

Spring 2011

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
CLINICAL ART THERAPY DEPARTMENT

# Clinical Art Therapy Department ...in the news!



## ARTWORKS!

The Frost Art Museum Presents:

### ARTWORKS! The Building Blocks of My Life



Miami-Dade County Public Schools Clinical Art Therapy Department and the Frost Art Museum on the campus of Florida International University have united to present cultural support of art as healing process through a collaboration entitled "ARTWORKS!"

Please be a part of the third annual student art therapy exhibit at The Frost Art Museum by attending the exhibit during its installation from February 23 through March 2, 2011. This year's theme, *The Building Blocks of My Life*, challenges students to explore their unexpressed wishes, fears, and emotions by placing them in a personal box that symbolizes safety and containment. The combination of artistic expression and cathartic communication lends itself to an amazing array of visual imagery.

In conjunction with the opening reception on Wednesday, February 23, 2011, art therapists will conduct a free workshop, *Storytelling through Art Therapy*, allowing for participants to experience the benefits of art therapy.

Exhibition on view February 23-March 2, 2011

Opening Reception: Wednesday, February 23, 6-9 pm

Free Art Therapy Workshop: *Storytelling through Art Therapy*, 7:30-9:00 pm  
10975 S.W. 17th St. Miami, FL 33199 Phone 305-348-2890



This year's Winter Exhibit marked our third opportunity to collaborate with the Frost Museum to highlight art therapy and the beauty of creative expression. The theme, **The Building Blocks of My Life**, utilized boxes as a foundation for students to express their thoughts and feelings. Approximately seventy-five students contributed artwork and many of them attended the opening event held on Wednesday, February 23<sup>rd</sup>. Those guests in attendance were able to witness the amazing sense of pride portrayed by both students and their families as they saw their work displayed in an art museum.

The evening was highlighted by a "hands on" workshop conducted by Dr. Patricia Isis and Mrs. Stephanie Moreno, members of the Miami-Dade County Public Schools Clinical Art Therapy Department. Over fifty people participated in the workshop, many of whom were "hungry" for additional trainings and informa-

tion on art therapy.

Several art therapists were awarded Target Field Trip Grants to take their students to view the exhibit at the Frost Museum.

The entire exhibit was a huge success and could not have been accomplished if it were not for the dedication of the entire department. Two members of the Clinical Art Therapy Department, Mrs. Leah Guzman and Mrs. Randi Becker, deserve special recognition for chair-



ing the Exhibit Committee and working tirelessly to see the exhibit come to fruition.

## Art Therapist Selected as Teacher of the Year!

Mrs. Melinda Fedorko has been selected by the faculty at I.B. Peskoe Elementary as their representative for TEACHER OF THE YEAR. This honor has been bestowed on Mrs. Fedorko, not only for her commitment to provide art therapy services to those students in need, but also to her tireless efforts to enrich the lives of students and staff at I.B. Peskoe Elementary through various grant activities and beautification projects. Mrs. Fedorko has been a valued member of our department for the past twenty years and truly deserves all the recognition bestowed upon her!

## News From Robert Renick Educational Center

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This year Renick is the place to be. Leah Guzman and Jackie Doner have been busy working with our students on their Youth Fair Art Entries. Before the holidays their art therapy students attended the Golden Corral for lunch and several had complimentary holiday photos taken.

This year Ms. Doner was awarded two grants the Target Field Trip Grant and the Education Fund Grant. Her students will be able to attend the play "The 25th Annual Putnam Spell-

ing Bee" and see "The Dance Theatre of Harlem". A group of students will also be treated to the Renaissance Fair for the first time.

Visits this year have included the Play-ground Theatre. They performed dramatic arts exercises with the art therapy students. Future guests will include a Japanese storyteller who will do origami with the students and a Peace Corp Volunteer who will speak about his work in Africa.

This year Ms. Johnson (school social

worker) and Ms. Doner conducted a 5 week "Bead for Life" unit based on curriculum listed on [www.beadforlife.org](http://www.beadforlife.org). They plan to follow up this activity by having a Bead for Life Party so stay tuned for your invitations.

In addition to all the amazing work Ms. Doner does at her site, she wants to state that she "works with great art therapy professionals" and encourages us all to "keep up the good work."

## Art Therapy "On Display"

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In honor of Children's Mental Health Awareness Day, M-DCPS is collaborating with the Department of Children and Families, and FACES, Families and Communities Empowered for Success to bring awareness to the needs of children within our community.

Students from selected E/BD programs throughout the county were invited to submit artwork focused on the theme of resiliency. Entries included paintings, drawings, poetry, and songs. Selected works were chosen to be displayed at a culminating event at Jungle Island on May 3, 2011. In addition to the selected works, students from Robert Renick Educational center provided a musi-

cal performance and students from Ruth Owens Kruse collaborated on a dance performance.

Students were invited to bring their family members to the event as a means to highlight their accomplishments and build family involvement.

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On May 4, 2011 at Kendale Lakes Elementary and on May 20, 2011 at Palmetto Elementary, Mrs. Garber will have the Openings for The Annual Art Therapy Exhibits at her schools highlighting student's creative achievements for the 2010-2011 school year. The Opening Date for each school has been scheduled for parents, aunts, uncles, and grandpar-

ents to attend. A theme of "UNDERSTANDING BOUNDARIES" gives the parents a means of approaching and understanding the symbolic representation of their child's work and how Art Therapy has a direct benefit to their child's emotional, behavioral, social and learning development. Last year was the first Opening and it was such a success for parents who attended that the request was made by them for it to be scheduled again. As part of the Opening, parents will be treated to a continental breakfast. Last year, it was wonderful to see parents engage with the artwork and each other and enjoy seeing their child SHINE.

## Spreading Art Therapy to Students, Teachers, and the Community

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Dr. Patricia Isis has been involved in numerous projects this year. In addition to providing weekly art therapy services to students, she has also been part of the team that is piloting ARTthread, a computer based art making program. Dr. Isis has also been conducting weekly lunch meetings providing a meditation ritual for the

student services staff at Homestead High. The intention is to invite the participants to foster non-judgmental awareness of themselves internally and externally for increased self care, self awareness, and stress reduction. She has also found time in her schedule to pen an article that will be published in the American Art Therapy Association newsletter that was pub-

lished Memorial Day weekend documenting school art therapy in practice with an adolescent featured in a Drop Out Prevention and Art Therapy video. This film will be shown as part of the Film Festival at the American Art Therapy Association's annual conference in Washington, DC, July 6-10, 2011.



## Art in the Park

By: Monika Hurter

Thanks to the Miami-Dade County Art Education Department, the E/BD program at Ben Sheppard Elementary School was able to get transportation for a fieldtrip to Fairchild Tropical Garden to see the marvelous sculptures of Claude and Francois-Xavier Lalanne.

Even though the outing fell on one of the “coldest” days in South Florida, the children had fun moving between the Garden’s rare plant collections and the art that is inspired by nature itself. Bun-

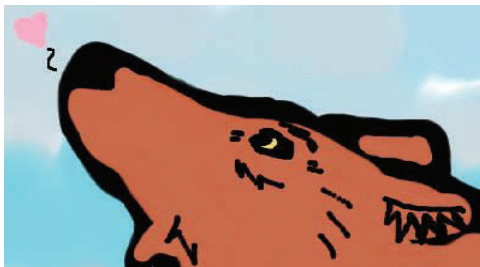


dled up in jackets, gloves, and scarves did not prevent them from touching a giant bronze apple or hugging sheep sculptures throughout the garden. A square opening in a cow sculpture offered an amazing vista into the park’s beautiful grounds. Coming from a Hialeah neighborhood, most children have never heard of or been to Fairchild’s Tropical Garden before. This was just another reminder that the smallest efforts have the greatest impact in the lives of the students we serve.

## Working to Address District-wide Concerns

Selected members of the M-DCPS Clinical Art Therapy Department are participating in a pilot project, ARTthread, through Project10 – Transition Education Network, utilizing a computer-based art program to assist students in engaging in success-oriented creative expression. Areas targeted through the use of this program are: increasing self-esteem, attendance, and academic success, while decreasing behavioral incidences throughout the school day.

The selected programs at Miami Southridge Senior, North Miami Beach Senior, Robert Morgan Vocational Center, and Ruth Owens Kruse Educational Center have been awarded a grant to assist in further implementation of the project.



Student artwork created on ARTthread

Additionally, three programs have been selected to be part of a collaborative project with MLK, Moving the Lives of Kids, Community Mural Project. The mural projects at Robert Renick Educational Center, Ruth Owens Kruse Educational Center, and Lake Stevens Middle will focus on moving art therapy outside the bounds of the therapist’s office to improve student engagement.

By having the students invested in a project such as mural making, we are hoping to observe increases in attendance while, at the same time, experience decreases in behavioral issues. As poor attendance and high suspension rates are indicators of students at-risk for dropping out of school, the goal is to reverse the trend for students participating in the project.

While participating in the project, students will be able to work on social and emotional goals related to organizational skills, social skills, communication skills, decision making skills, and self-esteem.

Transition to work skills will also be emphasized as students will develop “on the job” training that will be relevant once they enter the work-force.



**MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
CLINICAL ART THERAPY DEPARTMENT**

Craig Siegel, ATR-BC, District Chairperson  
2201 NW 207th Street  
Miami Gardens, Florida 33056

Phone: 305-624-1171 \*2242  
Fax: 305-625-5830  
E-mail: csiegel@dadeschools.net

**Department Members**

Amanda Alders  
Randi Becker  
Jennifer Blackmore  
Janet Bush  
Morgen Chesonis-Gonzalez  
Lorraine Dempsey  
Jacqueline Doner  
Cheryl Earwood  
Melinda Fedorko  
Enid Garber  
Leah Guzman  
Monika Hurter  
Patricia Isis  
Yvonne Martinez  
Linda Montanari  
Stephanie Moreno  
Yehoshua Ventura

**We're on the Web!**

<http://arttherapy.dadeschools.net/>

# SAYING GOODBYE!

As of the close of the 2010-2011 school year, the M-DCPS Clinical Art Therapy Department prepares to say goodbye to three colleagues who have contributed so much to the department, their schools, and the students they have served. Ms. Janet Bush, the creator and founder of our department, will be retiring following 35 years of service. Her impact on the field is well documented as she is credited as being the pioneer of school art therapy. Her departure is accompanied by Ms. Jennifer Blackmore and Mrs. Stephanie Moreno who have dedicated 24 and 12 years of service to M-DCPS, respectively. We thank you all for your contributions, your enthusiasm, and your friendship. You are forever woven into the fabric of our department.



## Southridge Senior E/BD Program Awarded Target Field Trip Grant

For the second time, Southridge Senior High School's E/BD Program was the recipient of a \$700 Target Fieldtrip Grant through Scholarship America. This opportunity was orchestrated by Morgen Chesonis-Gonzalez, Clinical Art Therapist. She and 4 stellar E/BD Program teachers (Holly Campbell, Clifford McCray, Robbi Jackson, and Curtis Brown) accompanied 25 students to see a live theatrical performance on the main stage of the Actor's Playhouse in Coral Gables. The experience also included bus transportation, a catered luncheon with dessert, as well as a reflection project in the student's choice of written narrative, artistic, or poetic responses.

On February 9, 2011 we saw the Tony award winning musical comedy "The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee". The majority of our

students at Southridge Senior High's E/BD Program reside in Foster Care and Group Homes.

These students have very little exposure to cultural events, nor do they have the funds to attend enriching, live, cultural performances. Considering all the personal challenges these students had to endure throughout their lives, Mrs. Chesonis-Gonzalez believed they could identify with the storyline of "Spelling Bee". It portrayed a quirky yet charming cast of six adolescent outsiders for whom the spelling bee is the one place they can stand out and fit in at the same time. Likewise, it was her hope that the "outsider" students she works with can view our E/BD Program within Southridge Senior High School as a place where they can stand out and fit in also.

Open to all school grade levels,

Target offers an online application for fieldtrip proposals and will cover the cost for approved fieldtrip expenses including tickets, fees, transportation, supplies, equipment, food or resource materials. The address is: <https://targetfieldtripgrants.target.com>

