

Neighbor to Neighbor

February 2006



Inner-City Neighborhood Art House
201 East Tenth Street
Erie, Pennsylvania 16503
(814)455-5508
www.eriebenedictines.org/arthouse

New Executive Director

After 10 years as Executive Director of the Inner-City Neighborhood Art House, Sister Mary Lou Kownacki has stepped down and Sister Anne Wambach, who has served as Program Director for 10 years, has been appointed to fill that position.

Sister Mary Lou praised Sister Anne as a "phenomenal administrator" who knows the Art House inside and out, has wonderful relationships with volunteers, benefactors, supporters, Erie organizations and the Women's Core

Committee that directs the Art House. "She'll give it new direction and energy," said Sister Mary Lou who founded the Art House.

"Music, dance, literature and the visual arts have flourished at the Art House during this first decade because of Sister Mary Lou's vision and dedicated service," said Sister Anne.

"The staff and I look forward to building on this strong foundation," she continued.



Sister Mary Lou and Sister Anne

"With the addition this year of two Benedictine Sisters to the Neighborhood Art House staff, our music program is developing and expanding. Through the efforts of Erie artist Chuck Dill we are creating a vibrant evening program for teens. And with the help of architect David Brennan plans are unfolding for expansion and renovations for much needed studio and gallery space, a performance area, and office space for development personnel.

"We are grateful to Sister Mary Lou for her inspiration and dream and I am excited about sharing the arts with inner-city youth and their families in the next decade."

Sister Mary Lou, who is also Director of Benetvision, the publication outreach of the Benedictine Sisters of Erie, said she will take some time off before returning to the Art House as Writer-in-Residence.

FOR US, IT'S TRAIN

The Pittsburgh Steelers may have the Bus, but the City of Erie has Train, and the Inner-City Neighborhood Art House will benefit from that relationship.



Pat Monahan, Erie native and lead singer for Grammy Award-winning Train, chose the Art House to benefit from a recent fundraiser that honored the group.

Train's local fans gathered January 30 at Sherlock's Park Place in Erie, where Monahan began his singing career 20 years ago, to celebrate the release of the group's new CD, "For Me, It's You." While Monahan and Train were in New York City for the release of the CD, his fans at the Erie event tried their luck at winning two tickets to an upcoming Train Concert.

We are honored to call Pat Monahan friend," said Sister Anne Wambach, executive director of the Neighborhood Art House.

The event was initiated and organized by Kelly Welser, Marketing and Sales Consultant of WICU TV and its sister station WB.

THROUGH A GLASS, CREATIVELY

Tom Vicary was fully engaged in what he calls his third career. "You can make any design you want," he told Art House students. "Just let your imagination run wild."

The young people did just as Vicary advised, arranging the colorful bits of glass triangles, squares and rectangles into intricate designs, the first step in the art of fused glass.

Vicary was teaching the class to Art House students for the second consecutive year as part of his contribution to the Silent Auction offered during Taste of the Arts 2005. Mary

Lincoln, a new member of the Core Committee, submitted the winning bid for Vicary's fused glass creations. Tom Vicary also honored an additional high bid for this item submitted by Cole Stearns.

When the students completed their work, Vicary fused their designs into 10-inch square decorative trays in a kiln at his home.

"I've always been interested in glass as an art form," said Vicary, an electrical engineer from MIT who took up fused glass art after he worked as an engineer and, later, as the owner of an Erie business.

Vicary said he and his wife, Cheryl Vicary, a member of the Core Committee, have always admired the work of the Benedictine Sisters in the inner city. "They do wonderful work at the Neighborhood Art House and [Emmaus] Soup Kitchen" said Vicary, "and we are happy and proud to be part of it."



Top photo: Tom Vicary works with students—clockwise from bottom left: Michael Alvarez, Michele Alvarez, Ray Beale (also close-up bottom right), Tom Vicary, and Daliela Ayala (also close-up bottom left).

Holiday Gift Books

An annual book-buying for the Neighborhood Art House at Barnes & Noble inspired one of the store's staff to make her own special contribution.

The Barnes & Noble head cashier, Jenn Cornman, contributed 20 of the 90 children's books purchased by customers for the Art House during the annual Holiday Book Drive.

"She promised to buy a book for the Art House every time she purchased a book for herself," said Heather May Caspar, Barnes & Noble's community relations manager.

Caspar said the Neighborhood Art House has been the recipient of the annual drive since the Erie store opened. "The Art House is a perfect fit for our goal [to get as many books as possible into the hands of children]," said Caspar.

In November and December, Barnes & Noble patrons were able to choose books from a display inside the Peach Street store or to simply buy a book which was chosen by booksellers.



Three Women Join Leadership Board

Three women accepted positions on the Women's Core Committee of the Inner-City Neighborhood Art House beginning in 2006. Joining the leadership group are: **Rebecca Hilbert**, **Mary Lincoln**, and **Lyn Twillie-Darby**. They join the following members: Linda Bebeko-Jones, Mary Alice Doolin, Audrey Hirt, Nancy Kern, Lynn McBrier, Marlene Mosco, Barbara Pollock, Denise Illig Robison, Patricia Rybak, Margaret Stolley, Ann Teed, Mary Ann Toohey, Cheryl Vicary and Craige Pepper Victor. We also wish to thank **Beth Baldwin** for her eight years of service on the core committee.

New Staff



Benedictine Sisters Marilyn Schauble (left) and Charlotte Anne Zalot, both degreed musicians, recently joined the Neighborhood Art House staff. Sister Charlotte teaches piano and drumming and Sister Marilyn teaches voice, choir and guitar.

Inner-City Neighborhood Art House



Benedictine Sisters of Erie
201 East Tenth Street
Erie, Pennsylvania 16503-1007

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Outside the Box

Children from the Inner-City Neighborhood Art House brought a bit of the weather indoors to the Blasco Library as part of a special art project.

Entitled "Art Outside the Box: A Weathering Project," the project ran over 15 weeks, beginning in early September, when seven- and eight-year-olds gathered a variety of materials, including beads, bits of tree branches, paper clips, bits of yarn, buttons and ornaments.

The materials were then weathered outdoors in trees, in bushes, in old birdhouses or buried, until November, when the students, using a gel medium, incorporated them into paintings.

Their creations—30 canvasses in all—were on display at the Blasco Library through December. They also will be on display at a local gallery in spring and at Taste of the Arts 2006.

The project was made possible through a grant from the Pennsylvania Partners in the Arts.

Passle Helminski, a Neighborhood Art House volunteer and an internationally known fiber artist who received the 2005 Distinguished Alumnus Award in Art from Edinboro University of Pennsylvania, led the project.

"Our students told us that this project



Fiber artist Passle Helminski displays the children's work.

made them feel like real artists for the first time," Helminski said.

ORIGAMI CHRISTMAS

Art House students added to the beauty of the annual Festival of Trees, sponsored this year by the Saint Vincent Health Center Auxiliary.

A 7-foot 5-inch artificial, pre-lit tree, donated by Dr. and Mrs. Peter Lund, was filled with the colorful origami ornaments the young people created in their floral design and origami classes taught by volunteers Joe Wiczorek and Laurel Taft.

It was one of 50 trees created by Erie artists for the festive event at the Avalon Hotel in Erie.

Neighborhood Art House students who helped decorate the tree include from left, Ray Beale, Stephan Bankhead, Tehryn Ewell and Joe White.



Dancing to Your Body Beat

Sandy Silva brought a few small "animals" to her class at the Neighborhood Art House.

"El-le-phant, three syllables, three beats," said Silva as she tapped her chest and legs to a three-beat count and held up three fingers for the young students to see.



Sandy Silva with Art House students

On cue, Neighborhood Art House students emulated Silva, a percussive dancer who uses her body to create rhythms. She led the young students to more and more complicated movements and used other animals to help the young people count the beats.

Silva was accompanied by Charmaine LeBlanc on the tamboa, a small African percussion instrument.

Both are acclaimed performers who live in Canada; Silva has appeared on NPR's "A Prairie Home Companion"; LeBlanc has been a composer for *Le*

Cirque Du Soleil. Both are members of *La Bottine Souriante*, a world-renowned music ensemble in Quebec.

Their appearance at the Art House was through a partnership with the Erie Art Museum, where they were artists-in-resi-

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dence for a week. The Neighborhood Art House visit was funded in part by the Gannon Schuster Program for the Arts and Toward the Whole Child: The Audrey Hirt Project. This was Silva's second appearance in Erie and her first appearance at the Neighborhood Art House.