

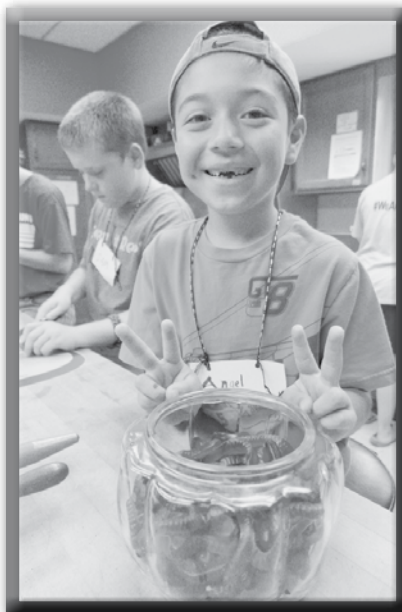
Arts & Smarts Making an Impact *by Amy Rich*

Our after school year began the day after Labor Day. Since then, every Monday through Thursday afternoon has been filled with the noise of children being tutored, making fabric sculptures, creating with clay, learning how to be leaders, painting, playing games, videotaping their goals for the future, cooking, eating snacks, and reciting the “Creed Official” which outlines the values they are expected to uphold as Arts & Smarts participants. Along with the children, there are plenty of adults to supervise and to build positive relationships.

The activities are fun ways to spend the afternoons, but we hope that they will provide something even more: contributions toward the children’s future success that complement the lessons they learn at school, at home, at church, and elsewhere in their lives.

We set goals each year and measure our progress toward these goals using surveys and pre- and post-tests. Program goals for this year are:

- All program participants will feel that they have adults at Patchwork who care about them and who challenge them to do their best.
- Tutoring Program participants will do better in school and will have more positive attitudes about learning and school.
- Participants will feel that they have new opportunities to explore their individual talents and interests, opportunities to develop new talents and interests, and caring adults who acknowledge and support their talents and interests.
- Arts participants will feel their talents in the areas of creativity and visual art are nurtured.



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- Participants will be challenged to think of positive futures for themselves, and they will gain skills to help them reach these goals (including substance abuse prevention skills and knowledge of college and how to attend).

These goals relate to research on “protective factors:” a term referring to the characteristics of environments that appear to alter--or even reverse--potential negative outcomes and enable individuals to transform adversity and develop resilience despite risk. These protective factors fall into three basic categories:

- Caring relationships that convey compassion, understanding, respect, and genuine interest in the individual; are grounded in listening; and establish safety and basic trust.
- High expectation messages from adults that communicate not only firm guidance, structure, and challenge but convey a belief in the youth’s innate resilience and look for strengths and assets as opposed to problems and deficits.
- Opportunities for meaningful participation and contribution, including opportunities for valued responsibilities, for making decisions, for giving voice and being heard, and for contributing one’s talents to the community.

(Benard, Bonnie. “The Foundations of the Resiliency Framework.” *Resiliency in Action*, 2012. Web. October 8 2013.)

Additional research supports this year’s emphasis on helping participants explore their interests in order to help them discover what they are passionate about--the activities that unleash their energy and joy. When young people know and develop the



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things they are passionate about, with the support of several adults, they present a strong picture of health and well-being. Research shows that these students have higher grades in school, are more likely to be socially competent, are more likely to be physically healthy, are more likely to volunteer to help other people, and are more likely to have a sense of purpose, among other things. (Search Institute. Igniting Sparks: Turning Young People's Interests and Talents into Improved Life Outcomes, Youth Leader Guide for Out of School Time. Minneapolis, MN: Search Institute Press. 2012.)



In the Arts & Smarts program, all of this valuable support and experience is available to families at no cost. This is important because each year 90%-95% of the children who participate come from low income families. Their parents value the lessons their children learn here and the adults who teach them.

When you make a contribution to Patchwork or specifically to our Arts & Smarts program, you are helping to make these experiences possible, and you're playing a role in helping each child reach his or her God-given potential. Without gifts from individuals, local businesses and organizations, and local foundations, our programming could not continue.

Through our printed newsletters, our website (www.Patchwork.org), and our blog (<http://PatchworkCentral.wordpress.com>) you can see moments that your gifts make possible. You're also welcome to be part of the programming by becoming a volunteer. Applications are available on our website and in our main office.

Circles *by Bill Hemminger*

I manage the large community garden at University of Evansville, and the garden has been particularly productive this year. Part of my aim is to involve as many students as possible in the various cycles of food and food production—from preparing the earth to planting and tending the plants to weeding and harvesting. Finally, when enough vegetables have ripened, we fill crates—swiss chard, tomatoes, squash, beans, basil, okra, peppers—and lug them to a spot on campus where we run a makeshift farmers' market. Colleagues can admire the colorful, heaping mounds of fresh food and can then buy what they want for little money. That money serves to buy new seed, help refurbish the



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tiller, buy soaker hose; whatever is left is given to Tri-State Food Bank, which feeds food pantries and soup kitchens throughout the region. What produce is left on our table at the end of the market is returned to the crates and taken to the Emergency Food Pantry at Patchwork.

This year we had three visits to the Patchwork Food Pantry, and we carried in at least 400 pounds of produce, all fresh from our UE garden. Early in the summer, a group of newly-admitted freshmen—getting a jump-start on their Fall schedule—took a class at UE, and part of their welcome to campus was an introduction to getting dirty in the garden. Later in the summer, other friends helped out—Pat Marienau, longtime Patchwork volunteer, who lives near the garden; Christie Hubbard, now a senior at UE, who used to attend Patchwork as a young child and who served as a student-worker in the garden this summer; as well as colleagues and other (I think the popular word here is random) university students. At the end of the summer, students of Biology 315 showed up in the heat of the day to fulfill one of their course requirements—sweating in the garden. We put much of the garden to bed.

I dug the Patchwork garden by hand a number of years ago, and each summer that I work in the Garden Art Program there I am amazed that kids are amazed—by the vitality of the plants, by the fantastic shapes of the leaves and fruits, and by



Circles (con't)

the brilliant colors. So, part of the fascination is aesthetic. But then this summer's university students wanted to see where extra produce might go and jumped into their cars to accompany the food to Patchwork. So, part of the ethos of gardening responds to a concern that everyone eat—and that everyone have enough good food to eat. Local food, worldly lessons.



Back to School

At our annual Back to School Sale on August 3, we helped to make back to school time more affordable for families in our neighborhood and beyond. We distributed 180 bags tailored to grades K-5 and containing most of the supplies that the schools require students to have on the first day. We also distributed new socks, new underwear, and assorted individual school supplies. Nineteen schools were represented by our customers. With a long line of parents waiting at our door long before the sale began, the demand was greater than our ability to meet it.

As in prior years, we expected something from parents in return for the supplies: a small contribution toward the cost of what they received. We've found over the years that this encourages people to take only



Back to School *(con't)*

what they need and helps to preserve the dignity of those we serve. When parents ask whether they should bring their children, we respond that we trust they will be truthful about how many children they are buying for.

Bags cost parents \$4 for grades K-3 and \$6 for grades 4 & 5. The same supplies might have cost parents between \$28 and \$44 if purchased in a store. With very careful shopping throughout the entire year, Patchwork was able to purchase the items for between \$14 and \$21 per bag.

The significant difference between the cost to parents and the cost to Patchwork was made up for by generous donations from individuals and from East Side Christian Church, First Presbyterian Church, Northside Congregational Church, and Kohl's.

We are also grateful for the many hours of volunteer time that were contributed to the project. Thank you to Jane Johansen for her tireless search for deals and to Helen Fisher and Jill Hemminger for their leadership during the bagging and sale day. Thank you also to volunteers from our supporting congregations, Aurora, and Kohl's.

Bendy Drifty DriftJam Art

Patchwork is grateful to Rob Millard-Mendez, who spent two weeks of the summer with us creating a new sculpture to add to our outdoor art collection. This summer's sculpture is an image of the Ohio River assembled from driftwood found on the banks of the river itself. The driftwood is assembled on a metal frame. Sculpture Week participants helped with all of the construction and installation. They also created individual masks using plaster cast material, paint, wood, and found objects.

The new sculpture can be found at the end of our building closest to Washington Avenue.

It's still waiting to be named this fall by Arts & Smarts participants, but finalists that were suggested by summer participants are: "Bendy Drifty," "DriftJam," and "Drifty Bend."



Other highlights from the summer included:

- Art Garden Weeks with the usual organic mix of gardening with Pat and Bill, ceramics with Audrey, snack preparation with Kristen, and storytelling with the effervescent Susan Fowler.
- Practicing making financial decisions in the "Reality Store" by earning an income and paying bills with one-on-one help from college students from UE.
- Spending a week learning to cook a fancy meal and then serving the food in courses to special guests while providing dinner entertainment (live music and stand up comedy!).
- Performing a joyous talent show that celebrated everyone's gifts including: drawing a portrait from a live model, cooking scrambled eggs, dancing, hoola-hooping, drumming, and public speaking.

PATCHWORK MISSION STATEMENT

Based in Evansville, Indiana, Patchwork Central, Inc. creates community and encourages spiritual and social growth

by offering hospitality,
by providing opportunities for learning,
by fostering creativity and involvement in the arts, and
by working toward a more peaceful and just world.

Volunteers Needed:

Our food pantry needs one or two people to join the team on Thursday mornings from 9:30-11:45. Ideally, the individual(s) would volunteer regularly once a week. If you're interested, please contact our main office or speak with John Schaeffer, the Food Pantry Coordinator.

SUNDAY WORSHIP

*The Patchwork Community meets for worship
every Sunday at 5:15 p.m.
at the Meetinghouse,
100 Washington Avenue,
followed by a covered dish supper.
All are welcome!*



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*Please be generous as you consider
sending your cash contribution in the
envelope provided for your convenience.
Your generosity will help us continue the
Patchwork tradition of providing these many
creative programs.*

Indiana Youth Institute Indiana Youth Investment Award 2005



This activity made possible by the Vanderburgh Community Foundation, the Indiana Arts Commission, and the National Endowment for the Arts.



The Arts Council
of Southwestern Indiana





100 Washington Avenue
Evansville, IN 47713-1521

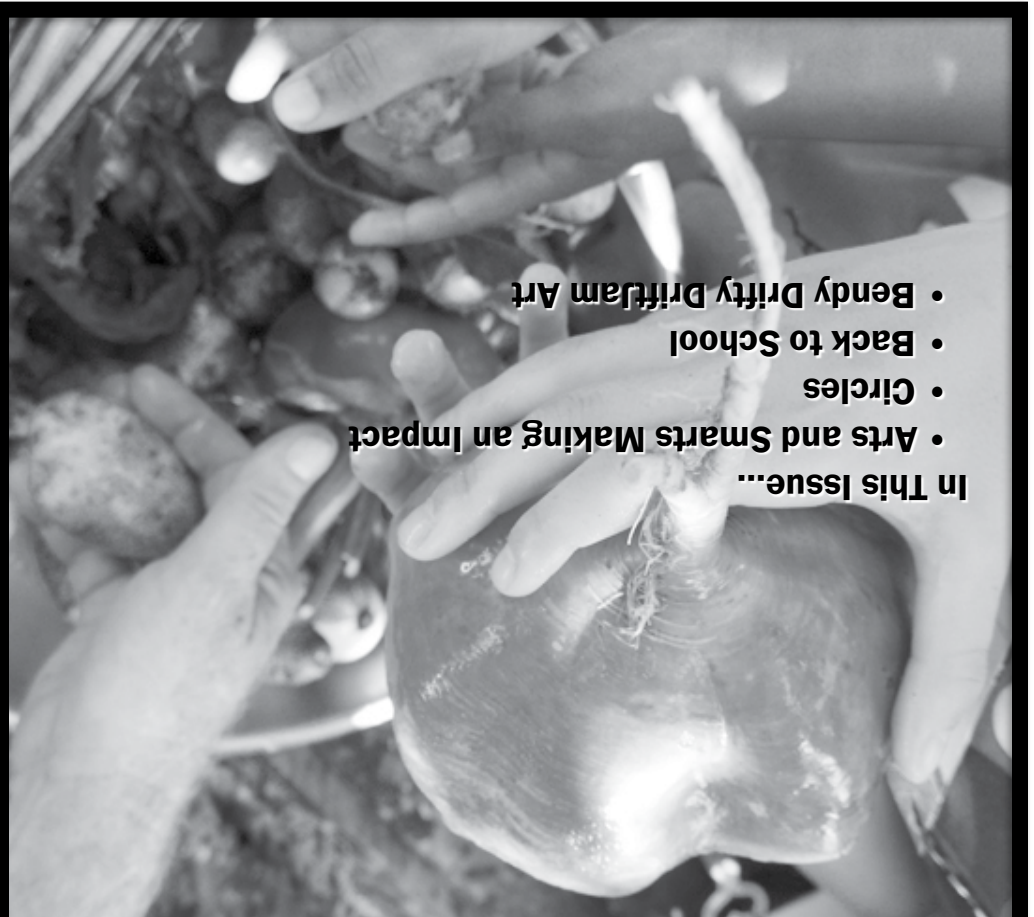
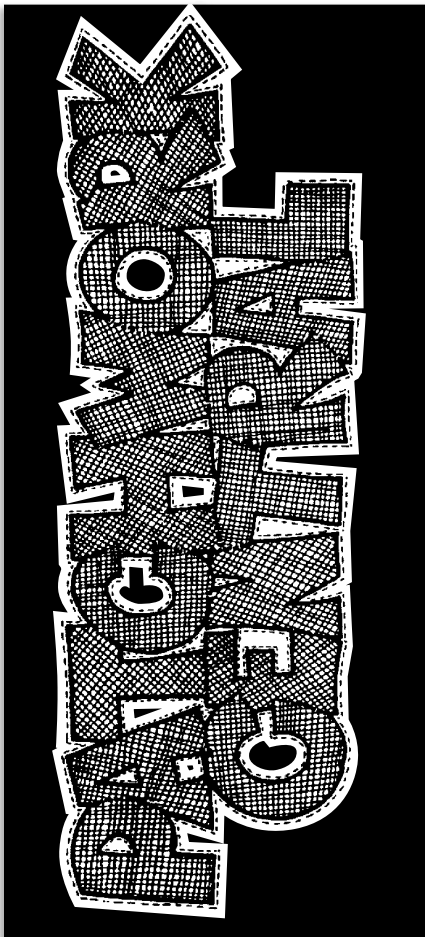
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