

UPSTREAM ARTS' ARTISTS AROUND TOWN

Don Mabley-Allen will be performing in Bedlam Theatre's *King Lear Project*, June 4 - 7.

Harry Waters Jr. will be teaching this summer at Penumbra Theatre Company's Summer Institute and Directing *Fierce Love* for the Black Pride Festival in September.

Charles Fraser will be teaching summer camps at the Guthrie Theater. In September, his set design for *Leaving Iowa* will be at the Jon Hassler Theater, and he'll be performing in *Buddy - The Buddy Holly Story* at the History Theatre October 3 - November 1.

Joe Mailander will be playing with his band, the *Okee Dokee Brothers* at schools, libraries, bookstores, and after-school programs throughout the summer and fall, and at the Minnesota State Fair in September.

Sara Richardson is performing in *Beyond the Owing* at the Red Eye Theater July 20th-31st and in *Super Monkey* at the Dowling Theater at the Guthrie this fall.

Ryan Hoag will be working at Tennis and Life camps at Gustavus Adolphus College this summer.

Mehri Davis will be doing a collaborative art residency and staff training with Lifeworks in June, followed by a move back to Ohio to start graduate school for School and Community Counseling in the fall. *Thank you for all your work and dedication to Upstream Art. We'll miss you.*

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



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

THE CURRENT

Upstream Arts' Newsletter - Summer 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.

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www.upstreamarts.org

A WARRIOR IN THE WIND - Matt Guidry, Upstream Arts' Program Director

It's spring here in Minnesota. Whether you're a homegrown citizen or a transplant to the Upper Midwest, you understand the feelings and emotions that swell up after the long dark winter. Joy. Elation. Relief. It's a time of new growth and new possibilities. Even though we see it every year, I'm still amazed and surprised to see the life popping out of the ground and the colors exploding all around. Spring creates an excitement in the population. The energy that permeates the city is palpable to the senses.

This is the kind of excitement and amazement that I see on the faces of teachers, aides, and parents as they react to the unexpected. Eyes widen with astonishment when a participant, right on cue, throws their arms wide open when asked to express how they are feeling with a physical gesture. Jaws drop as another participant, when asked to describe a certain piece of music, says, "It's like an ancient warrior sitting in the wind." This quote came from an elementary student with Autism. Abstract metaphor is not supposed to be one of his strengths.

Upstream Arts is successful because we enter the spaces we teach without preconceived notions about what individuals can and cannot do. We assume ability, meaning we orient from the premise that every one can participate in every activity according to their strengths. What we find is that when we expect great things from individuals, individuals achieve great things.

Here at Upstream Arts we are feeling the excitement of the new season. We approach each new class with the exhilaration one gets on that first 80-degree day of the year. It might be unexpected, but it feels so right.



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Upstream Arts uses dance, movement and theater to show how our bodies, our face, our hands can communicate more than our words are saying.

Feeling the Rhythm

Charmed & Calm
Tip toeing to bed in my aquarium
The breeze on a sailboat
Outside of a castle at night
Drums & thunder
Hot for a week
Then it's nice when it rains
Running like a cheetah in Egypt
Excited & Calm
Softball in the 40's
Dancing under the lights in New York
Piano in a fancy restaurant
Strong jumping violins
Yo-yos for all the royalty
Energy from fire

- By Upstream Arts participants at St. Louis Park Transition Plus, inspired by Classical, Eastern, Rock and Jazz Music

POETRY CORNER

I teach with Upstream Arts because it is a way for me to constantly learn, and I always leave programs inspired and excited. The light in the eyes of our participants when they are given the opportunity to perform in front of groups is like nothing I have ever seen! It is a way of celebrating people with disabilities that everyone who works in this field should experience!

- Mehri Davis, Visual Artist, Education Assistant and Upstream Arts Teaching Artist

We are honored to be one of ten national recipients of the *Arts Connect All* grant from VSA arts and the MetLife Foundation to carry out our "Success in the Arts" inclusive residency program in eight Minneapolis Public Schools. This new program will provide a much needed opportunity for students with and without disabilities to interact and create together, while gaining awareness, understanding and respect for one another. We are excited to have this chance to expand our programming and be present in more schools than ever before.

MetLife Foundation



Your contributions in combination with grants like these help our organization continue to deliver high quality, innovative programs. Consider making a tax deductible donation to Upstream Arts today.

SUCCESS IN THE ARTS

THE ART OF COMMUNICATION

- Bree Sieplinga, Upstream Arts' Associate Director

Communication is tricky. Every day I work to communicate the impact of our work in grant proposals. Sometimes I use quotes like this one from a high school teacher: "There were students in that group that I have never seen engaged in anything, that you had fully, actively engaged... they were enrapt." Sometimes I use stories that our artists tell me when they come back from a program, about a teenager, that finally, after weeks of feigned indifference, volunteered to lead a group activity, or a participant with limited mobility who surprised everyone when he got up out of his chair to help blow out the candles on an imaginary birthday cake. Sometimes I use evaluation data: In our school programs this fall, we saw improvement in almost every student in skills essential to self-expression, social interaction and group participation. There are many ways to say it, and show it, but it all boils down to this: Communication is tricky. And it is essential to every aspect of our lives. So we take a creative, interactive approach to teaching it. And it works. Better than textbooks, and better than lectures. For people of all abilities.

So please consider supporting our work. Whether it's data, stories or quotes that convince you, your donation will help us teach the art of communication.