

Neighbor to Neighbor

May 2006



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

TWO EVENTS MARK NATIONAL POETRY MONTH AT THE ART HOUSE

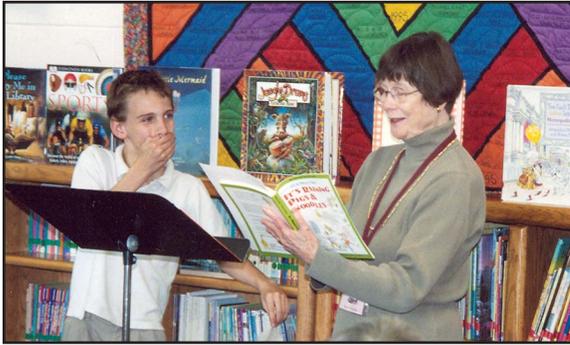
The Inner-City Neighborhood Art House celebrated National Poetry Month in April with two events: a Read-a-thon and a presentation by a local poet.

READ-A-THON "The poem "Waffles Give Me Sniffles" by Jack Prelutsky is funny because the poet got all these diseases from eating things like pizza, candy bars, macaroni, raisins," wrote Anthony Ferrara, 10. "Rhymes (in the poem) are funny, too, like itch and twitch, sneeze and disease. I'd like to ask the poet: 'Did you actually get these diseases from eating weird food?'"

Anthony and dozens of students at the Neighborhood Art House joined more than 1600 classrooms across the country participating in this year's first-ever Poetry Read-a-Thon that aimed to involve middle school students in reading poems and writing about them.

During April, Neighborhood Art House students joined with Hooked on Books! readers to choose a poem, read it aloud, and then write prose "responses" to that poem. Some of the students' responses, like Anthony's, were submitted to the Academy of American

Poets web site and read aloud at an Art House poetry celebration.



Hooked on Books! reader supervisor, Marjorie Podolsky, shares a humorous poem with Neighborhood Art House student, Kyle Shaulis.

The Academy, sponsors of the project, distributed 30,000 free copies of a new anthology, *How to Eat a Poem*, to schools and literacy programs across the nation, including the Neighborhood

WHAT IS GOLD

Gold is a metal
 Gold is a ring
 Gold is a very
 Beautiful thing.
 Gold is the sunshine
 Light and thin
 Warm as a muffin
 on your skin.

-from "What Is Gold" by
 Mary O'Neill *Hailstones*
 and *Hailbut Bones*

Student Response:

I like this poem because I like the color gold. I have a gold dress and gold earrings and a gold crown to go with it. I would like to ask the poet if she likes gold fish.

-Shania Deckert, 8

LOCAL POET Poetry Month celebration continued when local poet Mary Frances Baugh



Mary Lou Kownacki, OSB, writer-in-residence at the Neighborhood Art House, introduces poet Mary Frances Baugh to the Art House children.

visited the Neighborhood Art House and gave each student a poetry book in memory of her late sister, Jean Belle Porter who had a special love of reading. Baugh explained to the students how she herself as a writer kept a journal, and then read from her recently published book of poems, *When Dreams Escape*.

Manhattan Institute Award

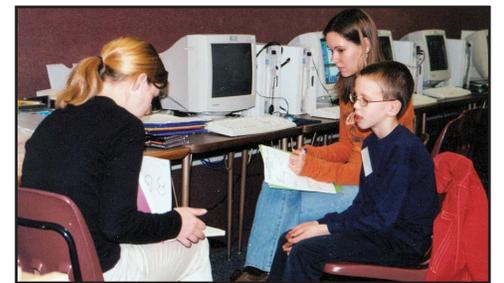
The Neighborhood Art House has been named one of seven national finalists for the Manhattan Institute's 2006 Social Entrepreneurship Initiative Award. The award honors non-profit leaders who have found innovative, private solutions to America's most pressing social problems.

Howard Husock, director of the entrepreneurship program and director of case studies in public policy and management, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University. He conducted an on-site visit Monday, May 8 to meet Mary Lou Kownacki, OSB, founder and former Executive Director of the Neighborhood Art House, and to observe the Art House programming.

If selected as the winner, the Neighborhood Art House will receive a \$10,000 grant at a dinner this fall in New York City.

Scholars at Work

Gannon University students Amy Snyder and Ashley Brooks spent three days a week for eight weeks at the Neighborhood Art House



Amy Snyder, left, and Ashley Brooks work with Neighborhood Art House student, Shane McClelland.

during the winter-spring session working on their senior thesis, "The Effects of Computer Game Usage on Visual Perception in Children Ages 7 to 10."

The young scholars gathered data for their paper by testing two groups of Art House students to measure their visual perception skills after they played computer games or read.

The occupational therapy majors are trying to determine if children's perception of the world around them is improved by playing video games.

Brother Thomas Pottery Studio Dedicated

On Sunday, May 7, 2006, Bernie and Sue Pucker of the Pucker Gallery in Boston, MA and the members of the *Friends of Brother Thomas* celebrated the dedication of the Brother Thomas Bezanson Pottery Studio at the Neighborhood Art House. The room was made possible through *A New Creation: The Brother Thomas Bezanson Pottery Fund* established to ensure that the art of pottery will continue to thrive at the Neighborhood Art House. Donations to the Fund are welcome.

Following the dedication, Brother Thomas, a world-renowned artist and artist-in-residence with the Benedictine Sisters of Erie since 1985, opened his new show "The Gift of Art" at Mount Saint Benedict Monastery. His work is found in over 50 national and international public collections and in numerous private collections in the United States and abroad.



From left, Bernie Pucker of the Pucker Gallery, Brother Thomas, Peg Pilewski, OSB, clay and pottery instructor at the Neighborhood Art House and Sue Pucker enjoy a moment at the dedication.

To read more about Brother Thomas and his work visit www.GoErie.com from May 11, 2006.

LITTLE CONCERT - three short pieces

Why are some flutes curved? How do musicians play in harmony with no conductor?



Flute students from Mercyhurst College perform for Neighborhood Art House students.

Holly Stackhouse-Sydow answered those questions during the "little concert" her flute students from Mercyhurst College performed at the Neighborhood Art House in March.

The little concert of three short pieces were from "Legends from the Greenwood," com-

posed in 1998 by Catherine McMichal. Stackhouse-Sydow said the concert was a chance for the students to perform before an audience and to do community service.

The concert was Stackhouse-Sydow's first visit to the Neighborhood Art House. But she heard a lot about its good work from two of her adult flute students, Janet Krack and Amy Vidmar, both Art House volunteer teachers.

Stackhouse-Sydow explained to the Neighborhood Art House students that some flutes are curved to make them easier to hold and the flutists use body language to communicate when playing without a conductor.



Holly Stackhouse-Sydow

Memorials

We are grateful to families who designated memorials to the Inner-City Neighborhood Art House in the name of deceased loved ones:

Marie Elizabeth Austin Roeback
June Elizabeth Lundquist
David Canning

Tax Credits

Erie Insurance Group recently made a \$50,000 tax credit donation to the Neighborhood Art House.

"We are proud to support the Neighborhood Art House," said Karen Kraus Phillips, vice president and manager of corporate communications for Erie Insurance. She assures that "Erie Insurance is committed to serving the community we've called home since 1925."

Through the Educational Improvement Tax Credit Program of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, businesses may receive tax credits by donating to the Neighborhood Art House.

For more information, visit www.newpa.com, click on Funding & Program Finder, scroll down and click on Educational Improvement Tax Credit Program (EITC). Details are also available from Sister Anne Wambach at the Neighborhood Art House, 814-455-5508.

Announcements

Save the Date
Taste of the Arts 2006
September 21 • 5 p.m.

Hooked on Books
Volunteer readers needed at the
Neighborhood Art House
- Call 871-7422 -

Grants

A \$10,000 grant from the **Ronald McDonald House Charities-Erie** will be used for "Brushes and Bricks," the Neighborhood Art House renovation project. A floor drain and utility sink will be installed and two handicapped accessible bathrooms will be constructed. A cleanup area will be created in the space now used by the Emmaus Food Pantry.

Over the next year, approximately 1,624 square feet of space will be redesigned for use by the Neighborhood Art House program.

Partial funding for the Spring Open House performance and Music Recital was made possible by the **Clarence E. Byers Music Performance Fund of the Erie Arts Endowment**. The \$1,252 grant was used for stage rental, background curtain, sound system and piano tuning. The performances were taped for the Neighborhood Art House video archives.



"Puppy Love" – Born of Imagination

The brown puppy with large dark eyes would be cute enough to cuddle, if it were real.

But it is not. The puppy image was born in the imagination of 12-year-old Michele Alvarez, who airbrushed the image on her T-shirt under the words, "Puppy Love." "Dogs are my favorite animals. I don't have a dog yet, but someday I will," said Michele as she put the finishing touches on her T-shirt project.

Michele is one of the students in Chuck Dill's airbrush classes. The class represents a new outreach from the Art House to teens. The goal is to teach teens practical skills with real-life applications.

Michele's work stands out because an Erie craft show vendor saw Michele's T-shirt and selected the puppy image to adorn various craft items she sells at art shows. "She



Airbrushing instructor Chuck Dill and student Chelsea Beeman, 13



saw Michele's T-shirt at the Art House and she really liked it," said Dill. Michele will receive a small fee for her design. Dill said the vendor also has her eyes on other designs created by his students.

"The important thing is the connection between buyer and seller of art," said Dill. The students understand that airbrushing will open a lot of job opportunities to them, according to Dill.

"The evening classes take the Art House to a different level," said Dill. "It builds on the skills they learned in the after-school program. Airbrushing also helps to develop their imaginations. "We have some really talented students in the class," said Dill.

Inner-City Neighborhood Art House



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



Art House Students' Works Recognized

District / State Winners

Three Neighborhood Art House students placed at the nine-county district level of the General Federation of Women's Clubs Pennsylvania art competition.

Alex Dzuricky, 8, won first place at Level 1, **Michele Alvarez, 12**, won first place at Level 2 and **Elizabeth Ayers, 14**, won third place at Level 3.



Michele and Alex advanced to the state competition.

Alex Dzuricky's oil pastel of a tiger won **first place for the state of Pennsylvania**. He will receive a \$75 prize.

Left: By Michele Alvarez
First Place District, Level 2

Right: Elizabeth Ayers
Third Place District, Level 3



Alex Dzuricky, Pennsylvania First Place winner



Art Chosen for Permanent Exhibit



Art House student Ray Beale

Four art pieces by Neighborhood Art House students were chosen to be part of the permanent exhibit at the recently opened Tom Ridge Environmental Center at the entrance to Presque Isle State Park.

The art was created on location during the 2004 Neighborhood Art House Summer Program.

The artists and their works are: **Alina Kleshchevnikova, 12**, a watercolor of the beach; **Chris Carroll, 12**, an oil pastel of the bay; **Chris Schneider, 12**, a colored pencil sketch of the Waterworks Pavilion; **Ray Beale, 11**, a painting of the Light-house at Waterworks Park on the peninsula.

The artists were invited to a ribbon cutting ceremony at Tom Ridge Center on May 26.

Teen Artist

Neighborhood Art House student **Shane Foster, 13**, recently completed what may be among the most important pieces of artwork of his young life. Shane is a student of Art House instructor, Paul DeNiro.

Shane's pastel of what he calls a rustic cabin in the woods near a tree and a pond will appear on the cover of a new book, *Bankroll*, by Janet Elaine Smith. When Smith learned from Shane's mother that he was interested in art, she asked that he create the cover for the book.

"It took me about two weeks to finish the cover," said Shane. "I've been doing art for as long as I can remember. And I really like working with pastels."

The importance of "living large"

Not long ago I overheard one of the teachers explaining the definition of a vocabulary word to her class. I didn't hear the word; I only heard the explanation. Nevertheless, I was touched by what I heard: "It means living large," she said. Now that is an interesting concept. Then she said, "It is because of people who live large that we have this Neighborhood Art House. They live large and make it possible for you to have this place where you can come every day to learn and grow. They share what they have. They are very generous. They are living large."

As I began to absorb what I was hearing, my mind began to picture the many benefactors who indeed give of their resources, their time and their talents. These enable the Inner-City Neighborhood Art House not only to exist but to thrive. Before my daydreaming got too far I realized the lesson was not yet over. The teacher said, "When you grow up you must remember how important it is to live large. Someday, when you are able, by choosing to live large you will be able to help other children just like people are helping you." I left the Art House that day without ever knowing the vocabulary word being taught. But I found myself being grateful for people who live large and wanting to live larger myself.

Charlotte Anne Zalot, OSB
Neighborhood Art House teacher