

# Neighbor to Neighbor

December 2014



Inner-City Neighborhood Art House  
201 East Tenth Street  
Erie, Pennsylvania 16503-1007  
(814)455-5508  
www.neighborhoodarthouse.org

—A MINISTRY OF THE BENEDICTINE SISTERS OF ERIE—

## Focus on Dance



Art House Dance Instructor, Larisa Melodinskaia

Dance has been a life-long passion for Larisa Melodinskaia, former professional ballroom dancer, now instructor at the Neighborhood Art Houses since 1998. Larisa's dance school experience began at age 3 in her hometown of Baku, Azerbaijan where she studied ballet, jazz, folk-dance, Latino dancing and tap. As part of her dance school she performed in Baku for about 15 years on a weekly TV program, at government events, and even in movies.

If you pass by the dance space during Larisa's classes, you're likely to hear her call for a plié, a chassé, or one of the five standard ballet positions. Even her youngest students soon learn just what is expected. "Ballet is the foundation of all dancing," Larisa explained. "It paves the way for so many of the other dance forms that I use with my students: jazz, modern dance, contemporary ballet, hip-hop, rock jazz and others like Eastern European folk dancing."

Dance is an essential part of the Art House program. This is not just because it is a beautiful art form, it gives the children an opportunity to perform, builds confidence and is something the children enjoy. It is, of course, all of that, but there is more. Dance has also been shown to help children learn to think and move at the same time and to be at home in their own bodies. It helps to increase spacial understanding and expand aesthetic intelligence. Dancers learn to walk gracefully, control their posture, improve their balance and focus their attention. Dance develops their ability to attend to details, to listen to instructions, and to attend to rhythm, all skills shown to be associated with improving math skills. All that being said, perhaps its greatest recommendation is that the children love it!



To develop their ability to count, students were occasionally instructed to practice their dance moves without the music playing. This paid off at September's Taste of the Arts when the music for the older students' dance malfunctioned. Larisa put on another selection, one they had never used. The students came through beautifully! The audience didn't even know there had been a problem!



"Miss Larisa" teaches her young students the classic ballet moves and positions by moving right along with them, showing them rather than telling them what to do.

## FIELD TRIP TO GLINODO CENTER



In October thirty five children from the Neighborhood Art House went to Glinodo Center on Lake Erie to explore the environment, photograph nature and capture the landscape in chalk pastel sketches. The trip was organized by Sister Pat Lupo (Environment), Lourdes Jasso (Photography), and Mary Kay Geary (Chalk Pastels).

Shane Work, one of the photography students, wants to get good and close to the stream so he can capture some unusual shots.

## "As we explored Lake Erie

...we observed rocks, logs, tree stumps, acorns, feathers, shells, ladybugs and sand," described some of the children from the environmental classes. "We also walked along Seven Mile Creek. We saw steel-head swimming upstream and they were really big."



## Neighborhood Art House 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Observances



On the 20<sup>th</sup> of selected months of 2015, 20 people will gather to celebrate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Art House at ARTfully yours. They'll be joining Art House teachers to try their hand at a variety of art media.

The Art House will provide the snacks; guests will supply their own beverages for this BYOB event. Be sure to periodically check our webpage [www.neighborhoodarthouse.org](http://www.neighborhoodarthouse.org), our Facebook page, or the newspaper for announcements for these anniversary parties chaired by Core Committee members Lisa Chinsky and Karen Clark. If you would like to receive email notification for these events, please send an email request to [nah@neighborhoodarthouse.org](mailto:nah@neighborhoodarthouse.org).

## PUMPKIN CARVING



"It's gushy!" This apt description was given to the pumpkin flesh being removed prior to carving by one of the youngsters as she reached into the large soon-to-be-transformed pumpkin. For some, carving pumpkin faces and designs was a brand new experience.



The children at the Art House prepared their pumpkin masterpieces as their contribution to the Master Gardeners Pumpkin Walk. Working in small groups under the supervision of teachers or volunteers, the children first transferred their designs to the pumpkin surface, then used pumpkin cutting tools to carefully turn a large vegetable into a piece of sculpture.



Maxim Panasenka, age 8

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



Valentino Rodriguez, age 8



## From the Desk of Sr. Annette

Holiday greetings abound, especially at this time of year. All of the various holidays contain a deep meaning at their core. I took a stroll through Hallmark's e-Cards and found Hanukkah cards with the wish: "May the glow of each candle bring love, warmth and peace to your family." Christmas cards spoke of "Peace on Earth" and other cards stated that "Kwanzaa's richest harvest is unity, peace and love." Cards for the celebration of Eid al-Fitr (end of Ramadan) observed later in the year wished "Blessed Holiday" and "Love and Peace."



Clearly our holiday greetings include a prayer for *Peace*. We seek peace within ourselves, peace in families and peace among friends. We long for peace in our neighborhoods, in our cities, in our country, and among all peoples throughout the world. This small, five-letter word carries a universal call for "harmony and mutual concord" (Webster). Although some may have difficulty defining peace, we all know it when we see it. The problem is, however, that more and more of us never do see it. In some areas of the world and in some neighborhoods in our cities, there is no peace. Mother Teresa of Calcutta tells us that "if we have no peace, it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other."

Here at the Art House there is a general understanding that anything less than a peaceful atmosphere is unacceptable. The children learn to share the materials, the space, the teacher's time and even their own ideas in a way that shows genuine regard and respect for each person. They are coached in settling their differences nonviolently. Their work is carefully displayed because each person, and the work of each person, is respected. No one "deserves" more than another. We all learn to share according to our needs.

"Peace is a journey of a thousand miles and it must be taken one step at a time," said Lyndon Johnson. Those steps begin when children are very young. Let's all embrace today's children by surrounding them with "harmony and mutual concord." Let's do all that we can to share the values and provide the tools they will need to help bring Peace on Earth.

Whatever holiday you celebrate, may you know peace, joy and happiness,

*Sister Annette*

### Memorial

A special thank you to the family of **Paul Weber** for designating memorials to the Neighborhood Art House in his memory.

### STUDENTS TESTIFY AT ZONING BOARD PUBLIC MEETING

Being a good citizen means taking an interest in what is happening and speaking up for what you believe is right. Seven of Sister Pat's students had the opportunity to do just that by offering testimony to Erie's Zoning Board. In part they said "... we want to talk about the walkway at the Bayfront. We like to go fishing in the City because it is close, but we want the walkway to be safe." They went on to explain why they believed that the current installation is unsafe and why a wider sidewalk is needed for the multiple use it is to get.



Samuel Kakulu and Abby Aguilar look on as Franco Harris does his part of the presentation to the Erie Zoning Board.

### CONGRATULATIONS TEACHERS

**Sarah Everett** received a Juror's Award for one of three wood burned and color stained dried gourds now on exhibit in *Shaping the Future: Pennsylvania Artist Educators*.

Cummings Gallery, Mercyhurst University  
November 10, 2014 - January 4, 2015

**Vitaly Volchansky** recently traveled to Moscow, Russia to speak to the International Conference for Christian Music, on the topic "History and Contemporary Christian Music: Problems and Solutions." In conjunction with this, he has had a two-part article published in *The Green Pastures*, a Russian-language journal published in the US.

## DONOR CORNER

### Events

The Erie Runners Club selected the Neighborhood Art House as one of the organizations to receive partial proceeds from the **41st Annual Marthon at Presque Isle** held September 14. Imagine our amazement when we received a check for \$10,000! **Jeff Shaw**, long-time member of the Erie Runners Club and route coordinator for the annual NAH Art & Sole 5k Run/Walk, is pictured at right with Patti Eichen, Development Coordinator, and Sujan and Empathy, representing the children who



are benefiting from the classes supported by this generous donation. We are most grateful to the members of the Erie Runners Club and to **Jan and Mike Vieyra, Race Co-Directors**. Being selected by the Erie Runners Club is an honor and reaffirms the commitment of the people of Erie to the children, especially those who are disadvantaged.

**Jeff Fromknecht's Tail Great**, a tail gating party held before a Sea-Wolves game in the NAH garden, was *great* fun for the participants and a *great* way to offer support for our programs. Shown at left, Sister Peg, Program Director, receives a check for \$500 from the event.



### Grants

#### ERIE ARTS AND CULTURE

A \$5,000 grant from Erie Arts and Culture, formerly ArtsErie, is supplying materials for the expanded chalk pastel drawing program and providing support for music instruction and performance in piano, violin, cello, flute, guitar and hand drums.



#### THE YORK CHILDREN'S FOUNDATION

Children in the nine Mosaics Classes taught each week are using a wide range of materials due to the \$1200 grant provided by the York Children's Foundation. Especially popular is polymer clay from which the students create their own colorful tiles to make decorative picture frames, plaques, bowls, etc.



### In-Kind Donations

#### BEACH GLASS IN ABUNDANCE

**Dick and Mary Eisert** called to say they had a donation of art materials for us. What a surprise we had when they arrived with 300 pounds of beach glass that they had collected over the years. Shown at right, Julliana Vega-Abreu, selects a piece of beach glass that is just the right shape and color for her project.



#### KEEPING THEM WARM THIS WINTER

**Maggie Stolley**, pictured below left, has been making good use of her time all year round knitting scarves for the Art House children. One of the Women of Vision whose efforts were key to the founding of the



Art House, Maggie serves on the Women's Core Committee and has recently offered her services as a tutor.

**Kate McMaster** of Fairview is pictured at right knitting one of the fifty-two winter hats that she recently donated for the children. An avid seamstress all her life, Kate sewed clothing for all of her children, including suit coats for the boys! Now 90 years old, Kate has renewed her interest in the arts, particularly knitting.



A box recently delivered from Port Henry, New York was filled with warm socks to distribute to the children who needed them. This gift from **Jacqueline Viestenz** will help relieve the cold, wet feet of children who are inadequately prepared for the frigid winter weather.

### DATES OF NOTE

2014

December 11 - Open House, 7:00 pm  
December 18 - 20 - Burger King® Deck the House

#### 2015—NAH 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Year

Jan. 5 - May 12 - Winter/Spring Session  
January 20 - ARTfully yours  
January 29 - Music Recital  
February 20 - ARTfully yours  
March 20 - ARTfully yours  
May 7 - Music Recital  
May 14 - Open House, 7:00 pm  
June 6 - 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



### NEIGHBORHOOD ART HOUSE



Be sure to look for **DECK THE HOUSE** at area **Burger King®** restaurants, **December 18-20**. Once again, Burger King® restaurants will be collecting wish list items and cash donations in support of the Neighborhood Art House. Every donation, no matter how big or small, will receive a free WHOPPER JR.® sandwich.

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