



Northeast Center for Special Care

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Information Bulletin

Healing People Through Creativity

Fine Arts & Performing Arts Programs at Northeast Center for Special Care

The Fine Arts and Performing Arts Programs encourage self-growth of individuals while they participate in the building of their community. Through the visual arts (painting, sculpture, collage and environment building), writing and theater, music and movement, individuals become engaged in diverse forms, which tap many dimensions in their life experience.

These modalities carry them into new avenues of creativity while seamlessly developing role recovery with new or renewed identities as artists, musicians, writers, and actors. Cognitive rehabilitation is also facilitated promoting improved concentration, problem solving, visual perceptual and motor planning skills. Self-expression naturally leads to emotional health, including the development of positive social and other life skills.

Why is fine art and performing art so effective in promoting wellness? Though in life uncertainty is scary and disorienting, in creativity being in a state of the unknown is necessary and magical.

Making art, music or poetry helps us transform what we know about ourselves in the world, developing one's freedom to express.



Being able to articulate one's feelings and perceptions through words, music and images is a validation of one's unique presence on earth.

Familiar activities soft peddle individuals to explore diverse modes of creativity, leading to

more structured learning in other realms. Often social interaction, as in the spontaneous making of music and dance or collaborative mural making, broadens the neighbor's outlook on life. Created through cumulative processes the completed art is always greater and more affirming than one can ever anticipate.

The Fine Arts and Performing Arts programs at Northeast Center for Special Care start with the premise that all people are inherently artists who can develop organically in one or more creative forms.

Professional artists, Carolyn Corbett in writing/theater, Peter Bass in music/movement, Rick Soshensky in music therapy, and artist Susan Togut in the visual arts, facilitate individuals to access their inner lives and find authentic modes of expressions. The facilitators guide individuals gently to rely on themselves, creating through self-direction as much as possible. Each program, in its own way, helps the neighbors to feel empowered, to take risks and move through gradual steps.



For some participant, evolution in these programs brings them to a realization that they are in fact, writers, musicians and artists. Some may have experienced these roles in their earlier lives to have them renewed and expanded in their current experiences.

Others engage in these art forms for the first time and come to recognize new, positive identities with great pride and joy.

After the challenging difficulties all have experienced, these new identities are among the first and often, most important steps in building new lives following the shattering of old ones.

As one of the goals of the Fine Arts and Performing Arts Programs at Northeast Center for Special Care the three facilitators of these programs collaborate on special events, performances and projects. These include:

Seasonal multi-media performances with music, dance, poetry, and special sets or environments within which the performances occur.

Indoor and outdoor performances in different settings on the Northeast Center for Special Care campus including street fairs, poetry nights, and cabaret format theatrical productions.

An outdoor Sculpture Garden will include a performance stage surrounded by comfortable seating and a garden tended by the neighbors, as well as stone sculptures, interactive musical sculptures and simulated stained glass totems.

Other collaborative projects include a recently published book of poetry, a calendar for 2006 with words and images. These projects incorporate some of the most interesting art produced by Resident-Neighbor at Northeast Center for Special Care, and preserving the legacy of their creative work.

In giving their work a greater audience the neighbors will be increasingly empowered as their work reaches the larger community.

Collaborative environment building seeks to enliven indoor and outdoor spaces with dynamic, and changing art as they create a sense of place and community. Murals with words and images and patchwork quilts exemplify simpler projects.

In the coming year neighbors, staff, family and outside community members will work collaboratively on a Living With Uncertainty Sanctuary, a large, comprehensive project. This contemplative place will be built on the Northeast Center for Special Care campus with many simulated and Dalle D'Vere stained glass components created by all. A labyrinth of pathways will offer a meditative journey to the sanctuary.

The Fine Arts and Performing Arts Programs seek to engage individuals deeply in the process of creativity. The objective is the creation of works of art, writing, and music through the cultivation of artistic skills and sensibilities. These programs are intended to have a profound therapeutic effect. The completed works of art, writing and music stand as concrete proof of this metamorphosis.

Individuals with disabilities are engaged in the creation of art (visual art, writing, music, etc.), helping them grow in this process until their creations are beautiful in their own eyes and others.

Consequently individuals undergo a fundamental transformation. They may have begun this process viewing themselves and being viewed by others as handicapped. Through their profound creative experiences, however, they come to experience their wholeness and assume their identities as artists.



The general effect of the intense focus and creative energy generated in these programs are to assist individuals in experiencing themselves in a uniquely positive way and to thereby raise self-esteem and hope about the future. Simultaneously, the collective effect of all the creative work, at Northeast Center for Special Care, builds a sense of community. Over time, individuals creative works will reach and profoundly impact the greater community and encourages their own reintegration in that greater community.

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