Focus on Sewing

Sewing is the act of joining or fastening by stitches. Our students, it is more than that. Sewing as an activity teaches diligence, following directions, creativity, concentration and a great deal of patience. Sewing demonstrates that hard work and commitment can result in something beautiful, something practical, and something that engenders pride and gives great satisfaction.

At the Art House, children have the opportunity to engage in both hand and machine sewing. Many of the younger children sign up for “Pillows.” Here they hand stitch the squares together to form the front of the pillow, then stitch the pillow together and stuff it with batting. Sister Susan Freytag notes that “the children learn to take their time and finish the hand sewing is the name of the game. Delilah and Ella (both 11 years old) work diligently at the sewing machines. Concentration is the name of the game as Delilah and Ella (age 12) who, together with several Dafmark Dance Academy students, performed at the awards ceremony. Ella (age 11) and Jada (age 9) show off their quilts in an interview with Debbie Sementelli, Executive Director of the Art House.

Cookie Decorating

Decorating cookies for the holidays has been an annual tradition at the Art House for many years. Renee Louy, Project Coordinator, and her volunteers provide large cut-out cookies, icing, colored sugars, candies and sprinkles to spark the imaginations of the children who each decorate three cookies. Each family receives packaging for the holidays. Renee offers encouragement to Brittany (age 7) Alexa (age 9) and Rolimore (age 7).

Youth Leader Visits Art House

Xiuhtezcatl, a 15-year-old, native of the United States, and beyond and made a presentation at the United Nations. He came to Erie to make a presentation at Penn State Behrend; we were very fortunate that he was also willing to come to the Art House. Xiuhtezcatl shared his love of hip hop, his commitment to the environment, and his passion for empowering youth with his students. His main message: You are never too young to make a difference, and that the environment belongs to everyone—it is everyone’s responsibility.

At the request of the children, he taught them a simple rap with an empowering message.

I’m Young, and I’m positive

I’m the future, I’m gonna tell it like it is; I won’t let anything stand in my way. I’ve my eyes on the prize; it will stay with me, and something that engenders pride and gives great satisfaction.

Congratulations Teachers

The Art House is home to highly respected professionals in all four of its educational strands: visual arts, performing arts, literary arts, and environmental action. Two of our teachers were honored recently. Jennifer Denevan was named the 2013 Bruce Milton Wright Artist of the Year by Erie Arts & Culture, formerly known as the Arts Council of Erie. “The Artist of the Year Award recognizes an individual artist of any media who has had a significant impact on the arts and culture landscape through personal commitment and leadership.” This honor was instituted as a means to acknowledge a local artist for his or her contributions to the community and/or for providing a mentoring role in helping other artists. [www.eaetcouncil.org]

Jennifer has been a driving force in spreading the joy of dancing, particularly hoop dancing, among the children of Northwest PA. Picture with Jennifer are Art House students Franco (age 11) and Ella (age 12) who, together with several Dafmark Dance Academy students, performed at the awards ceremony.

Pamela Holmaza, a volunteer teacher at the Neighborhood Art House for nearly twenty years recently received word that her Dragon Fly Lily, pictured here, has been selected by the Fiberarts Guild of Pittsburgh to be displayed at the John Herron Memorial Museum in March. Here is one of only eight fiber art pieces chosen for this show that is likely to be named Celebrate the Spirit: “Floral Visits.” Throughout November Dragon Fly Lily was part of the Kaleidoscope exhibit of the Fiberarts Guild of Pittsburgh.

Pamela’s art is well known and has been displayed in numerous venues. She was featured in an article in the Erie Times News in 2013 which lauded the artistic spirit and determination that she has displayed by not allowing despair and ridicule some twenty years ago to dim her early artistic expression. Her response was not to give up her art, but to move from fiber art to paper art. It is this “you can do anything” attitude that she brings with her to the Art House.
Throughout this year, 2015, we have been celebrating the 20th Anniversary of the Neighborhood Art House! Why? What prompts us to celebrate? What difference does it really make? Everyone loves a party any excuse will do. That may be true, but is this reason enough? Celebrating provides a great opportunity to review our history. Very true and very meaningful, but is this reason enough?

Sometimes, when we are very busy and passionate about what we are doing, we get so immersed in our work that we lose perspective. The bump that naturally occur along the way can seem like major obstacles. They really aren’t. In the words of Dag Hammarskjold, second Secretary-General of the United Nations, “For all that has been, thanks; for all that will be, yes.” United Nations, “For all that has been, thanks; for all that will carry it into the future. In the words of Dag Hammarskjold, second Secretary-General of the United Nations, “For all that has been, thanks; for all that will carry it into the future.”

The Art House “opened up opportunities beyond my/ and my/interests” / I / am/ and that/ I was/ talented. Could develop skills in a lot of things. The Art House taught me a lot of things. I didn’t know how enjoyable it was. The Art House was a better person.

And we play, too. Everyone loves a party! As we close out this 20th Anniversary year we are reminded of all the people and organizations who brought this dream to life, sustained it, and remind ourselves why we are here. We reflect on our Mission and are energized for the future.

City-City Neighborhood Art House

Donor Corner

Foundations, organizations and groups have been very generous on behalf of the children at the Neighborhood Art House. Among them are:

RBC Foundation - During the past year we were the recipients of two grants from RBC, one for $1,000 designated for annual scholarships for the children, and one for $5,000 under the display of the children’s art including frames, mats and wall treatments.

The S.O.N.S. of Lake Erie - The S.O.N.S. (Save Our Native Species) have been faithful donors of services and financial support. This group of anglers takes our students fishing several times each year. Most recently they also paid for the transportation for the field trip and helped to us to do our 20th Anniversary Celebration.

The Lord Good Neighbor Fund - This fund was created by Mr. Goodenough, one of our first donors, to support the children and programs at the Neighborhood Art House. Mr. Goodenough was an Erie lawyer who was very generous on behalf of the children at the Neighborhood Art House. We've been summoned to court. More precisely, Judge Kelly wrote. “Each one is so unique and creative, and we've been fortunate to display them.”

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Our Native Species (ONs) have been very generous on behalf of the children at the Neighborhood Art House. Among them are:

Erica Polke Golf Outing - The Erica Polke Golf Outing Committee and Board paid this designated charity for the past summer lesson. We are most grateful for their $2,500 donation.

Burger King Restaurants are collecting donations of MARSH LUST items and CASH to support the children and programs at the Neighborhood Art House. We are very grateful for this annual drive and encourage our local readers to pay a visit to Burger King to offer a donation and to pick up a free sandwich.

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