We’d like to share some stories from the past year illustrating how Youth in Arts “turns on the lights” for children through arts learning. Each story emphasizes a key idea behind our approach: Finding A Voice, Reaching All Learners, Artistic & Cultural Diversity, Community Engagement and Mentorship. Each story also represents just a sample of the work we do with thousands of students each year. For stories from all our programs, all year round, subscribe to our blog or email list, or find us on Facebook or Twitter. Learn more at youthinarts.org

Finding A Voice: Vanessa’s Story

Helping each child find A Voice is a core purpose of Youth in Arts’ work. We support Mentor Artists in creating programs that not only teach technique and craft, but help kids discover and express what they uniquely want to say to the world. Vanessa Lopez is a sixth grader at Willow Creek Academy. In 2010-11, Vanessa worked with Youth in Arts Mentor Artist Brooke Toczylowski as part of a district-wide model project. Brooke built her curriculum around exploration, self-expression, and the core question: “Who Am I?”

Vanessa’s thoughts on art reflect the focus: “Art gives you a chance to express yourself without using words,” she says.

“After I make a work of art, I feel a kind of relief that more of me is showing. I am starting to find out who I am.”

Vanessa has gained both art skills and a richer understanding of herself through her time with Brooke.

“Through Ms. Brooke, I learned quality projects...My favorite kind is abstract art, because it is a different way of seeing the world. Since class with Ms. Brooke...I’ve tried harder to do more detailed work. I push myself. I learned that even if you make a mistake there is always a chance, because it is about your mind and heart... She taught me this.”

In June 2011, an original work created by Vanessa was displayed in the Youth in Arts Gallery, as part of our inaugural “Lights On!” opening celebration. Mayte recalls:

“When I saw Vanessa’s work in the gallery, it really surprised me. She made art that showed she had deep questions and thoughts about herself and how people view her. I was really excited.”

Vanessa is continuing to work with Youth in Arts, now as a student of Mentor Artist K-Dub Williams at Willow Creek. Her mother reports that she has started sorting through the recycling bin, creating art that now decorates the whole house. As Vanessa so eloquently puts it,

“Making art is a joy that is hard to find.”

The San Francisco Foundation
The Green Foundation
National Endowment for the Arts
Margaret A. Cargill Foundation
Gloria McDonough
Crescent Porter Hale Foundation
County of Marin
Autodesk
$10,000 - $49,999
$5,000 - $9,999
$2,000 - $4,999
$1,000 - $1,999
$50,000 & above
Margaret Callinan
Joanne Dunn
George & Kele Gasparini
Dr. Anthony & Martha Eason
Bill & Lynn Callender
Miko Lee
Beatrix Litianu
Target
Nicholas & Beatriz Lituanio
Peggy Rathmann & John Wick,
Miko Lee
Maggie Thelen
Price Family Dealerships

The Year In Numbers

Students Directly Served: 21,600
Audiences for Performance & Events: 48,600
Mentor Artist Hours: 2,273
Classrooms Served: 435
Teachers & Parents at Arts Workshops: 347
Mentorship Hours per ‘Till Dawn Student: 386

Cash Donors
$2,000 - $4,999
Bank of Marin Community Fund
Bruce & Linda Hopper
Deb Bennett
Fenwick Foundation
Glea G. Wylie Fund
Joe & Sue Carlmagnino
Joseph & Frances Brucia Foundation
May G. Lee
Miko Lee
Nicholas & Beatrix Litianu
Target
Peggy Rathmann & John Wick
The Rathmann Family Foundation
Will & Leslie Thompson
$1,000 - $1,999
Bill & Lynn Callender
Creative Capacity Fund
Dr. Anthony & Martha Eason
George & Kele Gasparini
Joanne Dunn
John & Sue Feder
Margaret Callinan

$5,000 - $9,999
California Arts Council
Casey Securities LLC
George Shields Foundation
Melanie Nichol/
Fatigue Foundation
Mimi & Kevin Murphy
The McBurney Foundation
Whole Foods Market San Rafael
Margaret Callinan
John & Sue Feder
Margaret Callinan

Revenue: $748,600
Expenditures: $688,833

Revenue Sources
Expenditures by Category

34% Earned
8% Grants
49%
Corporate
6%
Individual

10% Programs
8% Gen Admin
84% Fundraising
Reaching All Learners: Arts Unite Us

Arts education programs engage learners of all abilities as few other teaching approaches can. Youth in Arts has a long-standing commitment to serving children with disabilities and has been the only consistent provider of arts education in Special Day classrooms in Marin.

In 2008, we created Arts Unite Us to address a challenge we heard echoed by so many teachers and families—that Special Day students are often isolated and have few opportunities to interact with mainstream peers.

Arts Unite Us provides opportunities for collaboration, learning and understanding between students of different abilities.

This past spring, Mentor Artist Melissa Briggs worked with Michael Lovejoy’s Special Day students at Tamalpais High School to create and perform an original play entitled “The Sensational Nine” about seven superheroes who teach two supervillains how to “look inside” for the good within themselves.

Parents, siblings, friends and mainstream peers attended the performance and all were touched by the story.

“It was such a joy and privilege working with Melissa. She is amazing. She connected with the students so well and inspired them to present their voice(s). It was one of the highlights of our year.” -- Michael Lovejoy, Tamalpais High School

Now this group of talented students is ready to take a big step and work with a group of mainstream peers on a fully collaborative piece to premiere in January 2012!

Artistic & Cultural Diversity: Youth in Arts Presents

Youth in Arts works with over 50 artists to create and lead our programs. We are committed to the artistic and cultural diversity of our artist roster, which gives us a rich range of options in developing new programs.

In February 2011, Youth in Arts created The Paper Princess and the Piñata, an original musical theater piece as part of our Youth in Arts Presents series.

The project drew upon the expertise of multiple artists, including Miko Lee (theater), Nydia Algazzali Gonzalez (Mexican vocal and instrumental music and dance), Miguel Martinez (traditional Mexican and contemporary Latin music), Zenon Barro (Ballet Folklorico), and Suzanne Joyal (visual arts).

The bilingual production, based on the popular book series by Bay Area author/illustrator Elisa Kleven, is a lively retelling of the Paper Princess story with a specific focus on kindergarten readiness through songs encouraging number, shape and color awareness, counting, vocabulary and positive social behavior.

Youth in Arts is currently hosting ¡Vuela! Paper Princess, an exhibit of Elisa’s original collage artwork alongside art items from The Paper Princess and the Piñata in our Youth in Arts Gallery at 917 C Street. A tour of the show is also available to schools and community sites. Visit us during the holidays to catch a glimpse of how diverse artistic visions, talents, traditions and techniques can combine to create something new and beautiful!

Mentorship: ‘Til Dawn

Youth in Arts’ approach is grounded in inspiring interactions between artists and students. Mentor Artist Austin Willacy’s impact on students in our “Til Dawn a cappella ensemble is impressive, lasting throughout students’ high school years and carrying many into careers in the arts.

Til Dawn alum Lily Elise was recently a finalist on NBC’s primetime show The Voice with Christina Aguilera. Lily’s mom Tori recalls watching her perform “Lady Marmalade” with Christina onstage before a live studio audience, calling it “one of those ‘living the dream’ moments for all of us.”

Lily is currently recording a five-song EP album in Southern California. Her first single, “Lock & Key,” is available on iTunes.

“I honestly don’t know who I’d be as a performer without Austin and ‘Til Dawn. Both played such a role in my learning who I wanted to become not only as an artist, but also as a person. The world needs more teachers like Austin.” -- Lily Elise

Drew Gasparini is in New York, where he has established a career as a songwriter and performer. His original musical Crazy, Just Like Me recently won the Best of Fest Audience Award at the 2011 New York Musical Theatre Festival. Drew says of his time with ‘Til Dawn and Austin, “’Til Dawn taught me how to communicate through music. It’s part of the reason I’ve gone on to do the things I’ve done and continue to do. Austin’s guidance and mentorship certainly helped me individualize my song writing style and look at music as a realistic career path.”

‘Til Dawn alums Austin Willacy and Lily Elise have coaching from an artist as they replicated the lesson themselves.

According to Suzanne, “The results were fantastic! Some parents were so confident after just the first workshop that they were able to jump right in and begin portrait drawing lessons with the children.”

According to Venetia Valley parent Jessica Bosch, “Attending the Parent Art Docent training classes has reminded me that creating a work of art is pure stress relief. I work a full-time job with two children, and after attending the first class I felt calm and refreshed AND I learned a lot. If it can do this for an adult, just think how important it is for our children.” -- Jessica Bosch
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Siblings Ian, Eric and Brittany Hölljes and Elizabeth Hopkins are currently touring the East Coast with their North Carolina indie band Delta Rae (many will remember Delta Rae from the 2009 Youth in Arts Italian Street Painting Festival). Also keeping busy are solo artists Emily Rath and Natalie John.

For updates on the lasting impact of arts mentorship these and many other ‘Til Dawn alumni, follow our blog at youthinarts.org/blog.

Community Engagement: Parent Training

Building community through the arts means engaging all the members of a school community, from students to teachers to parents.

In January 2011, Suzanne Joyal, Director of Artists in Schools, established a series of trainings at Venetia Valley K-8 School for the Parent Art Docent Program. Suzanne created and led hands-on workshops for parents, in which they learned projects they could replicate with children in their classrooms. Take-away lesson and supply kits for five classrooms were provided with each workshop. As follow-up, parents had opportunities to observe and assist a professional Mentor Artist in the classroom and to have coaching from an artist as they replicated the lesson themselves.

According to Suzanne, “the results were fantastic! Some parents were so confident after just the first workshop that they were able to jump right in and begin portrait drawing lessons with the children.”

According to Venetia Valley parent Jessica Bosch, “Attending the Parent Art Docent training classes has reminded me that creating a work of art is pure stress relief. I work a full time job with two children, and after attending the first class I felt calm and refreshed AND I learned a lot. If it can do this for an adult, just think how important it is for our children.” -- Jessica Bosch
Youth in Arts

Fiscal Year 2010-11

Turning On the Lights: Creativity and Engagement

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In June 2011, an original work created by Vanessa was displayed in the Youth in Arts Gallery, as part of our inaugural “Lights On!” exhibit.

In her piece, Vanessa surrounded a digital photo self portrait with cut paper and a rich tapestry of words that reflects the focus of her work. She wrote, “I was really excited.” Mayte recalls: “When I saw Vanessa’s work in the gallery, it really surprised me. Her work demonstrates how art-making both stimulates children to think more deeply and provides a channel for sharing new ideas. Vanessa and her mother, Mayte Lopez, came to the “Lights On!” opening celebration. Mayte recalls: “After I make a work of art, I feel a kind of relief that more of me is showing. I am starting to find out who I am.”

Vanessa is continuing to work with Youth in Arts, now as a student of Mentor Artist K-Dub Williams at Willow Creek. Her mother reports that she has started sorting through the recycling bin, creating art that now decorates the whole house. As Vanessa so eloquently puts it, “Making art is a joy that is hard to find.”