

VSA Florida

2010 - A Year of Sustained Growth



VSA

FLORIDA

The State Organization
on Arts and Disability

From the Executive Director:

We have a new look!

You may notice that we have a new brand. Don't worry, we are still the same organization, but our new look better identifies the work we do statewide. As you can see - VSA Florida covers Florida with high quality and innovative programs that provide unique opportunities for individuals with disabilities to be included in the arts in school, at cultural events or as an artist. Thanks to all of our funders that provide these outstanding opportunities.

Contact Us:

(813)558-5095

<http://www.vsafl.org>

<http://www.facebook.com/vsa-arts-of-florida>

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Young Soloists Bring Music to Our Ears

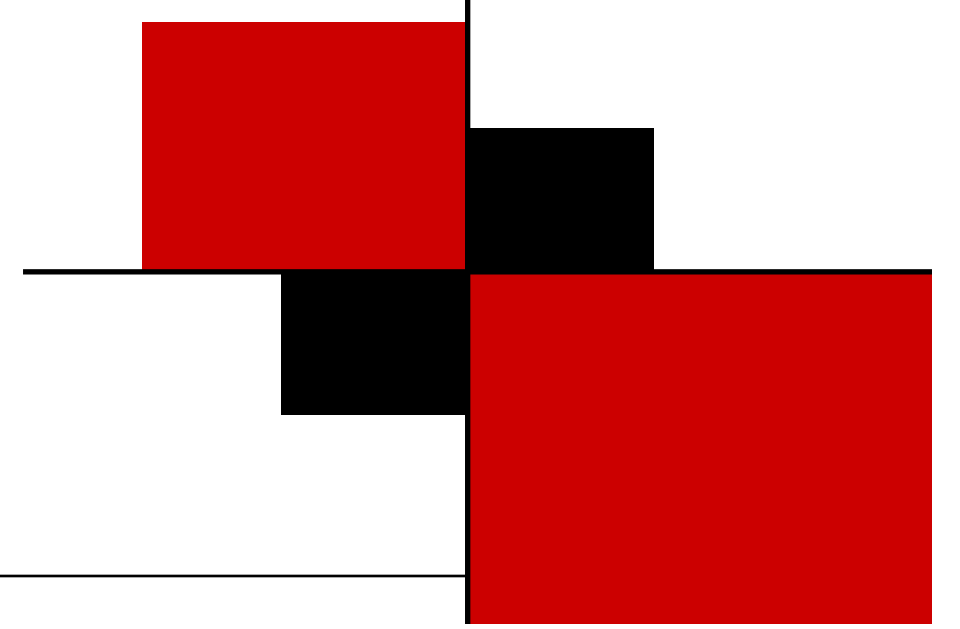
VSA Florida is proud to announce our winners for the 2010 VSA Florida Young Soloist Competition. Congratulations to Caroline Senko from Orange County and Matthew Oliver from Polk County. These two accomplished young musicians performed for a huge crowd in a pre-concert exhibition, Saturday, October 16, 2010 at Vinoy Park in St. Petersburg before the Florida Orchestra took the stage for their Concert in the Park. Joining them in the ranks is our third winner, Outta Sight, the music ensemble group from The Florida School for the Deaf and Blind in St. John's County. Applications for these three state winners, as well as all other 2010 applicants were sent to Washington, DC for the International 2011 VSA Young Soloist Competition.



Wendy Finklea, VSAFL Education Coordinator, Matthew Oliver, Marian Winters, VSAFL Executive Director and Caroline Senko at the Florida Orchestra Concert in the Park.

VSA Florida

Programs



ARTS ACCESS FLORIDA

VSA Florida was offered a grant by the Florida Division of Cultural Affairs to design a cultural tourism promotion program to attract visitors with disabilities to our state. The pilot program features cultural venues, events and hotels, in Pinellas and Miami Dade counties. This is a ground-breaking project for VSA Florida and for the field of cultural tourism.

For the first time VSA Florida will use internet technology as the primary medium to communicate with our constituents. Through the website, VSA Florida will serve visitors planning their Florida vacations from anywhere in the United States and the world. It will also be invaluable for Floridians who want to plan shorter, in-state vacations. VisitStPeteClearwater.com, the Pinellas County Convention and Visitor's Bureau, agrees and is assisting with the project in several ways; such as identifying hotels that will join the program and be featured on the website. Miami-Dade Cultural Alliance is also assisting with coordination of Miami-Dade outreach.

Artist Residency Program

In 2010, VSA Florida coordinated 132 artist residencies led by 82 different teaching artists. The residencies took place in schools, ARC facilities and Juvenile Justice sites in 62 Florida counties. Participants included 1,630 students and 125 adults. Each of these residencies allowed participants to experience the arts and gain new skills. "The program was a great success. My students were focused and engaged to a very high degree. Making a quilt as a final project was a great way to integrate math, social studies and art," said one classroom teacher. VSA Florida strives to have at least one artist residency in every Florida county each school year.



Hand 'n Hand Teaching Artist Residencies:

The *Hand 'n Hand* residency program was completed in Pasco and Martin counties. Each of these sites had a teaching artist, followed by an artist with a disability. A final exhibition showcasing one piece of work from each student and the collaborative piece done with the artist with disabilities was held in a public space with an opening reception. The *Hand 'n Hand* program is supported by local funders.



VSA Florida partners with Miami-Dade County Public Schools, Adrienne Arsht Center, Florida Inclusion Network and History Miami Museum:

The Miami-Dade County school district, Florida Inclusion Network in partnership with the Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts of Miami- Dade provided for 10 performing arts residencies and hosted the students for a performance at the center.

This program is also provided for adults with disabilities from residential facilities in Dade County. The adults also performed their experiences at the center's Peacock Foundation Studio. This brought great joy to many of the participants as shown by the smiles on their faces at the performance.

The Historical Museum of Southern Florida (History Miami) invited the six visual arts residency programs to exhibit the student work at the museum. The students visited and toured the museum. Their art work was based on the theme of the special exhibition on display there.

Observation Evaluation

Ten trained "observers" did a qualitative study focusing on collecting and analyzing data on inclusive arts teaching and learning that occurred during the teaching artist residencies. The report concluded that for the investment of 8 hours, there was evidence to support that students were on their way to achieving all of the arts standards. The VSA Florida residencies are an effective way to provide opportunities to meet these arts standards. VSA Florida published a monograph on its artist residency program.

Professional Development

During 2010, VSA Florida provided professional development training for teaching artists, classroom, ESE, art, music and PE teachers, para-professionals, parents, university students and others. The trainings focused on inclusion strategies and/or the *Start with the Arts* curriculum guide. Pre and post evaluations document the knowledge gained by the participants. One participant stated: "I hope children with disabilities will teach me how to reach them."

“The art projects completed by the group not only provided them with a creative outlet to be an individual, but it also encouraged the exploration of a healthy coping skills.”- an administrator on the artist residency program

VSA Florida teaching artists participated in quarterly teleconferences and webinars. The sessions worked on skill development and provided networking opportunities. Six teaching artists and the VSA Florida professional development coordinator participated in VSA’s Community of Practice, a national network for artists that encourages self development and professional development for teaching artists. The work consisted of a series of six teleconferences and the posting of lessons on a national website.

Members of the VSA Florida Artist Registry participated in six webinars geared towards skill development and networking.

In partnership with the Florida’s Division of Cultural Affairs, VSA Florida led two statewide webinars on access. An access session was delivered at the annual meeting of the Florida Association of Museums. Three regional trainings on cultural access and two regional trainings on audio description were held.

Exhibitions

Members of the VSA Florida artist registry were very busy. Highlights this year include three major exhibitions: **“Art After Dark”** at the Tampa Museum of Art in partnership with MacDonal Training Center; **“Smocks and Jocks”** in Miami Beach in partnership with the NFL Retired Players Association; and **“Pieces of a Dream”** at Scarfone/Hartley Gallery, Tampa, in partnership with Pyramid Tampa.



VSA Registry Artists, Susan Kubes and Lora Duguay exhibit some of their and fellow registry members’ work.

"Work of Art" Program

A twist to our time honored VSA Florida Artist in Residency Program in Florida public schools united three organizations in one singular mission - bring opportunities for creative expression to students with Disabilities using computer technology. The collaboration brought together VSA Florida, Project Ten: Transition Education Network; and the ArtThread Foundation's "Work of Art" program. Twelve VSA Florida teaching artists were placed around the state in art residency programs using the skills they gained from a "Work of Art" training session presented by ArtThread faculty this summer in Orlando. This training and residency project was funded by Project 10. The students' work can be seen by visiting the Project 10/ArtThread Gallery at Project10.ArtThread.org.



Art work from an ArtThread residency program in Polk County.

RPCs Extend VSA Florida’s Network

Regionalizing the state of Florida has proved successful as our five Regional Program Coordinators use their own strengths and talents to become a strong voice for VSA Florida in every county. Each coordinator has successfully moved around their region developing relationships and fostering a sense of community within the VSA Florida expanding network of partners. You may contact any of them as a VSA Florida resource.

Jennifer Bonaventura-Region 1- Panhandle jennifer@bonavstudio.com
 Pat York-Region 2- North Florida yorkpat@cox.net
 Anna Preston-Region 3 – Central East Coast ampreston13@aol.com
 Wendy Finklea-Region 4- Central West Coast wfinklea@usf.edu
 Kathy Iwanowski-Region 5 – South Florida kathy@kathyiwanowski.com

2010 Exemplary Participant Award Recipients



Exemplary Participant winner, for “personal growth through the arts”, Hayley from Brevard County .

In its 7th year, VSA Florida’s Exemplary Participant Recognition Program celebrates the amazing artistic talents and personal fortitude in students within the state. Education professionals throughout the State of Florida were asked to nominate students with a disability in one of two categories: students that have shown exemplary work in the arts; and students that have shown dramatic personal growth or leadership through participation in the arts. Enthusiastic teachers from both public and private schools in 21 counties responded with heartfelt nominations of 87 remarkable students in dance, drama, music, vocal and visual arts.

In the category of exemplary work in the arts we’d like to congratulate Gina Incandela, 7, from Osceola County. She was nominated by her teacher, Theresa Evans, Gina’s vocal and piano coach. More congratulations are extended to our winners in the category of dramatic personal growth or leadership through participation in the arts. The winners are Edward Fountain, 13, from Pinellas County, nominated by teacher Carol Downing from Blossom Montessori School for the Deaf and Hayley Winslow-Welch, 10, from Brevard County nominated by teacher Christine Givens.

Kennedy Center

VSA Florida welcomed the 2009-2010 Kennedy Center Theater for Young Audiences on Tour presentation of “Nobody’s Perfect”, based on the children’s book by Marlee Matlin and Doug Cooney. The performances were held at Thrasher Home Center in Orange Park, Charlotte Performing Arts Center in Punta Gorda and at the Kravis Center in West Palm Beach.

Affiliate Focus

VSA Florida is thankful to our affiliate programs and their ongoing work in their communities. For the past 22 years, **VSA Florida in Brevard County** has been hosting their signature Annual Hands-On-Art Festival at the Brevard Zoo. Additionally, Brevard County boasts a holiday card contest, touring art exhibits, Pen Power -Playwright Discovery and “Out of the Mist” Puppetry Project, a collaboration with the King Center for the Performing Arts and a host of outreach activities. **VSA Florida in Duval County**, located at the Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens, has facilitated a VSA Arts Festival for over 20 years! Impacting over 3,000 students and adults with disabilities, this four day event brings the opportunity to participate in art projects, listen to live musicians and storytellers and learn about art appreciation. In 2009-2010 the Cummer Museum impacted over 4,500 children, teachers and parents with their Start with the Arts programming. Art Beyond Sight programming and museum tours for students with disabilities represents Cummer’s commitment to VSA guiding principles. For over ten years, **VSA Florida in Lake County**, along with the Early Learning Coalition of Lake County has hosted “A Day in the Park”, paralleling activities provided by the amazing county-wide use of the VSA Start with the Arts Program. **VSA Florida in Palm Beach County**, headquartered at Palm Beach Parks and Recreation Center, is VSA Florida’s most diversified affiliate. Hosting year round arts events and activities in their Therapeutic Recreation Center and throughout Palm Beach County, this team personifies VSA Florida’s mission. Their annual Katie Gardner Memorial Golf Tournament continues to generate additional funds for this thriving VSA affiliate’s work. A holiday showcase features performances by children and adults with disabilities and an art exhibition. Their annual VSA West Festival offers children with disabilities a chance to explore their creative abilities in various art forms in a one day festival. These include dance and movement residencies, actor’s technique and community theatre, and drama residencies to children that are hearing impaired. **VSA Florida in Volusia County’s** is our oldest affiliate and whose primary focus is to showcase the talent of students and adults with disabilities. Luminaries, their annual talent night in May, mentored students with disabilities in honing their audition, practice, rehearsal and performance skills. VSA Florida Volusia facilitates art exhibitions at eight sites, as well as producing: *Celebrations: A Literary Journal*, a compilation of over 300 student’s writing excerpts.



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