

NEIGHBOR to NEIGHBOR



DECEMBER
2015

Inner-City Neighborhood Art House • 201 East Tenth Street • Erie, Pennsylvania 16503 • 814-455-5508
— A MINISTRY OF THE BENEDICTINE SISTERS OF ERIE —
www.neighborhoodarthouse.org

Focus on Sewing



Concentration is the name of the game as Delilah and Ella (both 11 years old) work diligently at the sewing machines.

According to Webster, sewing is “the act of uniting or fastening by stitches”. For our students, it is much more than that. Sewing is an activity that 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 Freitag notes that “the children learn to take their time and find out that



The hand stitching is done; it's time for Brooklyn (age 7) and Julliana (age 8) to stuff their pillows.



Guadalupe (age 10) and Jada (age 9) show off their quilts as their teacher, Debbie Sementelli Hoenes looks on. The quilt is made of twelve nine patch squares.

carefully executed small stitches produce a much better pillow than large stitches that allows the stuffing to come out.” It becomes a valuable lesson in patience. “One of the challenges is learning to thread a needle; they often help each other to learn this skill.” Older students develop their hand stitching skills in a class called “Critters.” Here the children make figures of all kinds – animals, dolls, action heroes – whatever their imaginations provide.

Beginning with age 10, children can select to take machine sewing. They have been known to make quilts, pajamas, and even lined purses and dresses. Debbie Sementelli Hoenes, teacher for the machine sewing classes, reflected that “my quilting class this semester has been one of the best. Five “Nine Patch” quilts (40” x 52”) are near completion. To see the smiles and pride in the children’s work is priceless. So many skills are learned in this program... patience, measuring, color choice, working together and even a little math.”



Alexus (age 12) is thrilled with the lined bag she has made. She even included several pockets in the lining. This was quite a project for someone new to sewing!



Cookie Decorating



Decorating cookies for the holidays has been an annual tradition at the Art House for many years. Renie Louis, Project Coordinator, and her volunteers provide large cut-out cookies, icing, colored sugar, candies and sprinkles to spark the imaginations of the children who each decorate three cookies which are then packaged for the trip home. Above, Renie offers encouragement to Brooklyn (age 7), Aleciya (age 9) and Rickimarie (age 7).

Youth Leader Visits Art House



Xiuhtezcatal Martinez, now 15 years old, has been an environmental activist since the age of 5. He has spoken to groups across 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.

Xiuhtezcatal shared his love of hip hop, his commitment to the environment, and his passion for empowering youth with our students. His main message: You are never too young to make a difference, and that the environment belongs to everyone - it is every person'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 that way.



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.



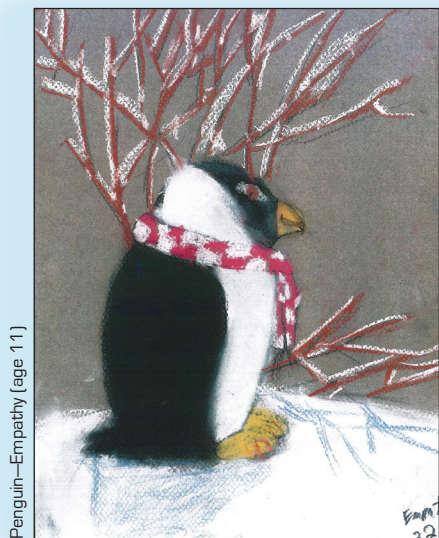
Jennifer Dennehy was named the **2015 Bruce Morton Wright Artist of the Year** by Erie Arts & Culture, formerly known as the Arts Council of Erie. “The Artist of the Year Award recognizes an individual artist of any media who has had significant impact on the arts and culture landscape through personal 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.erieartsandculture.org).

Jennifer has been a driving force in spreading the joy of dancing, particularly hoop dancing, among the children of Northwest PA. Pictured 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.

Passle Helminski, 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 Hermann Memorial Museum in March. Here is one of only eight fiber art pieces chosen for this show that is likely to be named *Celebrate Pop des Fleurs*.” Throughout November *Dragon Fly Lily* was part of the Kaleidoscope exhibit of the Fiberarts Guild of Pittsburgh.



Passle'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 an assault and resulting stroke some twenty years ago to dismantle her artistic expression. Her response was not to give up her art, but to move from painting to fiber art. It is this “you can do anything” attitude that she brings with her to the Art House.



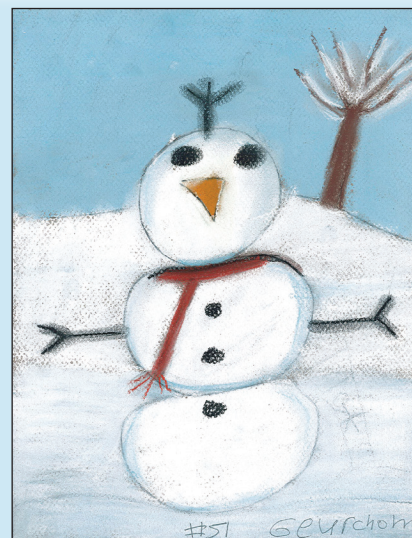
Penguin—Empathy (age 11)

**Wishing you all the
joys of the holidays
and blessings
in the New Year.**

Neighborhood Art House
Children and Staff

Annette Marshall, OSB,
Executive Director

Benedictine Sisters of Erie



Snowman—Geurchom (age 10)

From the Desk of Sr. Annette

Throughout this year of 2015 we have been celebrating the 20th Anniversary of the Neighborhood Art House. Why? What prompts us to celebrate? What difference does it make? Everyone loves a party; any excuse will do.

That may be true, but *is this reason enough?* Celebrating provides a good opportunity to review our history. Very true, and very meaningful, but *is this reason enough?* Celebrating helps us to revisit our Mission, to evaluate how well we are fulfilling it. How very necessary this is, but *is this reason enough?*

Sometimes, when we are very busy and passionate about what we are doing, we get so immersed in the present that we lose perspective. The bumps that naturally occur along the way can seem like major obstacles; the small successes can seem inadequate. It is when we step back and take a longer view that we can rejoice in all the good that has been done. We look back to our founding and remind ourselves why we are here; we reflect on our Mission and are energized for the future.

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 will carry it into the future. In the words of Dag Hammarskjöld, second Secretary-General of the United Nations, "For all that has been, thanks; for all that will be, yes."

Sister Annette

Holiday Outreach

From time to time opportunities arise for the children to "give back" by doing something for others. In addition to decorating place mats for the Emmaus Soup Kitchen Thanksgiving dinner, Welcome Bags for new residents at Benetwood Apartments, and Holiday goodie bags for seniors, the children were called upon to make ornaments for one of the trees at the *Saint Vincent Festival of Trees*. Potratz Floral Shop & Greenhouse invited the Art House to contribute ornaments for their tree named *Erie Community Tree*. In addition to supporting Saint Vincent's work with children, this was an opportunity to contribute to a tree that would be donated to a local shelter for women with children.



NAH Students Remove Trash From Neighborhood



Sarah Gaczewski, an intern from Mercyhurst University, helped NAH students with their Trash Clean-up.

Sr. Pat's environment classes conducted a major neighborhood clean-up in September and October. They joined 560,000 volunteers in 91 countries who picked up more than 16 million pounds of trash as part of the International Coastal Cleanup. Removing the trash from the environment meant that it did not get into the waterways where it would be detrimental to plants and animals there. Reflecting on their experiences, the children wrote comments which were later printed in the Erie Times News, Newspapers in Education section. Here are a few of them.

Dear Citizens of Erie,

We are the children at the Neighborhood Art House on 10th and Holland. In September we cleaned up in our neighborhood and we did a good job; but we shouldn't have to pick up other people's litter. When you have litter please be nice to the world and put it in trash cans, don't throw it on the ground...

Sam, Jada, David, Geurchom

You should Go Green - recycle more, care about your environment, don't throw your cigarette butts on the ground. Better yet, don't smoke. It's bad for you and bad for us.

Sam, Maggie, Ven

We were picking up the trash because it was everywhere and I was worried about the animals that might eat the litter and get sick or die.

Ayla

Fall Term 2015



Here is your own armchair tour of some of the classes that were held September - December. If you would like to have an actual tour, call our office at 455-5508. We would love to have you!

Donor Corner

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

Erie Police Golf Outing - The Erie Police Golf Outing Committee named NAH as their designated charity for this past summer's event. We are most grateful for their \$2,500 donation.

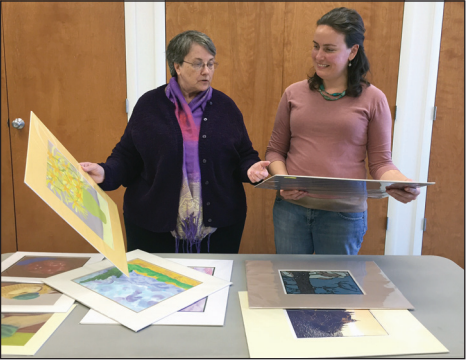
RBC Foundation - During the past year we were the recipient of two grants from RBC, one for \$1,000 designated for environmental field trips for the children, and one for \$2,000 to underwrite the display of the children's art including frames, mats and wall treatments.

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 underwrite our 20th Anniversary Celebration.

The **Lord Good Neighbor Fund** is an example of employees donating to a central fund and designating the collection for one or more charities. We are very grateful to the Lord Good Neighbor Fund for their loyal support of NAH and to all those who collect items for us at holiday gatherings, birthday parties, etc.


Does your place of business have a matching gift program? If so, you can maximize your donation by registering it with your employer.

Going to Court



We've been summoned to court. More precisely, Judge Elizabeth Kelly has asked the Neighborhood Art House to provide artwork done by the children for a long-term display on the second floor of the Erie County Courthouse. The show will be hung in February and will remain for much of 2016. Sister Margaret Ann (Peg) Pilewski and Sarah Everett are shown above choosing the pieces to be displayed. These pieces represent different media including reductive relief print, digital collage, colored pencil drawing, chalk pastel drawing, crayon and watercolor, marbling on paper, tempera painting, watercolor, glue resist batik, and digital photography. "Thank you so much for the stunning art from your young artists at NAH" Judge Kelly wrote. "Each one is so unique and truly remarkable. Thank you for sharing them with us at the courthouse."

Inner-City Neighborhood Art House



Benedictine Sisters of Erie
201 East Tenth Street
Erie, Pennsylvania 16503-1007

Beauty
Vision
Hope

Inner-City
Neighborhood Art House

Non-Profit
Organization
US Postage
PAID
Erie, PA
Permit No. 247

DATES OF NOTE	
2015	
December 10	Open House, 7:00 pm
December 17 - 19	Deck the House Burger King Restaurants
2016	
January 4	Winter/Spring Session Begins
January 28	Music Recital, 7:00 pm
February - December	Court House Art Display
June 11	Art & Sole 5K Run/Walk



- Healthy snacks—pretzels, crackers, breakfast bars
- Socks, winter gloves & hats for boys & girls (7 yrs.-14 yrs.)
- Health care products (shampoo, comb, brush, bar soap, deodorant, tooth brush & tooth paste)
- Gift cards to Michaels, AC Moore, Walmart, Staples, etc.
- Magic Markers (thin & thick)
- Acrylic paint in small bottles (bright colors)
- Tacky Glue
- Modge Podge
- Pencils (#2 for drawing)
- Drawing pads
- Polymer clay (assorted colors)
- Small wooden frames
- Wooden bird houses
- Heavy paper plates
- Buttons, stars, stained glass, glass gems, small mosaic tiles
- Frames (11x14 & 16x20)
- Matboard or pre-cut mats (11x14 & 16x20)
- Foam core



Drive
benefits

NEIGHBORHOOD ART HOUSE



Benefit the
Neighborhood Art House
December 17 - 19

Give a Gift
YOUR WAY!

1) **Donate...**
a FINANCIAL GIFT at any Burger King® and let our volunteers do the shopping.

2) **Provide...**
any WISH LIST ITEM and drop it off at your nearest Burger King® location.

Every donation, no matter how big or small, will receive a **FREE WHOPPER JR® sandwich**, courtesy of Burger King® restaurants of Erie.

2015 marks the third year that Erie Area Burger King Restaurants are collecting donations of **WISH LIST** 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.