

THIS WINTER WE ARE WORKING WITH...

Self Advocacy Groups at Lifeworks
The Autism Society of Minnesota's Social Skills Groups for children and teens
St. Stephen's Community Social Group
Parks and Recreation Programs in Apple Valley, Edina, Plymouth and St. Paul
Highland Friendship Club
Minneapolis Public Schools, including Cityview Elementary, Lake Harriet Middle, Washburn High School and Transition Plus.
Stillwater Area High School Transition Program
The Children's Museum, offering tree workshops during some of their All Play First Fridays
Lifeworks, as co-presenters at the ARRM Conference



Photographer, Scott Strehle

**ACT, WRITE, DANCE, PAINT,
LISTEN, IMAGINE, CREATE, COMMUNICATE,
SOCIALIZE, EXPERIENCE, LEARN.**

UPSTREAM ARTS HAS MOVED

Our new address is:
3501 Chicago Ave. S.
Minneapolis, MN 55407
(in Pillsbury House Community Center)

**Our phone, fax, email and website
are the same:**
phone: 612.331.4584
fax: 480.393.5587
info@upstreamarts.org
www.upstreamarts.org



Upstream Arts, Inc.
3501 Chicago Ave. S.
Minneapolis, MN 55407

THE CURRENT

Upstream Arts' Newsletter | Winter 2009

The mission of Upstream Arts is to enhance the lives of adults and youth with disabilities by fostering creative communication and social independence through the power of arts education.

www.upstreamarts.org

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JUMPING IN

—By Laressa Dickey, Poet, Dancer,
and Upstream Arts Teaching Artist

A year ago, I cold-called Julie Guidry at Upstream Arts after Googling “community arts Minneapolis.” I called looking for ways to integrate myself, a poet whose art is mostly conceived in solitude, into the larger community. Soon after that, I jumped in—upstream—and became a teaching artist.

What I love about the workshops we create with participants is this: *insouciance*. Lighthearted unconcern. We meet participants in a funny, vulnerable place of play. We write poems together, with lines like: *Success is black/Sounds like Sheng*. We use our bodies no matter the perceived disability.

All of Charlie's physical exploration is welcomed as we warm-up; I mirror his hands as he squeezes them together and shakes them. His eyes are bright; he laughs. He knows I am watching and playing with him. We have a dance of gestures. Soon he signs, “All done.”

What Upstream Arts has offered me is a chance to expand the scope of my audience and my artwork. The more time I spend writing poems with participants or creating movement with them, the more I change my ideas about art-making and success.

The painter Marc Chagall said, “The dignity of the artist lies in [her] duty of keeping awake the sense of wonder in the world.” Being in the community of Upstream Arts has captivated me. I leave workshops feeling that this is an exquisite place to be, because here is a place where we gather with participants to play—using our listening skills as we watch two performers, or following directions as we add to a collaborative painting. The beauty is that whatever we accomplish is what we accomplish. And that is all there is.

UPSTREAM ARTS' ARTISTS AROUND TOWN

Stay warm this winter watching our teaching artists direct, perform, act, sing, dance and teach around the Cities: **Harry Waters Jr.** will be in *Conference of the Birds* with Pangea World Theater from March 12-19, at the Avalon Theater (HOBT). **Suzy Messerole** is directing *Love's Labour Lost* for the Shakespearean Youth Theatre through March 1. **Norah Long** will be in *7 Brides for 7 Brothers*, at Chanhassen Dinner Theatres through June. **Laressa Dickey** will be teaching a course at the Loft Literary Center this Spring.

INTERESTED IN UPSTREAM ARTS PROGRAMS?

- Watch our 7 minute informational video at www.upstreamarts.org
- Bring us in for a **free** one-hour workshop so you can see how we work
- Call us at 612.331.4584

ART & ADVOCACY

“Small things like an inviting posture or a subtle smile can often be the difference between success and failure in a social environment. By working on the foundations of expression, Upstream Arts gives participants the power to communicate independently.”

—Adrian Freeman, Training Coordinator at Lifeworks on Upstream Arts' work with their Self Advocacy Group



Photographer, Scott Strebler

Over the past year, Upstream Arts led monthly workshops with Lifeworks' Self Advocacy group, using the arts to foster communication skills essential to self advocacy.

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WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT

With the economy in decline, grants and foundation funding for the Arts is dwindling. The Arts are at risk of being labeled non-essential or superfluous. Like most non-profits who rely on charitable giving, Upstream Arts has experienced this firsthand.

There is proof, however, that our arts programs are essential and fulfill a basic need: over the last year we have more than tripled the number of our programs, while doubling the number of individuals we serve.

The word has spread that our work is important. Our clients have seen how the arts can be used to build a skill set for communication and socialization that is crucial for successfully integrating into a job or community.

Please consider supporting us this year, so that we can continue to subsidize our programs, expand the number of people we reach and to pass on the power of creative expression to individuals with disabilities.

BAD FEELINGS

When I miss the bus
It can throw me off
My day
When everyone looks
Down on me
When everyone wants
Me at once
I can't move my arms
I can't relax
I'm stressed like Black
Angry like Yellow or Red
Frustrated, Confused
A piercing ZZZZZZ!
Like a dentist's drill
A hard Mh! Or Ahwh!
Boom-Boom-Boom

—By Upstream Arts participants at the Courage Center, exploring what it means to have a bad day