ Nate Kirley, art teacher

### Lapham Elementary School

*"This project offers students with disabilities the opportunity to try new tasks that are challenging for them. Students who struggle with self-control and social interaction become absorbed in the art process and work calmly and cooperatively. Students also practice working together and problem-solving as they jointly create the art piece. ...As one student exclaimed, "sometimes, even though you feel you're not an artist, you put together really nice things. Then, when you look (at what you've made), you think, 'Wow!'"*

~ Sophi Guilfoose, school psychologist



### Glendale Elementary School

*"VSA is a great asset to the community and to the preservation of fine art. As an art teacher in the Madison Metropolitan School District, I have had the opportunity to work with VSA for two years. This experience has made our students very proud about their work and cooperative efforts to beautify Glendale Elementary. Thank you VSA for the wonderful work you do!"*

~Victoria Vetter, art teacher



## Wisconsin recognized...

# National Awards

Each year, several awards are presented at the VSA annual meeting in Washington DC and we are pleased to announce two winners from Wisconsin this year. **Northwestern Mutual Foundation** received the Outstanding Community Partner Award recognizing a partnering organization that has made an exemplary contribution to the mission of the VSA state affiliate. Northwestern Mutual Foundation has supported VSA Wisconsin pre-school and K-12 residencies in a variety of mediums for more than 20 years. Initially, the

foundation's support was limited to programs in the greater Milwaukee area. They have now expanded their service area and recently doubled their annual gift to VSA Wisconsin.

**Chris Spencer** received an Award for Excellence in Leadership. Chris has been an outstanding champion on behalf of VSA Wisconsin for many years. In 2009, Chris suggested creating a photography class for adults with disabilities. Thanks to his energy and enthusiasm "Photo Town! An Introduction to Digital Photography"

was born. When speaking of that initial class, Chris says: "Some people had never held a camera before. There was a lot of tension. But within the first five minutes, we passed out the cameras and everyone just got excited. One of the participants just grabbed (the camera) and he wanted to go, like 'Let's go! I want to take pictures!'" In addition to serving as an assistant for all the photography classes, Chris has volunteered his professional expertise in strategic planning to help VSA Wisconsin develop its vision for the next two years.

## Recognize Someone Special...

# Art Activity

**How to Get Started:** Discuss with the artist:

- Who is someone special to you?
- Why is this person special?
- Making a plaque (medal) can show our appreciation.
- What kind of plaque (medal) is appropriate for the person?

**Materials:** Self drying clay, play dough, ceramic clay or Baker's clay (recipe below); assorted tools for sculpting and stamping such as: dowels, spools, sticks, forks, etc.

**To Do:** Use the steps below to create a medal or plaque.

**Demonstrate:** Making a plaque or medal using clay:

- Roll clay into a ball

- Flatten the clay by pressing with your hands
- Rub to make a smooth surface and the same thickness
- Use stick to shape the plaque (medal)
- Decorate: add name, initials, pattern
- Poke a hole to hang or add a ribbon

**Talking About Art:** Who is the plaque/medal for? How was the pattern created?

**Baker's Clay recipe:**

- 4 cups of flour
  - 1 cup salt
  - 1 cup water
- Mix together and roll into balls.

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## Yes! I want to support VSA Wisconsin

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



Participants enjoy a movement class at the VSA Art Center

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.

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