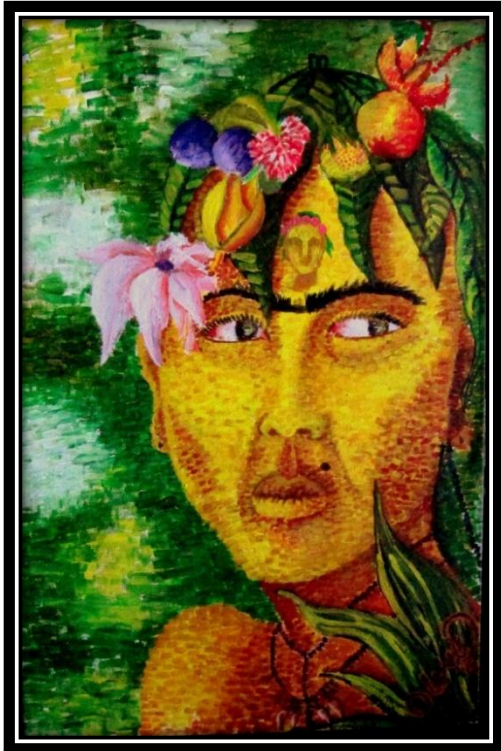




Children's AIDS Art Programme

Newsletter 2012



The mission of the Children's AIDS Art Programme (CAAP) is to provide art therapy to orphans and neglected children affected and infected with HIV/AIDS in the township of Khayelitsha, South Africa, as well as leading educational outings and fundraising for the students' higher education. We aim to foster an environment of support and opportunity, while helping to build our participants' self-esteem and hope for a brighter future.

As a prospective Art Therapy graduate student looking to gain field experience, I came upon the Children's AIDS Art Programme website in the spring of 2011. Deeply impressed by their mission to bring the therapeutic and healing benefits of the visual arts to children touched with HIV/AIDS, I contacted the organization's founder and executive director, Mary Miyata, to ask how I could become involved. Before I knew it, I was on a plane to Cape Town, South Africa, to meet with Mary and begin 7 weeks of long days, lasting

friendships, and unforgettable experiences. In this newsletter, I will touch upon the mission of CAAP and the wonderful work done through its art classes, as well as the progress achieved during our stay in South Africa, and the current and upcoming opportunities for CAAP in 2012.

CAAP CLASSROOM

It was clear from my first moments at the Baphumelele Children's Home in the township of Khayelitsha, where the CAAP art program is currently held, that this was a truly special place. Rosie Mashale, the remarkable woman who runs the orphanage, along with her wonderful team of administrative, childcare and social workers, has fostered a safe and loving environment for the HIV-affected, orphaned and neglected children in her care. Over the past few years, CAAP has built upon the supportive atmosphere by providing an art classroom free from stigma and discrimination, where the students are simply allowed to be kids. In painting, drawing and collage, the children have found a medium of expression through which to share their stories.

From the more senior youth present since the programs beginnings, to newer members picking up a paintbrush for the very first time, the students all seemed to exude a consistent and palpable energy of excitement in every class, with incredible results. There were wonderful transformations throughout the sessions, with many children developing into budding artists before our eyes! On our last day, one young boy announced that this was the first time in his life that he had ever felt a sense of pride and

accomplishment. His experience exemplifies the power of art in building confidence and a sense of self-worth.

CAAP DONATIONS

Despite great support from the Baphumelele staff and enthusiasm from the students, there was still much to be done! Though the list seemed daunting, with the help of countless donors and volunteers, CAAP was able to renew and renovate the art space in a way that maximizes our students' experience!



New sturdy doors have been installed in our art room. Now able to keep wind, cold weather and distractions out, the students' have the ability to focus and create in a calm space. New chairs, tables, art cupboards, and other furniture were generously supplied by Waltons, which allowed us to increase the number of children who could comfortably work in the space and take part in the art classes. After restocking on art supplies from our generous friends at Dala, the art room truly came alive! There is nothing more invigorating than the exciting potential held in a cupboard full of unused art supplies, just waiting to be smeared, dripped, sponged and splashed!

These numerous renovations all truly came together with the hiring of a new and extremely talented art teacher to continue running the program throughout the year! With an education in ceramic design and years of field experience, our instructor Abongile is passionate about working with children and has many exciting ideas for the upcoming months. Mandi, our volunteer seasoned art advisor and implementer, is a valuable addition to this years' art program. Along with Abo and Mandi, we have also hired two wonderfully gifted student art teachers to help with our younger and more recent additions to the program. Knowing how important leadership roles are in helping booster self-confidence within children, we believe it is beneficial to all of CAAP's students to give our older youth the opportunity to take on responsibilities within the art classes. Rosie Mashale, the founder of Baphumelele Children's Home, remains as this years' site manager.



Finally, through the generous donations of Mary's friends in California, we were able to receive overwhelming amounts of beautiful clothes and shoes for children of all ages at the orphanage. The girls and boys had lots of fun picking out their clothes and putting on fashion shows for their friends!

CAAP OUTINGS

Another important element to the Children's AIDS Art Programme is the organization of educational outings, 'Great Escapes', providing the children with the opportunity to explore a world outside their own. This year, we took some of the students swimming, to the movies, and set about exploring Cape Town's beautiful waterfront. Additionally, Mary was able to take a few of the senior boys to Bushman's Kloof, South Africa, where they spent 3 adventure-filled days on safari, hiking, fishing, exploring cave art, and even organizing a soccer tournament with youth in the nearby village. The boys' infectious energy had such an impact on the community in that even the staff was in tears when they left!



CAAP CALENDAR

Another important project executed during the trip to South Africa was the finalization and distribution of the 2012 CAAP Calendar. Featuring the whimsical mixed media portraits of some of CAAP's own youth artists, the museum-quality calendar turned out beautifully, and the profits generated from its sale will be of great help in sustaining the program. A big thank you to the design firm, printer, and everyone who supported us by purchasing one of our 2012 Calendars!

CAAP UPCOMING OPPORTUNITIES

As we celebrate the many positive developments that this past year has brought, we turn our eyes to the equally exciting opportunities arising for the Children's AIDS Art Programme in 2012. Google has asked to use the children's self-portrait work in an upcoming exhibition for the months of April and May at their world headquarters in Mountain View, California. Also, the leading biopharmaceutical company, Gilead, will be using our students' artwork for promotion and future exhibitions (e.g. 2012 AIDs day, multiple conferences and events). These partnerships will not only be a wonderful way to spread HIV awareness and give a voice to our young artists, but will help us in raising funds for their future education. Finally, we are submitting proposals left and right for

funding and various exciting events, such as the International AIDS 2012 Conference taking place in Washington, D.C, this coming July.

We are so grateful to everyone who has participated and supported us in our mission to bring the arts to the underprivileged children touched by HIV/AIDS in Khayelitsha, South Africa, and we are very much looking forward to what the future holds for the Children's AIDS Art Program and its outstanding students.

Thank you from a few Struggling Artists.



A personal note from Mary: Many thanks to Kristin Winter who created this newsletter. She is our treasured volunteer from Vancouver, Canada, and a dear friend who steadfastly worked by my side for over 7 weeks. We are grateful for her tremendous contribution to CAAP, and for sharing her perspectives on the program. Best to her in her Master's studies, and we hope someday soon she will consider making a permanent home with Children's AIDS Art Programme.

Thank you for all your support.

For more details, please contact Mary by;
Email: miyata.mary@gmail.com
Phone: (+1) 415-320-2442
childrensaidsartprogramme.org

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100 South Street, Suite 110, Sausalito, California 94965 United States of America Tax I.D. # 26-0118652