



Promoting self-growth and effective life skills through art-making

In Review

Fall 2006

Dear ArtSpring Supporters:

With gratitude for your continued support of ArtSpring over the years, I am pleased and proud to provide this update of the work that you have enabled us to do.

Over the past year, ArtSpring has been pursuing long-term programming partnerships that will serve as best practice alternatives to intervention and rehabilitation for women and girls in the criminal justice system in Florida. Having worked in this system for 12 years, we believe that specifically designed gender-based programs for women and girls can have a great impact on crime prevention and recidivism. ArtSpring is on the leading edge of gender-based programming and has begun implementing pilot programs that address alternatives that can be evaluated and proven to be successful. Most specifically, ArtSpring has begun to find ways that combine our adult programming with our youth programming to have a great impact in our community. The programs reported in this newsletter outline these efforts and will involve utilizing adult female inmates and female ex-offenders as viable and necessary mentoring components to juvenile girls' intervention programming. We believe this approach to intervention is a winning situation.

On behalf of the Board and staff of ArtSpring, I know that you will enjoy reading about our continued achievements and successes which you have helped us attain. Thank you for your support and belief in our work, we could never have reached our goals. Our choices today do affect the future!

Leslie Neal, Artistic Director

Watch for the announcement of the release of a Documentary on ArtSpring and the *Bridging the GAP* program produced by the Annie E. Casey Foundation in November!!!

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Programming Update: *Bridging the GAP* Writing Workshop

Governor Bush's office released a press announcement on March 10, 2006, explaining that the *Bridging the GAP* (BGAP) project "is a collaborative effort between the Florida Dept. of Corrections, The Florida Dept. of Juvenile Justice, Project Director, Vicki Lopez Lukis, the Girls Advocacy Project (GAP) and ArtSpring, Inc., in which female adult inmates serving long prison sentences will work to educate female juvenile offenders through writing workshops." (See a link to the full press release on our website under News).

The 13-week BGAP program was inaugurated at Broward Correctional Institution in February and community guests attending the final presentation on May 20 were moved to tears.

The women participating had been involved in ArtSpring's *Inside Out* program for a minimum of five years. They performed their written works from a script created by ArtSpring Artistic Director Leslie Neal. The script incorporated the women's writings into a multidisciplinary performance of dance, text, drama and music.



BGAP participants with Project Coordinator, ArtSpring staff, and Community Volunteers

A film crew commissioned by the Annie E. Casey Foundation for a documentary on the BGAP project filmed at BCI for two days including the presentation. They returned to the GAP program with the *BGAP* partners to share with the girls in detention video clips of the women talking directly to the girls as well as some of their writings. The girls were

truly moved and disturbed at the reality of long-term sentences, and those of us who were there saw the power of women in prison to make an impact on the lives of the girls in the GAP program.

Comments from Community Guests, Girls in Detention, and the Department of Corrections about the *Bridging the GAP* Project

“I’ve never experienced anything like jail and from their experience I never want to come back. Looking and listening to what you 12 women had to say, really made me realize to think twice. I will really take you 12 women everywhere I go and I am very sure of that. Why? Because I love my life and this was a mistake of me even coming here. The program on Monday really inspired me to go home and do right.”

“You ladies taught me a lot – watch what I do, and don’t go to the big jail. NEVER! Stay out of DJJ, don’t go to a program, obey my mom, go to school. Thank you!!! For having me realize what I need to do to change my life.”

- Girls in Detention

The vast majority of girls caught up in the juvenile justice system have a history of physical or sexual victimization.

Yet, juvenile facilities often do not offer adequate mental health care trauma counseling tailored to girls’ needs.

“I think the presentation to the GAP girls will be an interesting one....I hope the film and you can capture the girls expressions and reactions – of which I am sure there will be many. I can only believe the GAP teens will be deeply impacted by the presentation. It should change their lives in a positive way. Kudos to all of you! This is amazing work and I am honored that you included me in the audience. Let me know what I can do to help going forward. I was really impressed and so glad to have been there. “

- Community Guest

“It’s not often that a program touches me..., and I have seen countless many during the course of my 14-year-tenure as a program manager at the Annie E. Casey Foundation. It was clear as I interacted with the inmates, watched their performance, and later saw the impact of the women’s stories on the young girls in detention that ArtSpring has developed a unique rehabilitative and restorative model.”

- Joy Thomas Moore, Consultant, The Annie E. Casey Foundation

“Thanks to you and your staff for helping the women to put on such an amazing program this weekend. It was a life changing experience. I appreciate your years of hard work in our facilities. I look forward to continuing this work.”

- Laura E. Bedard, Ph.D., Deputy Secretary, Florida Department of Corrections

Spotlight: Welcome new Board members- Janice Billie & Jill Ecklund

We are thrilled to welcome Janice Billie and Jill Ecklund to our Board. Though both were appointed recently (at the end of June), their involvement with ArtSpring extends far beyond their recent appointment to the Board of Directors.

Janice Billie is the Editor for the Seminole Tribune, the official newspaper for the Seminole Tribe of Florida, one of two federally recognized Native American tribes in Florida. Janice was released from prison after serving 12 years at Broward Correctional Institution and 3 years at Jefferson Correctional and was a participant of the *Inside Out* workshop at both institutions. Janice’s unique perspective helps to provide a voice for the women ArtSpring serves.

Jill Ecklund is a Financial Consultant who serves as Co-Chair of the Girls Advocacy Project (GAP) Community Advisory Board. GAP is a successful intervention/education program at the Miami Dade Regional Detention Center designed to cater to the emotional needs of girls in juvenile detention. Jill’s involvement with GAP led her to participate in the *Bridging the GAP* writing workshop earlier this year as a community volunteer. The experience got her ‘hooked’ on ArtSpring; she continued volunteering as an assistant facilitator in the summer *Inside Out* session at Broward Correctional and currently attends weekly at Homestead Correctional for the next phase of the *BGAP* program.

Featured Artwork

The following is an excerpt from the *BGAP* presentation material written to a girl in detention by Deidre, a woman incarcerated at Broward Correctional:

*I wish I were you,
and had someone reaching out when I was your age.
I wish I were you,
getting the chance not to be me.
Getting the chance to learn ...Choice.
Having someone come along and say,
"You're worth it. Don't throw your life away."
If you could only sit in my shoes 24 hours a day
And see what I see, and know what I know,
You would know there is a better way,
And somehow fight to find it.
I wish I were you.*

Thank You for making ArtSpring Programs possible!

Would you like to sponsor an ArtSpring program? Or perhaps a portion of one?

Consider the following:

- ◆ \$15,000 covers an entire year of programming (3 sessions) for one level at one facility (each session serves approximately 20 participants)
- ◆ \$5,000 covers one 13-week session for one level at one facility (each session serves approximately 20 participants)
- ◆ \$250 covers one participant for one 13-week session
- ◆ \$100 covers supplies for one 13-week session

In addition to cash donations, we need art supplies, office supplies, volunteer time and other non-cash and in-kind donations and services. Please contact us at 305-278-1601 or artspring@artspring.org if you would like to help!

Inside Out is now at Lowell Correctional Institution in Ocala, Florida!! Lowell CI is the largest female prison in Florida housing roughly 3,500 women. We have now reached our goal to offer *Inside Out* at every state-operated maximum security facility in Florida!

S.A.G.E.— Special Arts for Girls' Empowerment

New Programming Initiative: the *SAGE* Program in partnership with the Miami-Dade County Juvenile Assessment Center (JAC)

ArtSpring was approached by Wansley Walters, Director of the Juvenile Assessment Center of Miami-Dade County, in late 2005 to design a community-based program for female youthful offenders that would be an option to current adjudicated programs for girls. So, ArtSpring developed *SAGE*.

The *SAGE* Program is a collaborative partnership between ArtSpring, Inc., the Juvenile Services Department (JSD) National Demonstration Project, and the Juvenile Services Division Agency Partners. The program is designed to target girls in the Juvenile Justice System who may be diverted from formal processing by the JSD to a post commitment or alternative treatment program. *SAGE* will engage girls in an individualized, gender-based, developmentally appropriate and culturally sensitive transition plan that collaborates arts-based on-going programming with a diverse network of service providers. *SAGE* will be evaluated by faculty from Rutgers University as to the impact on gender-specific arts programming for girls. This program reflects ArtSpring's philosophy that the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual needs of women and girls are fundamental in this holistic approach to program design.

SAGE will be implemented in January 2007 at a community-based diversion program and will then be expanded to other similar programs throughout the county. We are thrilled at this exciting opportunity!



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ArtSpring's mission is to support self-growth and effective life skills through art-making. Our focus is devoted to arts intervention programming and the value of arts education in underserved communities. Since 1994, ArtSpring has offered specifically designed arts-based workshops through two principal on-going programs: *Inside Out- Expressive Arts Workshops for Incarcerated Women* and *Breaking Free- Expressive Arts for Girls*. In 2005, ArtSpring implemented *Rites and Passages- Theatre and Drumming Workshops for Male Inmates* (RAP). ArtSpring is recognized for offering the longest running arts-based programming in corrections facilities in our state. Our interdisciplinary arts programs incorporate movement, theatre games, writing, drawing, music, story telling, meditation, guided imagery and performance as transformational tools for self-reflection and personal change.

ArtSpring's programs promote creativity, personal growth, effective life skill development and confident self-expression. ArtSpring believes in the power of art to transform individuals and communities. Our creative workshops encourage personal reflection, self-awareness, acceptance, commitment, tolerance and individual choice-making that provide participants with better tools for survival while confined in institutionalized settings and upon their release.

Thank you! Spring/Summer 2006 contributors:

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Women who are violent offenders are even more likely to have been abused and to be incarcerated for responding to that abuse violently.