

Arts at the Core

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE ARTS IN EDUCATION PROGRAM FROM THE OKLAHOMA ARTS COUNCIL

Expressive Arts in Alternative Education Conference

Friday, October 6

9:00 - 4:00 p.m.

University of Oklahoma

The College of Continuing Education

Norman Campus

Thurman White Forum Building

The Expressive Arts in Alternative Education Conference will be held from 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. on Friday, October 6, on the Norman campus, Thurman White Forum Building, of The College of Continuing Education, University of Oklahoma. Teachers, artists, counselors and others who work with students at-risk, will have an opportunity to learn effective strategies for including the arts in their school programs. Workshop sessions will be hands-on and interactive and include examples of student work. Practical ideas for implementing the arts will be presented along with a notebook with resources and lesson ideas to help bring the arts into the classroom.

Special guest this year is Hasan Davis, JD from Berea, Kentucky. Davis is a Living History Performer, poet, motivational speaker and storyteller. He holds a degree in Communications from Berea College and the University of Kentucky College of Law. His solo performance: "The Long Climb to Freedom," is an historic reenactment of the life and work of historic African-American Angus Augustus Burleigh and has been performed across the country.

Davis has spent the last twelve years of his professional and educational career working with and for youth and young adults who have been traditionally labeled as "at risk". He served as the first director of Youth Violence Prevention Project for the city of Lexington, Kentucky and founded Youth Empowerment Solutions. He was recently appointed by Governor Paul Patton to the Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee for the State of Kentucky.

Other sessions will include arts integration, an "open studio" approach in working with adolescents and incorporating the arts into community service. In addition to the Oklahoma Arts Council, co-sponsors include The Art Therapy Association of Oklahoma, Oklahoma Technical Assistance Center and VSArts Oklahoma in cooperation with the Oklahoma State Department of Education. To register, make check payable in the amount of \$40 per person to The University of Oklahoma College of Continuing Education, 1700 Asp Avenue, Room 202, Norman, OK 73072-6400.

Bricktown Live!

featuring Oklahoma Touring Performers

Saturday, October 14, 12 Noon - 9:00 p.m.

Bricktown Ballpark, Upper Level Concourse

Oklahoma Arts Council presents Bricktown Live! The event will feature an eclectic mix of more than 200 performing artists from the Oklahoma Touring Program. Performances begin at 12 noon and different touring groups will be featured on four stages every 15 minutes until 9 p.m.

Folk Bands! Theatre! Dance! Chamber Music! Opera! Blues!

Now, this is art, alive!

Alternative Education - 2000

During the last school year, fifty-one Arts in Alternative Education grants were approved for funding by the Oklahoma Arts Council. Over 3,900 students were served throughout the state. At least 31 sites contracted artists from the Artists-in-Residence roster with a total of 24 artists working in at least one alternative education program. Over half the sites reported a noted improvement in attendance on the days arts instruction was scheduled. The final reports again suggested several areas that were addressed or improved as a result of the arts component supported through this grant. These include improved skills in listening, patience, goal-setting and planning. They also noted shifts in attitude to a more positive outlook, acceptance of delayed gratification and an increased understanding of the world around them.

How does it work? Guest artists were key to the success of the arts component, and they planned activities that required students to practice critical thinking, problem solving and self expression. They also demonstrated how the arts can channel frustration and anger in an appropriate manner. Additionally, they recognized the arts as giving voice to students who have difficulty expressing themselves and often used the arts to help facilitate discussion of problems faced by the students. Students learned specific skills in the arts that gave them a sense of growth and accomplishment that often led to compliments from their peers, teachers and the community.

Teachers as Learners

Six Artists and Educator Collaborative Grants were awarded last year that enabled teachers to become learners to improve their arts teaching. These included Altus Arts and Humanities Council, Boley High School, BLAC, Inc., (serving Wilson, Dewey and Western Village Arts Integration Schools), Choctaw/Nicoma Park Public Schools, Greenwood Cultural Center (serving teachers from Carver Middle School, Alcott, Lindsey and Monroe Elementary Schools) and Lawton Public Schools. Each project was designed to strengthen the teacher's understanding of the arts and provided instructional strategies that could be immediately implemented in the classroom. Highlights include:

- Boley teachers worked with writer Fai Walker Davis from Brooklyn, New York. The project focused on inquiry based learning. They used reflection techniques and journal writing as learning tools and designed lesson plans that incorporated experiential activities including a "scavenger hunt" of historical sites around the town.
- Choctaw-Nicoma Park held an "Arts Orchard," using three artists from the Artists-in-Residence roster (Joe Long, theater, Andi Vance, clay and Debbie Langston, mixed media), to provide demonstration teaching in a summer camp format with children enrolled for the month-long program.
- The Greenwood Cultural Center worked with Artist-in-Residence, Marco Columbus and Tulsa Arts Coordinator, Gary Goree to explore creative writing and visual art utilizing fine art prints of the work of national artists John Biggers and Faith Ringgold and a video, "The Last Story Quilt" as inspiration.
- BLAC, Inc. continued their Partners in Education training program, by bringing in trainers from the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts to work with teachers on integration of drama, dance and storytelling into all areas of the curriculum.
- The Lawton project provided training in the Start with the Arts, an early childhood model and the Express Diversity program, both sponsored by the National Office of VSA (formerly Very Special Arts). These sessions sensitized participants in working with children with disabilities and enabled them to make, for example, a clay sculpture without looking and working with their hands inside a brown paper bag.
- The Altus project involved a series of workshops held around the community including at the Public Library, City Auditorium and Western Oklahoma State College.

Trauma Revisited -

Arts Bring Relief

Five communities hosted an ArtsRelief! Project during June and July, sponsored by the Oklahoma Arts Council. The purpose of the project was to bring arts experiences to children in communities hardest hit by the May 3, 1999 tornados. A grant from the National Endowment for the Arts supported program activities that began with an artist workshop in May. Each project provided at least a week of working with artists in visual art, music, dance, creative writing and/or storytelling.

Observations through the site final reports confirmed that even a year after the event, the trauma of that day is still very real; each child has a "tornado story" they lived that needs to be told, written about, drawn or danced and this, in turn, will help them confront their fears; the arts process enables communication in ways that merely talking about an event of this nature do not. Fears related to loss of safety, anxiety about cloudy weather and the loss of a sense of permanence were effectively addressed, though not necessarily erased. Additionally, once traumatized, problems and concerns in other areas often surface when opportunities for self-expression are made available.

Participating communities, coordinators and arts teams included: Choctaw-Nicoma Park Public Schools, partnering with Tri-City Youth and Families Center, Inc. and coordinated by Aarone Corwin, included artists Kay Lynn Ebert, Steve McLinn, Kris Atwood, Laura Warfel. The project with Moore Public Schools was coordinated by Gail Steelman and included artists Victor Rook, Susan Scott and JoAnne Alexander. The project with Midwest City-Del City Public Schools was coordinated by Sunny Scott with Arts Team members Cindy Cotner, Julie Bishop and Mary Lawrence.

VSArts Oklahoma and The Art Therapy Association of Oklahoma took teams to Stroud and Mulhall, partnering in Stroud with the Sac and Fox Nation. That site was coordinated by Debbie Simms. Arts team members included Spencer Robinson, Patrick Riley and Virginia Savage. In Mulhall, also coordinated by Debbie Simms, Arts team members included Joan Phillips, Tina Kambour and Virginia Savage.

The ArtsRelief! project gave back the children's

sense of control and dealt concretely with their disaster-related thoughts and imagery. The arts provided an avenue to externalize painful memories and personal fears through the creative experience of hands on art making. As one site reported, the arts teams working these programs were able to bring a nonjudgmental attitude towards traditional aesthetics, which allowed the children to have control in the idea formation of their artwork. They paid personal attention to the children's emotional condition, since these children were needy and less focused and more emotionally reactive to the art content than in other arts programs.

In some instances, the teams provided greater technical assistance in the art making process so the children could gain the desired artistic outcome they wanted and empathy for the painful stories and personal losses shared by the children. They shared optimism in providing hope for the future and designed projects that were metaphors for safety and security, as well as practical suggestions for storm safety.

Much was learned from the ArtsRelief! experience that can be incorporated into future programs in the event of other community disasters.

Statewide Public Awareness Campaign Coming Soon

A major public awareness campaign on arts education in Oklahoma will be launched in January, 2001. The campaign, designed by Ackerman McQueen advertising, is a project of the Business Circle for Arts Education. Major support is being provided by Phillips Petroleum and the Kirkpatrick Foundation, with technical assistance provided by the Oklahoma Arts Council. It will provide information about the value of arts education as well as listings of resources and ideas for teachers and parents to strengthen the arts in schools throughout the state. Components of the campaign will include print and broadcast messages, a printed action guide listing over 100 arts education programs provided by arts organizations, a video and web site: artspower.com. The consistent theme will be ArtsPower.

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Technology Tips for Teachers

Web Pages Worth A Look:

Funding for arts and arts education

<http://www.arts.gov/federal.html>

America On Line at School

<http://www.school.aol.com/>

Create Art with ArtEdventures

<http://www.sanford-artedventures.com/index.html>

Fine Art Prints and Posters

<http://www.artforkids.com>

Gateway to Educational Materials

<http://www.thegateway.org/>

Oklahoma State Department of Education

www.sde.state.ok.us

Oklahoma Arts Council

www.state.ok.us/~arts

National Art Education Association

www.naea~reston.org

Music Educators National Conference

www.menc.org

National Dance Association

www.aahperd.org

Target Arts in Education Grants

<http://www.target.com>

Teachers and Writers Collaborative

<http://www.twc.org/tmmain.htm>

Story Arts on Line

<http://www.storyarts.org/>