

Arts & Smarts at 35 *by Amy Rich*

Patchwork's children's program has a lot to celebrate. As we complete our 35th year of after school children's activities, we've impacted the lives of well over a thousand children. Heading up the children's program for the last 20 years has been Jane Case Vickers.

Amy: Is there any way to sum up the impact of the program over that much time? I know—that seems like a difficult question to answer.

Jane: I guess looking at the faces of the kids in 35 years' worth of photos. We don't know what's going on with all of them now, but some we do. Looking at their faces and how happy they were when they were with us. The collections of experiences that the kids have had over the years add up to something monumental. Think of it as paper chains like the ones we make at Christmas. They're so fragile, just strips of paper, but put them together, and they have purpose. They're a celebration. They're drapery that completely blankets Patchwork in a quilt.



Amy: I calculated the number of individual days children have spent at Patchwork in the last five years, and it's over 10,000.

Jane: So in 20 years I've been here for about 40,000 child afternoons. Gollee.

Amy: Could you talk a little bit about Patchwork's emphasis on process over product when it comes to making art? Why do we do it this way, and how do the kids react differently?

Jane: A nice piece of art is not nearly as important as a positive experience making art. The act of making is what's important. Making things makes me feel good. I think it makes the kids feel good, too. We do try to get a good-looking product. You can see that in the kids' artwork that's on display.

Then there are all the benefits from working with art and being creative: problem solving, looking at things from different points of view, collaboration. All those things are about the process, not the product. For me the process will win out every time.

Amy: Has working with kids changed your own art over 20 years?

Jane: It has. I have more fun with it. I think it is more about process. When I started working at Patchwork, I was just out of grad school. In grad school it's all about writing statements and producing a lot. As a woman in fiber arts, there was pressure to make things that were strong and monumental. I'm not interested in proving points anymore. I just like to make stuff.

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Arts & Smarts Timeline

1981: After School Children's Program begins coordinated by Ruth Doyle. Activities included recreation, singing, cooking, movies, crafts, arts, swimming, & study hall. Ruth: "There were always children hanging around the building looking for something to do....The program offers a safe place for the children to be, a place where they know they'll find love mixed with lessons in how to better live with one another."

1984: Ruth led the children in drawing pictures of the **Patchwork building burning down**, since many had witnessed the massive fire. Then she helped them build new structures out of cardboard. **First end of the school year picnic.**

1990: Celebrated 10 years. Ruth had worked with over 250 children. Ruth said of children in the neighborhood: "They learn from me, and I learn from them. The program's longevity in itself has had the most impact on the children. It's made a difference that we're just here and have stayed here. Some kids who were in the program when they were small are now in high school."

1991: Sylvia Lautzenheiser arrives as the first official Tutoring Program Coordinator and gets the tutoring program organized at a level it had not been previously. She stays 7 years.

1992: "Primary Colors," a month-long **exhibit at the Evansville Museum of Arts and Science** featuring the art of the After School Children's Program along with large format photos by Calvin Kimbrough of the children at work.

1993: "Welcome Matt" sculpture was created with visiting artist Chet Geiselman.

1994: "I'm a Promise" **Music Time** was added to program activities, led by Lynn Renne.

1995: The **Patchwork Garden** is created from a vacant lot by Bill Hemminger and Jenny Browne. The first year's produce included tomatoes, hot peppers, squash, okra, beans, potatoes, Swiss chard, beets, and sunflowers. Artist **Jane Case Vickers** becomes the new children's program coordinator after Ruth Doyle leaves.

1998: A **computer lab** is organized and children use it for various creative projects, including a book of poetry. Paula Adams and other children in the program produce their **first original play**: "The Accusation".

1999: **Book Club** is added to the list of programming thanks to Aldersgate United Methodist Church.

2000: **Bike Club** is added by Rick Unger, featuring lessons in basic bike repairs, group bike rides, and the creation of custom art bikes. Brian Kushmal, timpanist for the EPO, begins **percussion classes**.

2001: **Walk n' Talk** is added by Lynda Browne and Cookie Smith to provide physical activity and time for children to have positive conversations with adults. **Dance** is added with Deena Laska Lewis and the Children's Center for Dance Education. **Art & Co.** is founded by John Cheadle Rich and Nelia Kimbrough.

2003: The **new studio** building is dedicated, providing much better space for large and messy art projects including ceramics, bikes, and large-scale sculptures.

2004: Jane named **Art Educator of the Year** by the Arts Council of Southwestern Indiana. Dixie Wilsbacher joins the staff as the new Tutoring Coordinator.

2005: Arts & Smarts is recognized with an **Indiana Youth Investment Award** from the Indiana Youth Institute.

2007: **Susan Fowler** joins the crew of summer Art Garden Weeks.

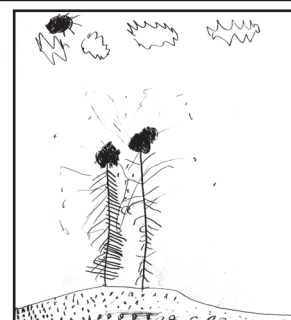
2010: **Paula Adams** is honored by Leadership Evansville as the Division Winner in the category of Individual Achievement for her work at Patchwork. She grew up in Patchwork's programming and was hired as a Program Assistant in 2006.

2010: Miriam Regier leads the children in a garden project in which they **harvest volunteer wheat**, separate out the seeds, grind them into flour, and bake muffins using this flour.

2012: The Arts & Smarts program receives the **Celebration of Youth Arts Award** at the Vanderburgh Community Foundation's Spirit of Giving Celebration.

2014: The kids create the **big blue hand sign** in front of Patchwork with Rob Millard-Mendez.

2016: **The Arts & Smarts program is still going strong!**



Arts & Smarts By the Numbers...

In the last five
years alone:

397 children
have attended
the Arts & Smarts
program

642 days of
programming have
taken place

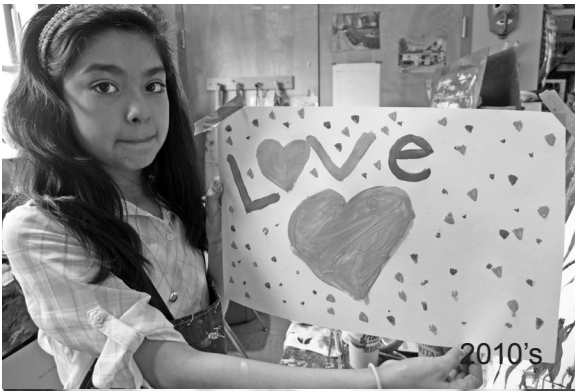
10,730
individuals days
have been spent
by a child at
Patchwork learning
and growing

68 different
schools have been
represented

12,767
hours of volunteer
time have been
contributed

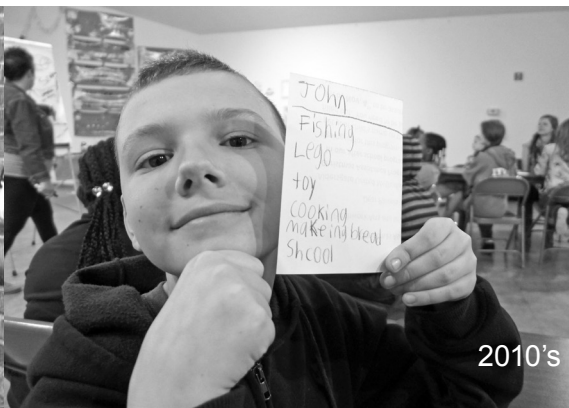
547 adults
and teens have
volunteered







1980's



2010's



1980's



1990's



1990's



1990's



2010's



1990's



2010's



2010's



1980's

Arts & Smarts at 35

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Amy: Back when the children's program started, Patchwork had the only after school activities in the city. Now there are many, and our program is in more of a niche program with the arts and tutoring. What do you think about these changes?

Jane: When I was hired, it felt like Patchwork was nervous about its children's program and the fact that there were many new programs out there competing for funding. We've done a lot of work assessing the programming over the years and have gotten stronger. Because of that, we feel more confident in the role we're playing and the work we're doing. So we've let that become a positive thing for us. Not that there are not struggles now.

Also, our endurance has helped us build a reputation. We were here years ago, and we said to kids that they mattered. We're still here, and now we say their kids matter. The fact that we're still here reinforces that—they all do matter.



Amy: Why is Patchwork so special?

Jane: I'm grateful to Patchwork. People here have given me a lot of grace and room to grow.

When I was hired, I was talking with Calvin about living in the neighborhood and walking in the neighborhood. I could walk to work at Patchwork. I realized that it's an opportunity to slow down and see things differently.

Patchwork does that well, too. It's not about getting greater numbers of kids. It's about serving those we have more greatly. That feels like a privilege in the not for profit world. You appreciate value that you would normally miss.

I'm really proud of Patchwork. Proud of what John's doing with the Health Ministry and of what is happening in the mornings with Hospitality. That's what Patchwork has been good about over the years—trying to look at what some needs are and seeing what

we can do to help and not just jumping in from outside with preconceived ideas. People at Patchwork have always asked, "What are we, in our limited capacity, able to do about this problem?"

Sozo Health Ministry Recognized

The Sozo Health Ministry was recognized at Leadership Evansville's annual Celebration of Leadership on March 10. Sozo was the Project Award winner in the Health and Social Service category.

It is nice recognition for the work that the health ministry is doing at Patchwork with the leadership of Rev. John Rich, RN and with assistance from Mary Damm, RN. John and/or Mary are at Patchwork every Monday morning from 9:00 am-Noon to speak with anyone who decides to stop by, to answer medical questions, to dispense basic medical supplies and over-the-counter medications, and to check blood pressures. Additionally, John spends much of the rest of the week transporting people to various appointments and advocating for patients during these appointments.



Open Studio: Soft Pastel Landscapes with Jerri Whitman

On May 6 & 7, Patchwork will host a special Open Studio class with visiting artist Jerri Whitman. The class will run from 9 am-4 pm each day. Class participants will explore soft pastel technique, color in a landscape, framing, and promoting their work. The cost for the two-day class is \$150.

If you are interested in joining us, please contact Patchwork's main office (812-424-2735) for a registration form and list of materials to bring.

More about Jerri Whitman: For the past five years Jerri has been teaching private students drawing and more recently pastel painting in her studio. In 2015 she taught workshops and classes at the Carnegie Center for Arts & History, New Albany, Indiana, and at the Boothbay Region Art Foundation, Boothbay Harbor, Maine. She is a member of the Pastel Society of America. Learn more about Jerri and her work on her website: <http://jerriwhitman.com>.



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Bequests

The next time you update your will, please consider adding Patchwork Central, Inc. as a beneficiary. As a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, Patchwork is eligible to receive donations from bequests. Any size of gift makes a big difference in providing for our programming and contributing to our long-term stability.

Sunday Worship

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

All are welcome!

Patchwork Central, Inc.

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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.

PATCHWORK'S 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.





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