**February 2007**

**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.

Journey Nguyen applies glaze to one of his teapots.

**A Classical Performance**

The four fingernails on Jason Vieaux’s right hand are part of his instrument. “For classical guitarists, it’s the finger- nails 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 Schaubel, 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.

“Hey, my first visit to Erie,” said Vieaux, a native of Buffalo, N.Y., and head of the University and one of Vieaux’s former students, and performed for them.

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 was happy to meet 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.

**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 neighborhood Art House music staff decided to have the “show go on.”

The script that wove the poems together was “I’m Going to Visit Langston’s Black History Month.”

Willie Perdomo. The performance was presented “I’m Going to Visit Langston’s Black History Month” during February.

It was a wonderful evening of entertainment provided by students taking private lessons in piano, flute, strings, guitar and voice.

**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 Art 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 — cont’d on Page 2
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 contributors’ characteristics to the art, especially Baker’s” to jazz, and then experience three different art mediums.

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 outgoing Neighborhood Art House Fund. “I do admire the work done by Vitaly Volchkansky, the string instructor, and wanted to make certain that he continues at the Neighborhood Art House. He’s such a gift to the children,” Sister Margaret Ann Pilewski, OSB, reported.

James W. Martin, CFRE, Community Affairs Director for the Northwest PA Region for Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield presents a check for $1,000 to Sister Anne Wambach, OSB, and Neighborhood Art House children, from left, Josephine Baker and Ernesto Pena. 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

McDiarmid High School students played Santa’s elves and distributed their Annual Holiday Bags as part of the Ophelia Project with the direction of teacher Julie Van Valkenburg.

Cathedral of St. Paul Children’s Choir students participated in a field trip to McInnes Rolled Rings with teachers Chuck Dill and Paul DeNiro.

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

Neighborhood Art House alumni Brenda Teman, who is now part of the Staghe Rolex Company, played the part of the Prince in the 2008 Nutcracker Suite that played at the Warner Theatre during the Christmas season.

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As part of the SBA Christmas event, Denise Brzozowski, seated from right, designed and sewed a quilt for a special raffle to benefit the Neighborhood Art House. Denise is surrounded by her classmates of 1981 standing left to right, Julie Walczak, Heidi Hellmann, and Julia Allen 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 from 8000.

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