Art Therapy Programs Receive Continuing Approval from AATA

The art therapy programs (both the M.Ed. and the M.A.) were recently granted continuing Approval (accreditation) by the American Art Therapy Association (AATA). The Approval status is for seven years through 2021. Thank you to all those who completed a survey or otherwise participated in the self-study process!

2014 Wayne State Art Therapy Conference

On June 6th and 7th, the 2014 Wayne State Art Therapy Conference was hosted on campus by the Students of the Michigan Art Therapy Association (SMATA). The theme of this year’s conference was “Mindfulness.”

At the kick-off event on Friday, attendees enjoyed an evening at the Detroit Institute of Arts, followed by dinner and a screening of “Room to Breathe.”

The all-day Saturday conference featured a keynote address by Dr. Gillian Robbins on practicing Mindfulness techniques. Dr. Robbins, a counselor in WSU's Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) department, focused on ideas of self-care and being present in the moment to reduce anxiety and stress. There were also several breakout sessions, such as the Practice of Zentangle®, taught by certified Zentangle® instructor, Mary Milhaupt (current M.A. student).

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What is Mindfulness?

Mindfulness seems to be an increasingly popular trend in therapy and self-care techniques; but what is it, actually?

Mindfulness has its roots in Eastern cultures as a form of meditation and mind-training, and can be a very powerful tool in terms of bringing about more personal awareness. Mindfulness meditation pioneer Jon Kabat-Zinn (1994) gives the definition: “Mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way; on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally” (Wherever you go, there you are: Mindfulness meditation in everyday life, p.4).

Mindful techniques can include simple breathing and reflection practices that can be incorporated into one’s daily routine, as well as more time-demanding techniques, such as guided meditations. Mindfulness practices are more commonly being incorporated into the therapeutic process, particularly in working with issues of anxiety, trauma and stress-reduction.

In addition to Mindfulness there were sessions on other topics: Janis Kaufman, an art therapist at the Neighborhood Service Organization presented a session on the model of art therapy and microenterprise for persons with developmental disabilities. Eric Suter (current MA student) presented his research on art therapy and the digital age. There were also several professional development sessions led by recent graduates, including an art therapy jobs panel, a Board Certification Exam workshop and an art therapy supervision focus group.

Other notable features of the conference included a Mindfulness bead-making exchange, an improvisation troupe performance led by alumnus Carissa Pintar, and a very successful Empty Bowls lunch. The bowls used for the lunch were handmade and individually painted by Jamie Pillow (M.Ed. ’14) and Lavinia Hanachiuc, and the food was generously provided by Sydney Tremont (current MA student). Through the Empty Bowls portion of the conference, SMATA raised over $400 to donate to the Rosa Parks art therapy Program at the Capuchin Soup Kitchen. A special thanks goes out to SMATA, as well as all of the other volunteers whose time and donations helped to make the entire event so successful.
Mack Art Alive Program Finishes Strong

For three months this summer youth at Mack Alive, a community center serving the east side of Detroit, were involved in gardening and art making in a project called Art Alive. The project provided a unique opportunity for the youth to work together with neighbors, students and staff from the nearby Timbuktu Academy and Wayne State University, as well as volunteers from ArtsCorpsDetroit.

Today, anyone traveling down Mack Avenue near Fischer can’t help but notice the brilliant sunrise colored mural on the Mack Alive Community Center designed and facilitated by Detroit artist Jasmine Harris, with contributions from Mack Alive youth. Given the enormous scale of the building, the artists decided to cover the building in color—colors of the sunrise —and to overlay the color with an upbeat line design of paisleys and flowers, the Mack Alive logo and the title, “We Are One.”

Detroit artist and experienced gardener, Halima Cassells, coordinated the gardening portion of the program, which began with selecting and sprouting seeds, then progressed to designing, planting and tending to the garden. Through the gardening the children learned about compost, container gardening, how to mix organic soil with the dirt from the garden to improve the quality of the soil, and transferring plants to give them more room to grow.

Much more than gardening and painting techniques were learned through Art Alive, however. As Cassells put it, “what we are doing is important. We are sharing information, asking questions, being with each other, caring for the earth.” Throughout each week, the message was consistently one of thinking positive and being aware of learning how to embody the message that “We Are One.”

Throughout the season, youth used disposable cameras to record their experiences. Photographer and Wayne State art therapy student Laura Little showed the children how to use a camera and compose a photograph. The children were able to search for examples of patterns in nature and other scenes that would represent their experiences with gardening and painting.
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On days when gardening was not possible due to weather conditions, Cassels, Harris and Wayne State art therapy interns Laura Little and Jeneen Conley Berry led the youth in art-making. They explored various media, making observations of nature and self-awareness through themed art. Detroit teacher, Tyammie Perkins, reviewed the youth’s progress with them and facilitated recording their experiences in journals through writing and drawing.

The program culminated on September 6th with a Harvest Art Show. The drawings, paintings, collage work and photographs that were created during Art Alive were displayed, and participants were allowed to harvest whatever they wanted from the garden. Final evaluations showed that participants had fun, learned something new, made new friends and learned to be creative.

While the youth were working in the garden one day, a neighbor yelled across the lawn, “You’re making a difference!” The impact of this program was evident, and hopefully will continue to inspire similar projects in the future.

Art Therapy: The Movie

Art Therapy: The Movie is a documentary project started by filmmaker Alfonso Bui to highlight the impact that art therapy has had on an extensive variety of populations and programs around the world. The film is currently in its final stage of production and fundraising, with a current goal of being released in the spring of 2015.

To learn more information about this project, go to http://www.arttherapythemovie.com/ and https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/arttherapythemovie/art-therapy-the-movie-the-final-push
2014 Student Exhibition

The 2014 Art Therapy and Art Education student exhibition was displayed in the Art Department Gallery from May-June, 2014. The exhibit featured a selection of juried two and three-dimensional works from undergraduate and graduate students. The opening took place on Thursday, May 29th.

2014 Annual Community Service Award

The recipient of the 2014 annual award for Community Service in Art Education and Art Therapy was Susan Aaron-Taylor. Aaron-Taylor completed her undergraduate training at Wayne State in Art Education before attending the Cranbrook Academy of Art and earning her M.F.A. Following her early career as an art teacher, she joined the faculty at the College for Creative Studies (CCS) in 1973, where she continued to teach until her retirement in 2013. She was also Chair of the Crafts department as well as Section Chair of the Fibers department at CCS.

Aaron-Taylor is a mixed media artist, whose work encompasses her studies of Jungian psychology, delving into worlds of dreams, archetypes and the collective unconscious. She has exhibited her work in museums and galleries across the nation, and is included in several collections, including Cranbrook Art Museum, Kmart Corporation, and Westin Hotels.

2015 Award for Community Service Recipient

Rev. Dr. Charles Flood studied art education at Wayne State University and graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Education in 1968. Dr. Flood has worked with trauma victims both nationally and internationally, through the American Red Cross, the U.S. Department of State, as well as several organizations that he has personally helped to initiate. He has provided direct counseling services to those who were close to victims of a number of natural disasters, including the 9/11 tragedy and the 2005 tsunami in Sri Lanka.

Dr. Flood currently lives in Philadelphia where, as an ordained priest in the Episcopal Church he is Rector of the historic St. Stephen’s Church. His most recent work has been with the Jewish Community Relations Council in Philadelphia where he has been a co-coordinator of two multi-faith and multi-disciplinary missions to Israel as part of helping to formulate avenues to peace.
Art Therapist Giola Chilton to Visit Wayne State

The Art Therapy Department is planning to host a presentation by art therapist Dr. Giola Chilton during the first week in June, 2015. 
Dr. Chilton graduated in 2013 with a Doctor of Philosophy degree from Drexel University’s Creative Arts Therapies Program and has taught as an adjunct professor at George Washington University and Marymount University. She specializes in positive psychology and arts-based research.

Dr. Chilton’s lecture on positive psychology and art therapy will be open to the public on Friday, June 5th. She will also teach a one-credit course from June 5th – 7th that will be available to current students and alumni.

Save the date!

42nd Annual Noel Night

The 42nd annual Noel Night will take place on Saturday, December 6th, 5:00 – 10:00 p.m. in Detroit’s Midtown District.

The ARC Detroit has reserved a table for Life Choices consumer artists to exhibit and sell original art at the Cathedral Church of St. Paul, 4800 Woodward
(Entrance is in back of church off Warren)

For Further Information
Contact Janis Kaufman, Art Therapist
at 313-875-7601
Toni Johnstone (M.Ed., 2001) had a show of her work, “Across the Board” at Starring Gallery in Northville for the month of July, 2014!

Amy Rostollan (M.Ed., 2011) passed her Board Certification exam!

Lindsay Keyser (M.A., 2010) accepted a position with PSA Art Awakenings in Tucson, AZ!

Wendy Levine (M.A., 2014) was hired as an Art Therapist at the Karmanos Weisburg Center in Farmington Hills!

Tombi Stewart (1999-2002) was featured as the “Styleline Icon” in the September issue of Styleline Magazine!

Rachel Green (M.Ed., 2010) received her ATR!

Kelly Darke (M.Ed., 2009) opened a business: Mindful Art Center located in Livonia, MI!

Lourie Davis (M.Ed. 2000) received her MA in Psychology in June from NorthCentral University!
SMATA (Students of the Michigan Art Therapy Association) is taking a new direction this year and is off to a great start! The student-run organization recognizes the importance of reaching out to the community with a revised mission statement to include, not only students in the art therapy program, but all students at Wayne State University as well (see below).

This year, SMATA participated in the student organization fair for the first time and was able to connect with many students who had never heard of SMATA or were unaware of the art therapy program at Wayne State. Needless to say, students and staff alike were pleased to find out all that SMATA has to offer. So far, SMATA has had great turnout at events and the group is continuing to grow.

During the first meeting for art therapy students, the members made a group mandala and first-year students were welcomed to the program. One of SMATA’s main goals for art therapy students is to provide connections and support, both personally and professionally. A mentorship program is also in the works, which will allow first-year students to pair up with students who are further along in the program. SMATA’s first community event of the year was a Halloween party which was also a very strong success. Art therapy and non-art therapy students alike came in costume for fun, food, art, and a chance to connect with student and share information about the art therapy program.

SMATA has many upcoming events, including organizing an art supply drive with one of our service learning providers, Art & Soul, and participating in Noel Night on December 6th. An art therapy conference is also being planned for next summer (see page 6). For more information regarding SMATA or future events, please check out the SMATA bulletin board located in the Community Arts Building. As always, questions and comments are welcome! To reach out to SMATA or to be added to the mailing list, please e-mail us at waynestate.smata@gmail.com.

- Michelle Krason, SMATA Vice President

SMATA Mission Statement:
SMATA recognizes the importance of personal and professional development. We aim to educate students and the community about the value of art therapy. Our goal is to create a supportive environment that promotes growth for art therapy students in personal, professional and academic domains. This includes providing opportunities for self-care, fostering relationships among students and encouraging the expression of thoughts and ideas.
This past beautiful summer marked the successful conclusion of another academic year in Visual Arts Education at Wayne State University. The month of May brought the opening of the Annual Student art exhibition, which once again demonstrated the intense creativity and advanced studio skills that the students have developed through their studies here. In many ways this exhibition is the culmination of a year’s work for the students. It is also a sign of their commitment to the creative process which nurtures both the student and future teacher, and supports them in designing real art experiences for the children they will teach, rather than the “make and take with” approach, which encourages an assembly-line of nearly identical imitations-of-art.

This spring we presented our annual Community Service Award to Susan Aaron-Taylor, who is mentioned in more detail in the article on pg. 5. May also marked the completion of the second year of collaboration with the Charles Drew Transition Center, a DPS school for 18-26 year old adults with cognitive impairments. Each semester a group of 25 students are bussed to WSU where I teach a visual arts class, assisted by my students in the Theory and Practice course, as well as volunteers and service learners. This has been a very enriching experience for the WSU group, but has also produced significant changes in the behavior, engagement, and academic progress of the Drew students. It certainly has been one of the most rewarding experiences of many for me at WSU.

As I look to the future of this, and all arts programming, I want to encourage alumni to become more vocal, not just in support of Visual Arts education as an essential part of every child’s education, but in support of a public education that is guided by the wisdom of those who know the children best: their teachers. We need to do our homework, speak, write, march, blog, and vlog so that the intended stakeholders - parents and children - will learn that corporatization is only a means to funnel millions of dollars into the hands of corporate owners, and not into the improving the schools and materials needed for educating our children. The most pernicious sleight-of-hand used by the school “reformers” is the fact that both private and charter schools employ former public school teachers and others who studied at the same universities as the public schools do. And, even though these corporate schools only skim the best students from the top, their academic performance is rarely any different. Worse, the growing scandals of test score fixing, embezzlement, and profiteering reveal the corrupt nature of large and small charter systems across our country.