

# THE CURRENT

Upstream Arts' Newsletter - Spring 2008

In one Minneapolis High School of 1,200 students, how many Special Education students a semester are accommodated for participation in an art class?

Only ONE.

Although this is not the case in all of our schools, arts programming in and out of the schools continue to decline. Individuals with disabilities often have limited access to the opportunities that are available.

Upstream Arts is working to change this reality by offering arts programs to schools that are low cost, high quality and easily integrated in to what is already being done in the classroom.

Additionally, Upstream Arts' programs work to compliment Transition Programs, Self Advocacy groups or organizations interested in exploring how the arts can deliver alternatives to traditional forms of communication, along with opportunities to grow, develop and practice real life social skills.

Our approach is accessible; we explore how theater, poetry, music and dance can tell the stories of our lives. We use drums to share our emotions, poems to solve the day's problems and theater to better understand how our actions can impact those around us.

We invite you to come check us out, or bring us in to your classroom, day program or facility – to see how we ask individuals to write, dance, paint, listen, create, communicate, socialize and learn. We are Upstream Arts – moving against the current.

*Julie Guidry  
Executive Director  
Upstream Arts*

## Jim Explores

**Jim the Texan is cranky.  
Jim is as cranky as a vulture.  
Jim has a bum job and crashed his car.  
He will look in the Want Ads and tow his car.  
He feels so so much better,  
he'll visit his mom.**

**-Written by Upstream Arts participants**

## Upcoming Programs

Summer Art Workshops for Youth and Adults  
at the Courage Center

June 18 -20, 2008,  
1pm - 3pm  
Ages: 14 to Adult

In, Out and Upstream Camp  
with Edina Adaptive Recreation

Monday - Thursday, Aug 4-7 2008,  
10:00am - 3:30pm  
Ages: 13 -21

Theater Workshop Series for Adults  
at the Courage Center

Mondays, Sept. 8 - Oct. 13, 2008,  
12:30pm - 2pm  
Ages: 18 and up

Call us at 612.331.4584 or visit our website  
[www.upstreamarts.org](http://www.upstreamarts.org) to register or for more information.

## DID YOU KNOW?

**We offer programming for youth and adults with disabilities:** Self Advocacy groups, service providers, disability focused organizations, Special Education classrooms and Transition programs are just an example of some of the types of organizations we serve.

**We come to you:** Upstream Arts carries out programming with your clients or students, on site at your agency, organization, or in your classroom.

**Our participants have a range of abilities and strengths:** and include those with DCD, EB/D, ASD, TBI, LD and physical disabilities.

Call or email for additional information at:  
[julie@upstreamarts.org](mailto:julie@upstreamarts.org) or Ph: 612.331.4584

**"I HAVE ALWAYS WANTED TO LEARN HOW  
TO ACT AND THIS IS THE FIRST TIME  
I'VE HAD THE CHANCE."**

**-PARTICIPANT, UPSTREAM ARTS  
PROGRAM WITH TRANSITIONS PLUS**

**HELP US MOVE**

The generous donations of our supporters have allowed us to offer our programs at low cost to participants, schools and organizations. Help us continue to hand over the benefits of the arts to those who need it most by:

- making an additional donation to help us reach our 2007-2008 fundraising goals (We are almost there!)
- arranging for Upstream Arts to carry out programming with your organization or in your school
- making an inkind donation of equipment or art supplies

**UPSTREAM!**



## USING THE ARTS TO TRANSITION TO ADULT LIFE

This year, Upstream Arts is excited to be working with metro area Transition programs - continuing education and life skills training provided by School Districts to Special Education students who have graduated from high school and are transitioning to adult life.

In Upstream Arts' interactive arts programs, youth have a safe forum to express themselves, build self confidence, act out real life situations, and develop social and communication skills to use in everyday adult life. Our experience working with these youth has proven once again what we have seen over and over: interacting with and through the arts can provide individuals with the tools they need to move upstream. As one Transitions program Social Worker put it:

*"Upstream Arts creates a climate of acceptance, respect and empowerment in which I see students taking risks they typically would not take. These are individuals who often have not been the center of their social groups, the lead roles in high school plays or the star athletes— For them, this is their moment on the stage."*

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.

1304 University Ave. NE, Suite 306  
Minneapolis, MN 55413



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

## SPOTLIGHT ON OUR ARTISTS

Our teaching artists are some of the Twin Cities' most exciting and accomplished actors, dancers, poets, musicians, visual artists and creative writers. You can see and hear their work in theatres, galleries, and on bookshelves around the metro area!

In addition to being the co-founder of Upstream Arts, **Matt Guidry** is also the co-founder of The Burning House Group Theatre Company (BHG) which is now in its 14th year of operation. BHG's last production, *3 Parts Dead*, was cited as one of the "Outstanding Experimental Theatre Works of 2007" by the *Star Tribune*, and the company was cited by *Metro Magazine* as one of the "Theatre Companies to Watch for in 2008." Right now Matt is devoting all of his time to Upstream Arts and is thrilled to be able to bring his passion for the arts to all of our participants.

Between her regular gigs in opera, concert work, CDs, musicals, plays, public speaking, and church music ministry, **Norah Long** can't wait to spend time with all the great students in Upstream Arts' classes because of their joy, creativity, and great risk-taking! She'll be busy this spring and summer at the Pantages, the Southern Theater, Skylark Opera, and the Guthrie, but there's always time for UA!

**Suzy Messerole** is currently directing *The Lady With All the Answers* at the History Theatre and will also be performing *Draw Two Circles* with her frequent collaborator Aamera Siddiqui at the National Asian-American Theatre Conference showcase in June. Suzy has begun her second residency with Upstream Arts and loves teaching because of the organization's commitment to the individual growth of everyone who participates in Upstream Arts programming.

