

## VSA Studio Program 2003–2004

### OUTCOMES

VSA's Studio Arts Program provides high quality arts education and employment opportunities for people with developmental disabilities. The participants in this program are referred to as apprentice artists. Goals of the program include providing opportunities for participation in inclusive settings and maximizing opportunities for the work of apprentice artists (visual and performing).

### ACCREDITATION

The Studio Arts Program earned a three-year accreditation this program year from CARF, the Rehabilitation Accreditation Commission. In 1997 VSA arts of New Mexico became the first arts-based day habilitation program in the country to receive accreditation by CARF.

### DEMOGRAPHICS

VSA arts of New Mexico currently serves 91 people in the Studio Arts Program. Participants attend either the Classroom Program or the Multi-Sensory Studio. The studio has an average daily attendance of 51. A demographic profile of these 91 shows: 45% Hispanic, 46% Caucasian, 8% Native American, 1% Asian; 56% female, 44% male; 44% aged 21-34, 42% aged 35-54, and 14% are 55 or over.

### SURVEY RESULTS

Two separate satisfaction surveys were conducted this year. A survey completed with apprentice artists asked them to comment on their favorite classes, if they liked attending VSA, and if they had any concerns. 100% of the people responded that they liked coming to VSA.

Family members and other stakeholders were mailed a survey and asked to rate the Studio Arts Program based on the following scale: poor, fair, good, excellent. 81% of those responding rated the program excellent. 98% rated the program good or above. This was an increase in expressed satisfaction from last year's survey with family and stakeholders. Some positive comments from this survey:

*"The entire staff at the North 4<sup>th</sup> Art Center are friendly, flexible, creative, and responsive. They truly strive (and succeed) to treat each apprentice artist as a unique individual."*

*"This is an excellent program that my son thrives in."*

## thank you!

### FUNDERS/SUPPORTERS

Albuquerque Community Foundation  
City of Albuquerque:  
Dept of Family & Community Services  
Urban Enhancement Trust Fund  
Entrepreneurial Pathfinders  
Fraser Foundation  
LEF Foundation  
National Endowment for the Arts  
New Mexico Arts, a Division of the Office of Cultural Affairs  
NM Commission for Community Volunteerism  
AmeriCorps State Programs  
PUSH America  
US Department of Education  
VSA arts  
Western States Arts Federation/TourWest

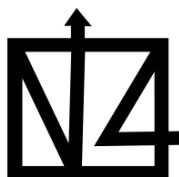
### PROGRAM PARTNERS

Albuquerque Academy  
Albuquerque Public Schools  
Art Center at Fuller Lodge  
Association of Developmental Disability Community Providers  
ARC of Albuquerque  
City of Albuquerque Therapeutic Recreation Program  
Designs for Learning Differences  
Devel Disabilities Planning Council  
Division of Vocational Rehab Careers Project  
Family Workshop  
Governor's Commission on Disability  
Harwood Art Center  
New Mexico Commission for the Blind  
Keshet Dance Studio  
NewArt New Mexico  
NM Highlands School of Social Work  
OFFCenter Community Arts Project  
Out ch'Yonda  
Southwestern College  
State of NM DOH Long Term Services Div  
Tricklock Theatre Company  
United Way of Central New Mexico  
UNM Dept of Theatre and Dance  
UNM School of Medicine  
Occupational Therapy Program  
TEASC Program  
Western NM State University

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## Words from Win

I met my future stepson, Adam Smith, the same day I met his mother. He was four years old and playing with his older brother, Joshua, at a swimming pool. I'd been wanting to meet their mother, Bonnie, and a friend had told me where I could find her. I'm no fool. I knew the way to win over the mother was to win over the children. I started playing with Josh and Adam. By the end of the day, I was falling in love with all of them. Bonnie and I were married a little more than a year later.

Adam was a golden child. He was cute, articulate, funny, interesting, active and smart. He was a natural athlete. He loved baseball. He did very well in school. By high school, he was in National Honor Society. People liked him. Other kids wanted to be with him. Adults enjoyed his company.

Joshua was another golden child. He was just as gifted as Adam academically, and he went on to become a professional musician.

Bonnie and I knew we were blessed.

Not that there weren't problems. Adam at about age 15 start going into what we assumed was a rocky adolescence. But by age 21, Adam was a lost soul. He could barely function in school. He couldn't hold a job. He couldn't manage his money. It turns out Adam had a rare genetic disorder that had slowly over a period of years destroyed portions of the white matter of his brain. Adam had lost his ability to initiate action, plan, organize and exercise proper judgment.

Bonnie and I were devastated. We had no idea how Adam would spend his time or find any sort of fulfillment. Then Bonnie discovered VSA arts of New Mexico.

Art is a transaction. The artist, by creating, enriches and provokes and ennobles and enlightens the viewer of art. The artist, by creating, also enriches himself.

Adam became an artist. With the help of VSA instructors, Adam found he had a voice, an insight, a sensitivity. Adam created images that expressed his religious faith, his love of horses and his Greek heritage. He found the joy and discipline of dance and theater. He learned how to teach that love and joy to children as part of a VSA outreach program to the public schools. Adam became himself.

Bonnie and I know we are blessed.

—Winthrop Quigley  
Former Board Member

## AmeriCorps Outreach

By Deborah Mashibini



For the first time since 2000-01, when VSA arts of New Mexico began hosting an AmeriCorps Program, VSA has been awarded full competitive funding directly from the

Corporation for

National Service. Over the past four years VSA has developed its unique AmeriCorps program with support from the Corporation and the New Mexico Commission on Community Volunteerism. VSA's AmeriCorps Team for 2004-05 will consist of members with and without disabilities who will facilitate outreach activities in the arts in schools and other community settings, as well as offer classes at VSA's North Fourth Art Center.

VSA's current team of five AmeriCorps performers is finishing up their 2003-04 year of service. They not only facilitated a range of dynamic classes in the performing arts for VSA apprentice artists in the studio program, but also managed to conduct outreach activities in three Albuquerque area schools, reaching more than 140 youth at risk each week. As the school year ended, feedback was solicited from teachers at one of the most active sites, Cochiti Elementary School:

*"It was interesting to me as a teacher – to see how the students that have been going to VSA AmeriCorps classes all year had such a positive view of persons with disabilities... VSA does make a difference in helping people understand..."*

*"The children are learning to be comfortable with persons with disabilities and they are learning to show respect to everyone, regardless if they have a disability or not. The program was a positive learning experience for my students. Thanks so much!"*

These teacher comments are a reflection on the magic wielded by VSA's AmeriCorps outreach team. It's magic that comes partially from the fact that members with and without disabilities collaborate together, and partially from the fact that most members arrive with degrees and skills in their disciplines, added to a measure of the wonderful luck VSA has had in successful recruitment. AmeriCorps members are challenged creatively, intellectually and emotionally throughout the year and our 2003-04 members have been more than up to that challenge. Dancers Emily Reiter, Greg Mains and Tammy Quade extended their service for a second year with the VSA Program. Adrienne Katz, a dynamic young dancer, relocated from Ohio to join the program and Molly Kohl came to VSA AmeriCorps from New York, where she had begun a career in theatre.

Active recruitment for the 2004-05 AmeriCorps Program is underway. The new team will include 12 full-time and 12 part-time positions in the visual and performing arts. For information /application contact VSA's North Fourth Art Center (505) 345-2872.