

VSA arts of Florida 2009 A Year of Extraordinary Growth



VSA arts of Florida (VSAFL) has just completed an extraordinary year. For the first time in its 28 year history VSAFL expanded direct program services for people with disabilities to all 67 Florida counties. During 2009, VSAFL presented first class performances and exhibitions, provided professional development on successful arts inclusion in the classroom and in the community, and provided technical assistance to artists of all ages. This growth is not just in the short term. During 2009, VSAFL built a strong viable infrastructure to provide program stability for the long term. A tremendous thanks to our outstanding board of directors for their support and guidance. I am pleased to present VSA arts of Florida 2009 Annual Report – The Year of **Not** Being the Best Kept Secret.

VSA arts of Florida (VSAFL) is a member of the international network of VSA arts, an affiliate of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. Headquartered at the University of South Florida, VSAFL was established in 1981 by the Florida Department of Education and the Florida Department of State. Our mission is to create a society where people with disabilities can learn through, participate in and enjoy the arts by providing arts, education and cultural opportunities for and by people with disabilities.

We believe that:

- o Every person with a disability deserves access to appropriate arts learning experiences.
- o All artists in schools and art educators should be appropriately prepared to include students and adults with disabilities in their instruction.
- o All children, youth and adults with disabilities should have complete access to community cultural facilities and activities.
- o All individuals with disabilities who aspire to careers in the arts should have the opportunity to develop appropriate skills.

Marian Winters, Executive Director

Recognition of Excellence

The 2009 VSA arts of Florida Young Soloist Finalists are:

Matthew Oliver, age 17, from Winter Haven, playing the piano, Erin Cheeseborough, a 20 year old vocalist from Tallahassee, and Paul Gavin, age 17, from Sanibel Island playing the Marimba.

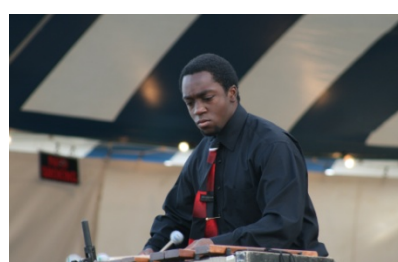
On October 17th these talented musicians and state winners were showcased in a partnership concert with the Florida Orchestra at Vinoy Park in St. Petersburg. The effort to identify the many talented musicians with disabilities through the Young Soloist Program continues to be a priority program for VSAFL. Matthew, Erin and Paul will go on to represent Florida in the VSA arts International Young Soloist Program. The international award is given annually to four outstanding musicians, two from the United States and two from the international arena.



Matthew Oliver



Erin Cheeseborough



Paul Gavin

6th Annual Exemplary Participant Recognition Program

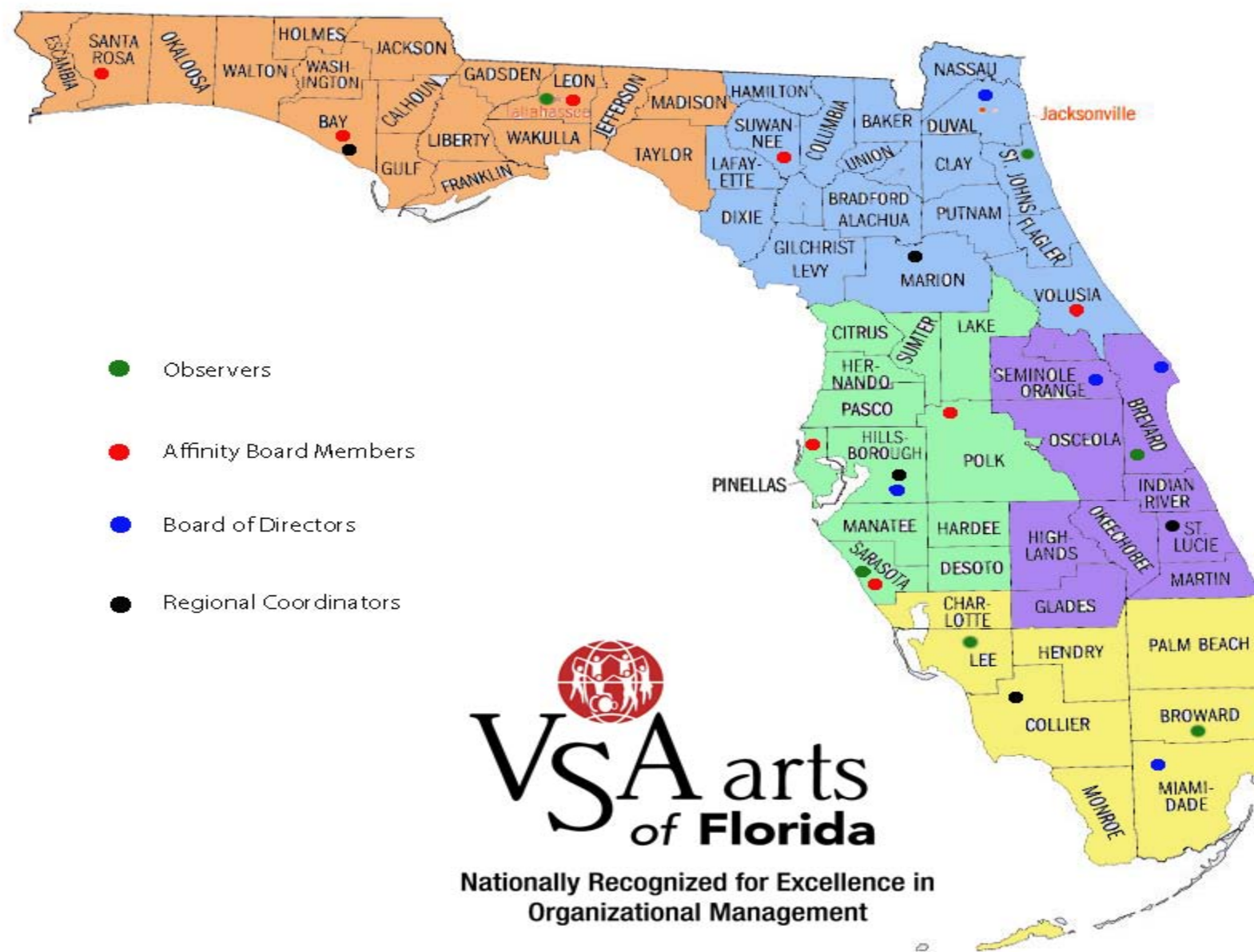
An annual program, the Exemplary Participant Recognition Program is designed to identify the artistic, creative and talented students of students with disabilities in Florida. The program recognizes 4 students individually for these exceptional qualities as well as their nominating teachers. Education professionals are asked to nominate students with a disability in one of two categories: **exemplary work in the Arts** or **dramatic personal growth or leadership through participation in the Arts**. All nominations of individuals K through age 22 in Literary Arts, Music, Visual Arts, Drama or Dance are considered. The 2009 winners are: Shardyah Stauffer and nominating teacher Debra Markley from Sarasota County; Melissa Lewis and nominating teacher Colette Semple from Miami-Dade County; Mallach Sibahi and nominating teacher Catherine Rivera from Miami-Dade County; and Jonathan Davis and nominating teacher Charlene Orlando from Hillsborough County. Students and nominating teachers received a savings bond and recognition at an awards ceremony.



Jonathan Davis receiving his award for Exemplary Participant

Statewide Expansion

The state has been divided into 5 regions that are managed by a specific regional coordinator for that area. The coordinator acts as the liaison between the region and VSAFL to develop lasting, "sustainable" relationships between our state office, school district ESE and Arts supervisors, local/regional art organizations, parents of children with disabilities and social agencies that provide services to our targeted population. Our 2009-2010 Regional Coordinators are: Jennifer Bonaventura, Region 1 (orange); Pat York, Region 2 (blue); Anna Preston, Region 3 (purple); Wendy Finklea, Region 4 (green); and Barbara Southwick, Region 5 (yellow). We also welcomed aboard several observers to assess student learning in our expanded '09-'10 Artist Residency Program. The observers gather consistent data from artist residency programs for students in inclusive classrooms, providing evaluations that move beyond simple descriptive quantitative data and anecdotes. The 2009-2010 selected Observers are: Peggy Adair, Region 1; Sue Moxon, Region 2; Pamela McLean, Region 3; Bonnie Hammer, Region 4; Eileen Musluk-Gervase and David Hammel, Region 5.



Parent Partnerships

This year VSAFL focused on expanding our parent partnerships. Through the participation of board members representing parents and our regional coordinators we began the process to connect more personally with parents of children with disabilities and to highlight what programs we have in place to benefit their children. We will use this network to continue promoting "sustainability", by receiving feedback from parents whose child participated in our residency programs.

Artist Registry

Artists with disabilities play an important role in VSA arts of Florida's efforts to advance the value of the arts in classrooms, communities, and ultimately society. VSAFL expanded its exhibitions to a regional level to allow artists to showcase artwork in their communities and partner with other nearby artists. Artists were trained and given the opportunity to represent VSA arts of Florida at statewide cultural events.

The Registry is free and open to all artists with disabilities living in the State of Florida, ages 18 and beyond who are committed to their artistic progress. The registry in conjunction with the website entitles members to numerous resources, technical assistance and exhibition opportunities. Our online Artist Registry is geared to address the career development needs of artists with disabilities.

In addition, an E-Newsletter for the artist registry is the joint effort of VSAFL and two of our members, Dottie Riley, a visual artist and Cecilia Evans, a literary artist. Proposed as a link to the website, this newsletter will give artists an easier format to access resources, learn about each other, share information and hi-lite accomplishments.

Artist Residencies

VSAFL coordinated 79 different teaching artist residencies in schools, ARC facilities and Department of Juvenile Justice sites across the state. Each of these residencies allowed participants to experience the arts and gain new skills. A classroom teacher commented that their students, "found a new form of expression through art. The very quiet and withdrawn students proved to be the shining stars, and the art experience helped to build self-esteem." An ARC director stated: "the program brought forth an opportunity for everyone to create new friendships, self worth, learn new skills, and the pride to 'be'." A Department of Juvenile Justice administrator reported: "the artist motivated the youth to get in touch with their inner feelings, hopes, desires and situations and to verbalize in a group setting how these factors can be used to improve one's circumstances and surroundings."

Hand 'n Hand Artist Residencies

In 2009, VSAFL coordinated the *Hand 'n Hand* residency program in 4 Charlotte, 3 Hernando and 4 Pasco County classrooms. Each of these sites had a teaching artist working with the students for 7 sessions, followed by an artist with disabilities for 2 sessions to create a collaborative piece with the same class. A final exhibit showcasing one piece of art from each student, the collaborative piece and artwork from the professional artists was held in a public space for 2 weeks and included an opening reception.



A performing arts residency program

Program Partners

Program Partner Highlights- The true success of VSA arts of Florida lies with the work that is done through our network of program partners. These partners produce outstanding creative programming that embraces disability and the arts experience. Programs opened doors and opened minds about the role of the arts.

Brevard County VSA Festival – CVS/Caremark- The festival took place at the Brevard Zoo and ran for three days. Throughout the school year the 1000 participants had an arts experience in the classroom that culminated in the visit to the festival. This year CVS/Caremark provided volunteers and funding.

VSAFL Duval County is a program of The Cummer Museum of Art and Gardens, Jacksonville. A yearly Festival, sponsored by CitiBank, ran for 4 days and was held inside the museum and gardens. Over 2000 students with disabilities participated along with almost 800 community volunteers. Before a class can attend the festival the teacher must participate in a series of workshops on inclusion in the arts. There is a waiting list to attend the festival.

VSAFL Volusia County presented Talent Night, a showcase of the performing talents of students with disabilities. Participants audition and practice prior to the performance. The performance is open to the public and is emceed by a nationally recognized performer.

VSA Palm Beach is a program of the Palm Beach County Parks and Recreation Department Therapeutic Recreation Department. VSA Palm Beach County offered inclusive visual art classes including painting, pottery and jewelry making. This work is showcased at the County's VSA arts Gallery and at local galleries throughout the county. Classes were also held in the performing arts including theatre and dance and song.

Lake County Start with the Arts Festival. Lake County Early Childhood Coalition ensures that every pre kindergarten teacher uses the *Start with the Arts* resource guide. This curriculum enhances pre-literacy skills through the arts. Participants number 450 children with and without disabilities. The Festival was held at the beginning of the school year to kick off the year of learning.

Miami-Dade- For the third year, VSAFL partnered with the Arsht Center for the Performing Arts/ Miami-Dade Public Schools to bring residencies in the performing arts to 20 inclusive classrooms in Miami-Dade County. The culminating event is the opportunity to perform on stage at the Center's black box theater. This year the residency expanded to include 8 visual arts residencies. The work created was displayed at the Historical Museum of Southern Florida. An additional part of the partnership is 8 residencies for adults with disabilities. They too culminate the residency with a performance at the Center's black box theater.

Polk Museum of Art VSA exhibition- For over ten years, the Polk Museum of Art has sponsored a summer exhibition of art work created throughout the school year by students with disabilities – early childhood through high school. The museum hosts a reception where awards, presented by Polk county School Board members, are given to selected students.

In St. Lucie an 8 week artist residency was held for a class of students with multiple disabilities. The results of the experience were so outstanding that the districts school devoted an entire television broadcast on the residency and the participating teacher and teaching artist have been invited to present their program during the VSA arts International Festival, June 2010.

Maplewood Elementary School – Marion County. Each year Maplewood, an inclusive school which includes students with varied disabilities, holds a week long VSAFL festival. Every classroom participates in art and music activities, a play is presented and the entire community is invited to the concluding performance.



Start with the Arts residency program



Artist residency program in an inclusive classroom

Cultural Access

VSA arts of Florida continues to serve as a cultural access information resource for both individuals and cultural organizations throughout the state. Professional development in arts access, disability awareness for assisting patrons with disabilities, strategies for inclusion in the arts, universal design and universal design for learning, access self-evaluation tools, and assistive technology for cultural facilities is available. Partnerships with cultural venues, public and private school systems, the Florida Inclusion Network, and the Florida Division of Cultural Affairs have all contributed to a program that is becoming more expansive each year. A series of "Brown Bag" lunches and workshops entitled "A Taste of Access" are offered as an introduction to disability awareness, marketing for access, and inclusive access strategies. Accessible culminating performances and exhibits from teaching artists' residencies promote the collaborative spirit of inclusive programming. VSAFL has maintained its focus on the equalization of arts opportunities for individuals with disabilities both as patrons and performers.



Creating an art mural

Board of Directors...

Moving ahead with the goal to include all, VSAFL reorganized its board structure. Along with the "traditional" board members the board now includes 2 members from four different constituent groups: teaching artists; artists with disabilities, cultural organizations and parents of children with disabilities. Each board member works directly with the VSAFL staff member that facilitates programming impacting their constituency. Ensuring program continuity, new board members have a two year term with a member exiting each year and a new one coming on. Much thanks to our outstanding 2009 board members:

Wade Wetherington
President, Tampa
Sandra Sroka
Vice President, Tampa
Hope McMath
Secretary, Jacksonville
Gayla Russell
Treasurer, Tampa
Bruce Cook, Live Oak
Lora Duguay, Clearwater
Enrique Escallon, Miami
Dainery Fuentes, Lakeland
Debby Grubb, Bradenton
Ann Harrison-May, Cape Coral
Anne Holt, Tallahassee
Vicki Howell, Santa Rosa Beach
Janice Kershaw, Melbourne
Terrie Nolinske, Tampa
David Penn, Orlando
Marsha Rockhill, Panama City
Doug Towne, Largo
Loreda Williams, Sarasota
Elizabeth Wills, New Smyrna Beach



Arts for All Equipment in use.



Students creating.

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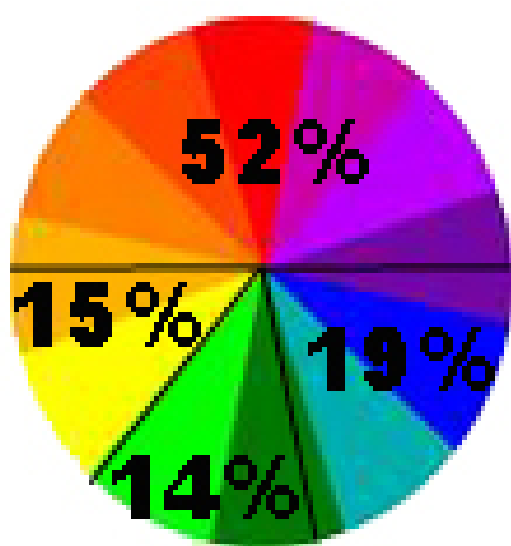
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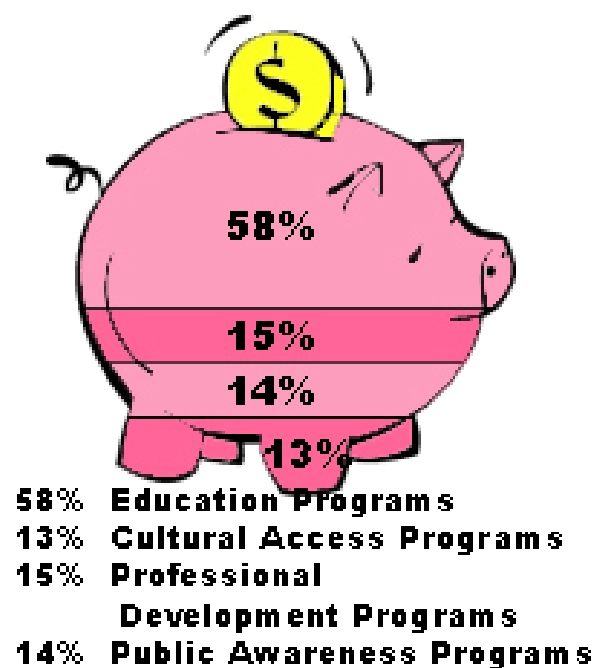
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Earned Income:

52% Special Events
19% Training Fees
15% Exhibitions
14% Other



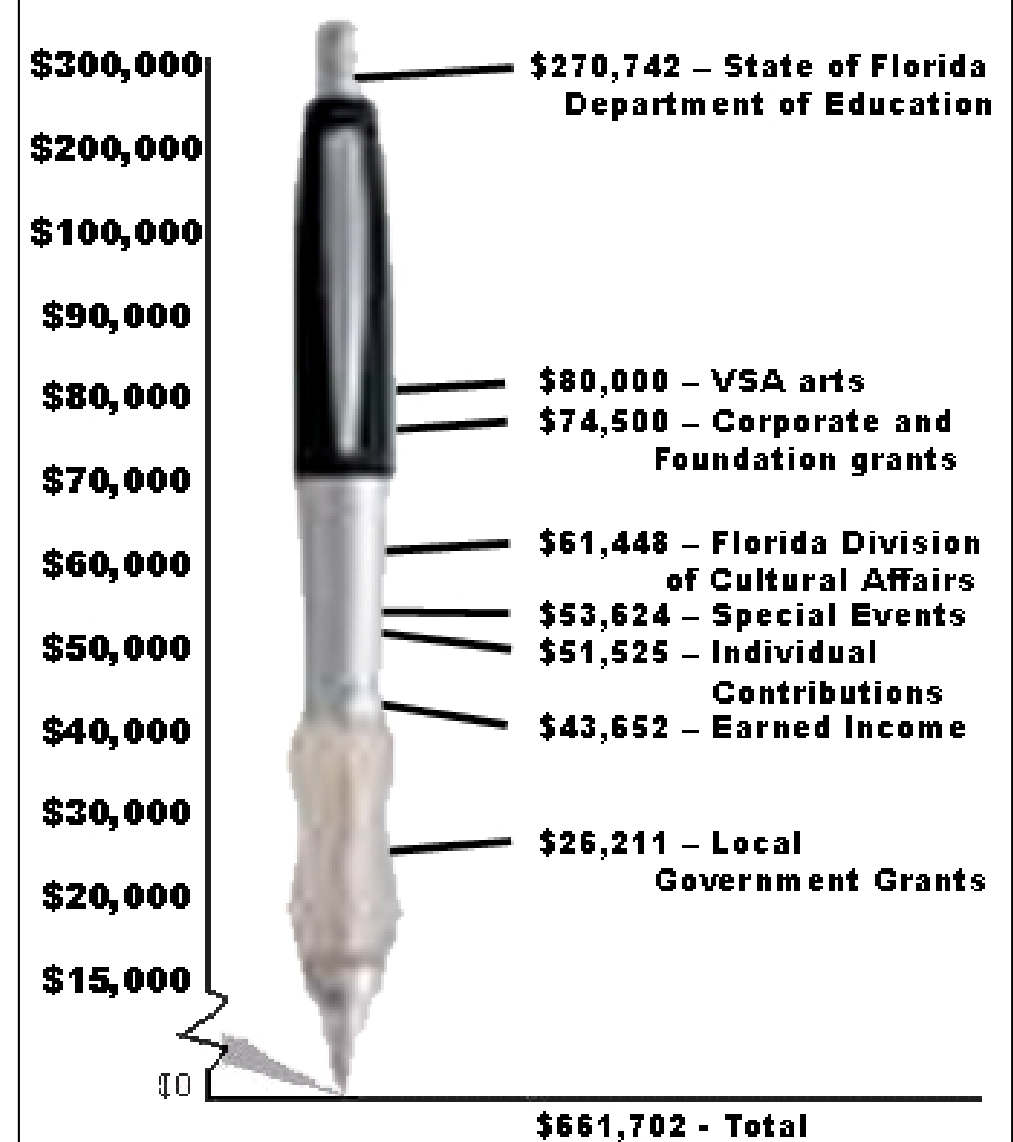
Program Money Allocation



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2009 Financial Information



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