

Neighbor to Neighbor

February 2007



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

Mad Hatter's Tea Party

Maria Samusenko's eyes grew wide when she heard about the teapot show that her class was undertaking. She thought they had to make the teapots.

The children from Sister Margaret Ann Pilewski's clay and Chuck Dill's airbrush classes at the Neighborhood Art House are actually glazing and decorating the teapots, some with their original designs.

Each child will decorate four teapots; one will stay at the Neighborhood Art House and two will be part of a show, "Mad Hatter's Tea Party," at Geary's Studio 7 Gallery, 2807 West Eighth Street, on March 23. The children will take one home. And they will earn a stipend for every teapot sold at the gallery show. Their pots will be signed on the bottom with their initials.



Nguyen Nguyen applies glaze to one of his teapots.

Maria, 13, said she's "excited" about the project. She likes the idea that they're learning different glazing techniques. She's never done an "abstract" design before. "I like to make them look pretty," Maria said.

Sister Margaret Ann said about 20 children are involved. "I think it's going to be a really nice show and fun for the kids," Sister Margaret Ann said. She credits Mary Kay Geary, owner of Geary's Studio 7 Gallery for the idea.

Geary has been showing artwork from the children of the Neighborhood Art House for three years. She said there's always a lot of interest from the community and people ask regularly if there are any new pieces from the children. "And some look for certain children by name," she said.

by Debbie McQuaid



A Classical Performance

The four fingernails on Jason Vieaux's right hand are part of his instrument.

"For classical guitarists, it's the fingernails that amplify the sounds from the guitar," he told his young audience. "The long fingernails are my [guitar] picks," Vieaux said. "Actually, the fingernails don't have to be all that long, just a little longer than your fingertips."

Vieaux, one of the most highly acclaimed classical guitarists of his generation, visited the Neighborhood Art House on February 1.

During the visit, he toured the Neighborhood Art House, met with guitar students and their teacher, Sister Marilyn Schauble, OSB, and performed for them.

His visit was part of a grant proposed by Erik Mann, a guitar teacher at Edinboro University and one of Vieaux's former students, and was funded through the Arts Council of Erie.

"This is my first visit to Erie," said Vieaux, a native of Buffalo, N.Y., and head of the Cleveland Institute of Music Guitar Department.

He was in the Erie area to perform two free concerts at Edinboro University. His visit to the Neighborhood Art House was part of an outreach he does during his concert tours.

The artist said his meeting with guitar students was impressive. "They asked a lot of good questions," he said. "It was lots of fun talking to them."

Vieaux performed for over an hour at the Neighborhood Art House, and between his solos, explained his techniques and answered questions from the students.

He told the students he enjoys being a classical guitarist because one guitarist can sound like three or more instruments playing, "It takes a long time and a lot of practice to be able to do that."

"How long does it take?" a student asked. "Oh, about three weeks," he joked.

Sister Mary Lee Farrell, GNSH, grant writer at the Neighborhood Art House, coordinated the project and visit.

by Ron Wasielewski



Jason Vieaux answers a question from a Neighborhood Art House student.

Performance of Excellence

SHOULD WE OR SHOULDN'T WE?

It was a tough decision but the Neighborhood Art House music staff decided to have the "show go on." The first music recital of 2007 faced off with the first major snow fall of the season. An early evening respite in the snowfall allowed performers and parents to come out for an enjoyable evening of entertainment provided by students taking private lessons in piano, flute, strings, guitar and voice.



Sister Charlotte Anne Zalot, OSB, and her student, Keenan Gore, perform at the recital.

One week before the annual winter recital, a student approached her piano teacher and said, "I am not going to be in the recital." With tear-filled eyes the child expressed that she didn't think she was good enough.

But what is "good enough"? The recital is about showcasing effort and progress. It is not about perfection; it is about excellence. Perfection is about being afraid to make a mistake; excellence is about honest effort and doing the best you can.

It is that very spirit of excellence that made the January recital a success. Parents, relatives, friends and teachers rejoiced in the courage and progress shown by the student performers. It was a wonderful evening of achievement and affirmation. And yes, that child did take part in the recital; and yes, she did an excellent job; and yes, she wants to do it again!

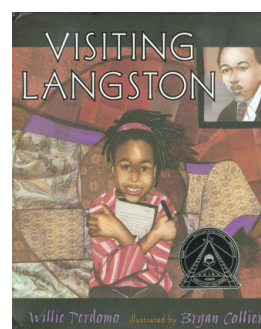
by Charlotte Anne Zalot, OSB

The performance was funded in part by The Lynn Gasche Levinson Memorial for Piano and the Arts Council Byers Music Performance Grant.

Black History Month

In a celebration of diversity, students at the Neighborhood Art House joined in the national celebration of Black History Month during February.

LITERATURE – Students in Poetry on Stage presented "I'm Going to Visit Langston's House," a performance of 15 memorized



poems by Langston Hughes, an African American poet, on February 27 at 3 p.m. at the Neighborhood Art House. "I like the poem 'Motto' best because it's full of mystery for me," noted Keenan Gore, one of the performers.

The script that wove the poems together is from the book *Visiting Langston* by Willie Perdomo. The performance will be

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BLACK HISTORY Month, cont'd.

repeated during National Poetry Month, Wednesday, April 25 at 7 p.m. at the Neighborhood Art House. The public is invited.

ART – Students in Cheryl Robinson’s art classes studied the lives of two African American singers, Josephine Baker and Sammy Davis, Jr. and then produced their portraits in paint, pointillism and pen and ink. “I want them to recognize the names, understand each of the singers’ contributions to the art, especially Baker’s to jazz, and then experience three different art mediums.

Activities at the Neighborhood Art House during Black History Month are funded by the Audrey Hirt Project: *Toward the Whole Child.*

DONATIONS

– A New Idea Is Launched –

A gift of \$20,000 was donated by Mary and Howard Lincoln to **“Sponsor a Teacher”** and to assist the on-going Neighborhood Art House Fund. “I so admire the work done by Vitaly Volchansky, the string instructor, and wanted to make certain that he continues at the Neighborhood Art House. He’s such a gift to the children.” **If anyone else is interested in the “Sponsor a Teacher” program, please call 455-5508.**



Vitaly Volchansky and students, Slava Kleshchenikov, left, and Isaiah Howard



James W. Martin, CFRE, Community Affairs Director for the Northwest PA Region for Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield presents a check for \$1,300 to Sister Anne Wambach, OSB, and Neighborhood Art House children, from left, Joseph Tores, Sarty Ogak and Ernesto Perez. The monies represent proceeds from the Highmark Triathlon.

Dear Sister Anne,

Enclosed is a check from the choristers of **The Cathedral of St. Paul Children’s Choir**. Each year the singers donate part of their choir stipend to the Neighborhood Art House. We are happy that you are able to bring the arts into the lives of many children and youth of Erie.

Sharon Downey for the Choristers

Attention All Donors: Be sure to check if your place of business has a matching gift program. Donations given to the Neighborhood Art House may be doubled.

LOOKING FOR ENTERTAINMENT FOR A CLUB, SERVICE ORGANIZATION, DINNER, MEETING?

“Poetry on Stage,” a performing poetry troupe of the Neighborhood Art House, is available for evening events. Call Sister Mary Lou Kownacki at 450-7168.

Inner-City Neighborhood Art House
Benedictine Sisters of Erie
201 East Tenth Street
Erie, Pennsylvania 16503-1007

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ART PIECE COMMISSIONED

It was a unique field trip just before the Christmas break for Neighborhood Art House students.

Wearing hard hats and protective glasses, ten Neighborhood Art House students along with Sister Anne Wambach, OSB, and teachers Paul DeNiro and Chuck Dill visited the McInnes Rolled Rings company at 1533 E. 12th St. to view the fiery process by which the rings are forged into various sizes for industrial use.

The visit came after company officials visited the Neighborhood Art House and asked Art House students to create a piece of art for their office area.

“It was a very impressive visit and we got to see how the rings are forged,” Dill said. The



Neighborhood Art House students participate on a field trip to McInnes Rolled Rings with teachers Chuck Dill and Paul DeNiro.

students also had a chance to see the 5’ x 7’ wall space where their art piece will be displayed.

Dill said the students are still in the brainstorming phase of the project. “It’s hard to say exactly what it will be,” he said. “Once that’s settled, we’ll determine what materials we’ll need and get to work.”

by Ron Wasielewski

Christmas News Collage



Maggie and Jim Stolley, standing left and center, organized their **Annual Cookie Decorating Class** for the children and were pleased that one of their sons, Jim, Jr., right, joined them along with their good friends, Brady and Renie Louis.



Students from the Neighborhood Art House **decorated the downtown office windows** of the Loyal Christian Benefit Association (LCBA) under the direction of art teachers Chuck Dill, Paul DeNiro and Cheryl Robinson.

Neighborhood Art House alumnus **Brandon Tetuan, who is now part of the Bayfront Ballet Company, played the part of the Prince in the 2006 Nutcracker Suite** that played at the Warner Theatre during the Christmas season.



Gannon University Provost, Keith Taylor, reads to Marina Babkin as part of the daily Hooked on Books! reading program.

Volunteer readers are needed at the Neighborhood Art House. Please call 871-7422.

McDowell High School students played Santa’s elves and distributed their **Annual Holiday Bags** as part of the school’s Ophelia Project under the direction of teacher Julie Van Volkenburg.



An “angel tree” was decorated by students at the Neighborhood Art House as part of Erie’s holiday event, **Festival of the Trees 2006**, held this year at the Ambassador Hotel.

Saint Benedict Academy Alumnae Association earmarked monies from its Annual Christmas Dinner for the Neighborhood Art

House. Sister Margaret Ann Pilewski, OSB, an alumna of SBA and ceramics teacher at the Art House, presented an inspirational talk on the Neighborhood Art House to the 240 women who attended the event and thanked them for their donation of \$2,600.



As part of the SBA Christmas event, Dianne Brzozowski, seated front right, designed and sewed a quilt for a **special raffle to benefit the Neighborhood Art House**. Dianne is surrounded by her classmates of 1961—standing left to right, Judy Walczak, Heddy Hellmann, and Judy Allison who celebrated their 45th reunion at the Christmas party. Sister Anne Wambach, OSB, Executive Director of the Neighborhood Art House, front left, received their gift of \$900.

NEIGHBOR TO NEIGHBOR

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