

the place

The Multi-Sensory Studio, a creative learning environment for VSA apprentice artists who want to explore various art forms and sensory experiences, will be moving into a new location this summer. Over 30 apprentice artists with a range of needs and abilities will be served in the new larger location—next door at the old Payless Shoes building! The new space will allow the program to continue and expand on the choices offered for apprentice artists. Art stations, sensory equipment, swings, ball baths and plenty of space for movement and music will provide an art-filled, community connected, inspiring learning environment that everyone can enjoy.



the program

The program will continue to use all the art forms to stimulate and inspire its apprentice artists. Visual Arts will be headed by Emily Marshall, who will offer opportunities in mural painting, furniture decorating, gift-wrap making and a variety of other arts and crafts. Individuals will have the opportunity to choose group activities during which they can build social skills, or work at individual art stations offering a wide variety of media, including ceramics and fiber art as well as drawing and painting. Performing Arts such as music, video, storytelling and puppetry will be the focus of Anna Zollinger, Multi-Sensory Program director.

Peer mentoring and community membership programs of the Multi-Sensory Studio will focus on building and expanding connections for people with developmental disabilities. Breaking down the myths and barriers that separate people with severe disabilities from the wider community is a major goal of the Multi-Sensory Program. Anna Zollinger animates that goal by explaining, "We want people to get a stronger sense of who they are and what they are capable of. Seeing yourself on video, or being part of a music group can wake up an inner joy and curiosity that has been long suppressed in a person who hasn't had the chance to do these things before."



VSA's multi-sensory studio

- paint a mural
- make a movie
- play music
- find out about yourself
- dance
- make a gift
- swing in the sensory hammock
- help another person
- explore the community
- march in a parade
- weave
- string beads
- laugh
- learn about relaxation
- discover a new skill
- create a puppet play
- make a friend

For more information about VSA's new Multi-Sensory Program, please contact Anna Zollinger at 350-9235.

the people

Trudelle McDowell, owner of the building next door to the North Fourth Art Center, is enthusiastically working with VSA to create an accessible space for the program. Her support and willingness to accommodate our unique needs are very much appreciated. An illustrious committee of esteemed educators have been assisting Program Director Anna Zollinger and Lead Teacher Emily Marshall in developing a vision for the expanded program. This team includes VSA arts of New Mexico board member Becky du Mond, a social worker at Manzano High School who has worked with students in need of multi-sensory services since 1981, and UNM Special Education professors Ruth Luckasson, PhD, JD, and Susan Copeland, PhD. Additionally, the program is being guided by long time friend and champion of VSA, Jane Blumenfeld, PhD, who has educated and advocated for students with severe disabilities for over 50 years. With this direction and support, the new Multi-Sensory Program has the potential to become the most dynamic arts program serving adults with severe disabilities in the country!

PHOTOS top to bottom: Apprentice artists in multi-sensory program activities; Staff and apprentice artists on community visit to fire station

