



ARTS AFTER SCHOOL ANNUAL REPORT 2003-2004

CHANGING LIVES...Personal Transformation
Through Community Service

Co-sponsored by
The Christian Association and the Arts and Spirituality Center
2003-2004

"Train a child in the way he/she should go..." *Proverbs 22:6*
"Let us put our minds together and see what life we can make for our children."
Sitting Bull, Lakota Sioux 1877

PURPOSE:

The Arts After School (AAS) program connects under-served children in West Philadelphia with university students through an affiliation with after school programs at a church and a full-service shelter. AAS exposes children to various art forms, and uses art as an opportunity to discuss culture and ethnicity, diversity, conflict resolution, feelings, and career goals. University students are encouraged to share their varied backgrounds and culture throughout the year as well as to serve as mentors, role models, and teachers.

THE YEAR IN REVIEW:

This was our third year operating the Arts After School program with approximately 26 children at Calvin Presbyterian Church, located at 60th and Master, and our second year providing services to 10 children at St. Barnabas Women's Shelter at 60th and Girard. Each location is quite distinct; each operates differently and serves a different clientele. As such, these sites provide different challenges for the program and unique experiences for the university student volunteers.

St. Barnabas Women's Shelter, a full service social agency provides a six-month housing opportunity for mothers with children who have few resources. Although the program had fewer children, the children really looked forward to visiting CA house on alternating weeks.



They were always anxiously anticipating their trip to the CA house and the warm reception they received upon arrival. The children enjoyed the spaciousness of the house and were delighted to pair off with the University students. The children blossomed as University students held them on their laps, showed them how to use a glue gun, or shared an artistic creation with them.

By the second semester, the children were not able to travel to the AAS program, so we traveled to them! Our University students were challenged to develop activities that could be used at the new setting and address challenges that arose. The students were well-prepared and both amenable and flexible to any challenges. An unexpected result of the location change was that some of the mothers started attending and participating in the program as well!

The program at Calvin Presbyterian Church comprised of children attending neighborhood schools was twice the size of the program at St. Barnabas. When asked “what they wanted to be”, the children initially replied, a “rapper”, “football player”, and occasionally shrugged their shoulders and gave an “I don’t know”. Before the year ended, these same children were emphatic in their individual declaration of being “doctors”, “lawyers”, “teachers” and other professionals. The University students had reinforced an attitude of “you can do and be whatever you want to be” through verbal and non-verbal communication. Additionally, they enhanced and acquired new abilities, skills and knowledge in a variety of subjects discussed.



WHAT WE DO:

University students, who enjoy the arts, are artists themselves, or who want to do significant community service with children, are recruited during the first few weeks of the academic year. The weekly program affirmations by Ms. Marcy, or sometimes called, and a artist; the visiting artists have musicians, drummers and activities also include reading the children humanistic values promotes a discussion of the projects included attaching a child “fly” to a mobile (Wings), dancing and acting out the could represent (Yesterday I



learned how to make cornhusk figures (Juneteenth), do Chinese calligraphy (Sam and the Lucky Money), experienced other cultures and traditions (Sing Me a Song).

included singing and Mama Marcy as she was a performance by a visiting been storytellers, dancers, impersonators. The a relevant book that teaches and an art activity that story’s themes. Some art picture of what makes each creating a color wheel , emotions various colors had the Blues). We also

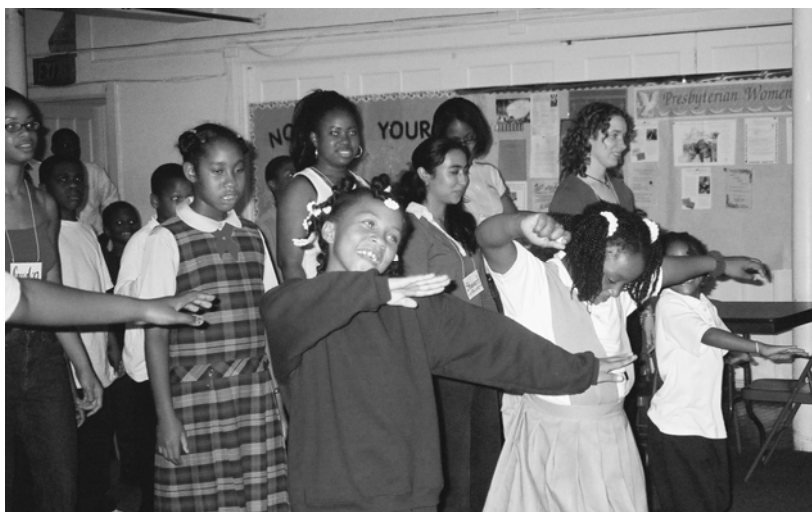


When a leading entertainer was cited for inappropriate actions concerning children, we had a discussion about “good touch, bad touch”. This really fostered open communication between the children at both sites as we dealt openly and frankly about this issue.

While the program was designed to provide a service opportunity for undergrad Penn students, we were pleased to

welcome graduate students into our roster and to have the continued support of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. This year’s volunteers were an international group of students this year with representation from Africa, China, England and Nepal, India, as well as students from various regions of the United States and the Caribbean. Each brought something different to the relationships formed each week between the children and students. Some examples are:

- Our African and English volunteers, Imo, Kelechi, and Kiel, reminded the children of racial and cultural diversity. When Kelechi, short in stature, quiet, soft-spoken, unassuming person played his native drums, what a difference! Kiel, raised in England, also very soft spoken, medium height with a strong sense of self-assurance and Imo, the tallest of the three, each had a magnetism that caused the children to flock to their sides.
- Sharareh, our graduate student volunteer came from Nepal, India. She shared her culture and tradition with the children during the year in dance and storytelling.
- Michael, a Villanova student, was often cornered by one of the boys to discuss in remarkable detail the status of Villanova’s team, particularly during the basketball season and “March Madness.” During the course of these conversations, Michael would remark



admirably to the boy, “Man, with your ability to remember all the plays and statistics, you should consider sports management”.

- Desiree was able to share with her own relationship with her brother and how they differed with two children who were sisters in a conversation about the girls’ relationship with one another.
- Jenny always introduced

herself as the future President of China and has been a faithful volunteer with this program for two years. Everyone knows Jenny and her winsome way.

- Volunteers Matt, the European-American Sarah, Julia, Kate, Aimee, Lisa and Stephanie used their diverse backgrounds to talk about skin color, California, and the family crests of Hungary. Shakira was busy observing the interactions for a class project as well as playing with the children.
- Jerryanne and Tanekia used dances of the Caribbean to stretch the children's boundaries, while Farralon and Andrine, who both work at the CA, freely volunteered these extra hours to be a part of a fun program.

As the University and dreams with the introduction period, the able to relate to at least

"I feel this is the best program that has come through since I've been here."

--Faith Manning, Director
St. Barnabas Women's Shelter



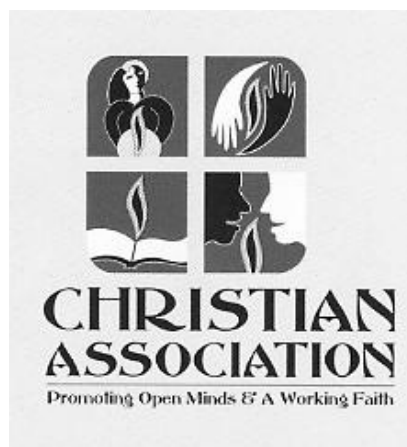
students shared their hopes children during the children at both sites were one of the volunteers.

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Ms Marcy Francis, Artist in Residence, Christian Association





OUR VOLUNTEERS IN 2003-2004:

Christopher Amos ♦ Sharareh Bajracharya ♦ Kiel Berry ♦ Lisa Bubbers ♦ Carol Ortiz-Christenberry ♦ Julia Cunningham ♦ Stephanie Gonzalez-Turner ♦ Tanekia Hall ♦ Jerryanne Heath ♦ Robert McRae ♦ Sarah Morgan ♦ Kelechi Okerche ♦ Matthew Sears ♦ Shakirah Simley ♦ Jenny Suen ♦ Desiree Tunstall ♦ Imo Udom ♦ Michael Williams ♦ Andrine Wilson ♦ Farralon Wilson