

2006/2007 CGAF Events & Conferences

Recent Event Updates

- 1) September 30, 2006: *Victoria Lifelong Learning Festival Program Launch:*
“Want to Learn some New Tricks”

Friends Represented: Helen Hughes, Jeffrey Pitcher, Joe Karmel, and Nadine Cruickshanks

The Children’s Global Arts Foundation was represented at the first Victoria Lifelong Learning Festival, held outside at Centennial Square on Saturday, October 30th. This was a new annual event for the City of Victoria, and we had a beautiful, sunny (albeit very windy) Fall day. Despite the strong winds and scarce attendance, we had an inspirational day at the festival launch. This City of Victoria initiative - in partnership with the B.C. Ministry of Education, and the downtown Victoria Community Alliance - included a host of well planned and diverse main stage performances, learning demonstrations, and community group displays, for children and community members of all ages!

The Foundation set up an attractive display featuring: 1) an exhibit of children’s artwork and photographs from Iraq, Afghanistan, Zanzibar Island, New Delhi & Deenabandhu India, Belize, and Canada; 2) a colourful information board with a large world map highlighting the global art exchanges to date; and 3) a creative arts table with an invitation for “the child that lives inside all of us” to share their own messages of “the world we live in” and/or “the world we want” through a variety of art mediums (pastels, crayons, markers, sketching pencils, poetry, magazine - newspaper collage, and clay). People of all ages visited the booth and shared their stories. Bob Dalton’s accordion display board again provided a great backdrop for discussion and reflection. A number of compliments were paid to the Foundation for the work it is contributing to and to the connections and interrelationships it is promoting. Victoria mayor, Alan Lowe, escorted by our youngest board member, Jeffery Pitcher was given a thorough introduction to the project, and was sincerely enamored by Jeffery’s articulate delivery and inspiring world view. A few new “Friends of the Foundation” were recruited, including another very enthusiastic youth board member. The City of Victoria kindly donated the art supplies to the Foundation which had been purchased for the art station. These resources will be used at future events and presentations!

- 2) October 2, 2006: *Global Arts presentation - Darlene Clover’s graduate seminar - UVic*

Nadine and Roselynn Verwoord co-presented to 14 graduate students of the Education Department, University of Victoria. Students viewed a children’s artwork and project display, watched a segment of the Global Arts DVD, learned of the Foundation’s background, goals, and projects, listened to project-specific stories, and took part in interesting dialogue and discussion. Overall, students were highly enthusiastic and interested of the work of the Foundation and the meaningful connections and opportunities presented to children worldwide. Many students joined as new “Friends” of the Foundation.

2.

3) October 20, 2006: *ESL - PSA Conference (Gladstone Secondary, Vancouver)*

Children's Global Arts

Weaving The Tapestry: Take 2

16th Annual ESL PSA Conference

Gladstone Secondary School, Vancouver, B.C.

Based on two themes, “the world we live in” and “the world we want”, children from around the world are invited to create and exchange cultural art forms in pursuit of a more peaceful, just, and connected world. This project has supported artwork initiatives and exchanges between Canadian children and children from Iraq, Afghanistan, South Africa, Tanzania, Nigeria, Zambia, Iran, India, Belize, Chili, and Vietnam. This presentation will explain more about the Global Arts initiative and support delegates who would like to get involved. Children’s artwork will be available for viewing.

Presenters: *Nadine Cruickshanks and Joe Karmel*

Conference hosts provided a computer, LCD projector, T.V. and DVD player.

Reflections from Session

The session proved to be very interesting and thought-provoking. We set up an artwork display and put out related children’s books and resources on separate tables. Nadine began the session by inviting delegates (6 females - 1 high school teacher; 5 elementary/middle) to walk around and view the artwork, paying particular attention to the voices and the messages of the children who created them. A discussion followed generating thoughts of what was seen, heard, and felt through the pictures. All delegates were quite moved by the quality, colour, and the starkness of the art from Iraq and Afghanistan. A high school teacher from Iran noted how she could see, and resonate with, multiple layers of the artwork messages and helped to transcribe for us, the Farsi notes and titles, written by the children in Afghanistan.

Nadine proceeded by sharing a brief history and background about the Children’s Global Arts initiative, and then showed the introduction, the “Clothesline art” project and the introduction to the “Guguletu-Victoria” connection. A discussion transpired about the ideas that were shared in the video. Nadine asked the question:

What do you think are the important elements to consider for initiating a global arts project in your school or classroom?

The main points that were raised by the delegates and presenters:

- The importance of the *artwork ideas and mediums to come from the children/students themselves*, with the awareness that the more students *have a say or a choice* in the project, the more they will *have to say* throughout the project.

3.

- The need to *provide quality and uninterrupted time* for students to consider and create ideas about their world. Students need time to generate the “creative flow” for expressing their ideas and visions.
- The need to enter this conversation with *reciprocity* in mind. Through artwork exchanges, children will share aspects of their world with one another, connect with each other, and ultimately *learn from one another*. The importance of *getting away from* “us” and “them” mindsets, and away from ideas that suggest that “we in the westernized world have everything and will go and ‘fix’ those ‘poor people’ in other parts of the world”. Delegates noticed the sense of family, hope, and community in the children’s artwork from war-torn Iraq and Afghanistan, and a discussion was generated about the perceived lack of these aspects in Canadian children’s artwork.

Joe Karmel then shared two firsthand stories related to his experiences with Global Arts - one with a grade 7-9 class in Victoria, and one with a grade 10 class in Vancouver. Delegates were quite moved and provoked by his overall student’s expressions - those that demonstrated “the world we want” represented by large houses, cars, TVs, skateboard parks, and aggressive and violent images, as well as those that demonstrated “the world we live in” as a world full of fear, violence, and hatred. An interesting discussion transpired about where children are generating their images of the world we live in, and why images were solidly negative in nature. Joe shared his conversation with his students, and his overall thoughts on this matter by suggesting that some students felt that perceiving the world as dark and negative, was “the right answer” - or an answer they thought was what was wanted. Others felt that that was all the newspapers and media had to share - the media in a sense became their eyes to a world of darkness. Delegates and presenters came to recognize how the global arts project can raise some interesting dialogue about our world - not only for the children who are expressing thoughts about the world, but also for us adults, who are hearing them. One delegate from Saanich felt that a community meeting should be held (with diverse members of our community sitting around a table) to discuss these points and concerns about our children and the world they perceive, through open and active dialogue. Of added significance was the note of how important it is to authentically honour the children (as Joe has done) by allowing them to express their thoughts and ideas without interference or preconceived notions of how their thoughts of the world should look (from a “teacher’s” point of view). Ultimately, student ideas will be challenged through the artwork connections they make, and through ongoing messages that are shared through artwork, child-to-child.

The presentation was then followed by a brief exposure to the Global Arts website and what could be found there. 3 DVDs were sold and 2 new Friends of the Foundation signed on.

4) October 20, 2006: *B.C. Peace & Global Education Conference/PSA-continuing WPF*
(*Inlet Theatre & Moody Middle School, Port Moody*)

Presenter: *Roselynn Verwoord*

1 DVD sold; 4 new Friends of the Foundation

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5) October 20, 2006: *Bring Sustainability into Your Schools, Vancouver (GVRD)*
**Children's Global Arts: Visioning the World We Want and
Connecting to the World We Live In**

Presented by the Children's Global Arts Foundation; University of Victoria

Presenter: *Dr. Tim Hopper*

This workshop tells the story of the Children Global Arts project which started in 2003 with an exchange of artwork between children in Canada and children in war torn Afghanistan and Iraq based on the theme the 'World We Want' and now includes arts exchanges with Canadian children and children in India, Chile, South Africa, Belize, Tanzania, Vietnam, Iran, and Nigeria.

The workshop will feature a DVD created to show five lessons created and taught by Canadian teachers to develop Arts based exchanges with children in other countries around the world. The Children's Global Arts project uses multiple forms of Arts (pictures, dance, drama, crafts, poetry, music, video), encouraging children from a wide spectrum of cultures around the world to impart images and impressions of the "world we live in" and visions for "the world we want". See project website for examples of children's expressions from around the world – <http://www.childrenglobalarts.ca>.

This workshop will invite teachers to examine how creating Arts based projects and programs can help to develop ongoing global connections between students and school communities that enables the promotion of global citizenship, social responsibility, cultural understanding, sustainability, democratic society, and peace education.

They provided a Computer, an LCD projector, and speakers.
www.bctf.ca/EEPSA or www.gvrd.bc.ca/education

Reflections from Session

The session went very well. As can be seen from the photos I set up the display and put out booklets, laminated pictures from Afghanistan and DVD with booklets on separate tables. During the break between sessions I made a connection with a Sandra Santarossa who has a similar project to the Children's Global Arts with "Word love World Love" connected to Sri Lanka. She volunteered to take money for me for DVDs (see picture 4).

At the beginning of the session I surveyed the teachers to see where they came from in relation to school curriculum age levels. Out of about 40 teachers 2 came from high school, 1 from middle school and then rest from elementary school. There were only 3 men in the group.

After an introduction to the project and the website I asked participants to choose a visual medium to study (display, DVD, booklets) and to consider the following questions

- * "What does the artwork say to you?"
- * "How could you use this with your students?"

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This resulted in lots of discussion as people circulated. One teacher shed a tear in relation to the Afghan art. When I brought the teachers together again I ask them to debrief with a colleagues on the questions.

We then shared some big ideas. Such as,

“The need to connect children in a meaningful way.”

“How this project could be a spring board for so many curriculum ideas.”

“How this project could get children to focus on needs rather than wants.”

I then showed the DVD introduction, art analysis, the “Clothsline art” and then the final reflection piece. This then spawned more discussion. A great point was made about the need to help our students to not speak from the privileged position. As one teacher commented, it took her 2 years living in Africa to realize that being poor was not a deficit in life. That poor people can make great lives. Though we have tried to address this in the video with comments from Gita and Kathy, this is a critical issue. It was pointed out that being able to view the grade 1 class allowed older students to reflect on that way of seeing the world and could offer a spring board to critique the way from a young age we are socialized to think in a certain privileged way about the rest of the world. A final comment came from the secondary art teacher (Nicholas Stanger see card nicholasstanger.ca) who showed the Afghan piece of art depicting a terrible battle with babies being slaughtered. He commented how this one piece could be used as a unit item for high school students to study Afghanistan – “Who drew the picture? What does it show? What did they want to communicate? How can we respond?”

All in all a very successful workshop.

I wish I could have stayed and mixed with the participants more.

12 DVDs sold and 7 new friends signed up.

6) Month of October: *Victoria International Art Symposium “Art with Conscience” exhibit at SilverThreads on Douglas Street*

Kim Crowell - the Galleries & Volunteer Coordinator for the Victoria International Art Symposium - informed us midway through October that although the Silver Threads Administration were enthusiastic about the exhibit, the daily events and lack of understanding of patrons have not allowed for an ongoing and safely kept [portable] Global Arts exhibition. Although some artwork remained on the walls of Silver Threads until October 30, the two traveling art displays were removed from Silver Threads by mid October. We appreciate Kim's care and attention to this matter. On our behalf, Kim offered us extra space at the Symposium's Artist Marketplace to exhibit our traveling art display alongside our promotion table. The Marketplace was held in the Saanich Room - lower level of the Victoria Conference Center.

October 27-30, 2006 : *Victoria International Art Symposium “Art with Conscience”*
Market Place Art Exhibit: Victoria Conference Centre

A colourful and compelling Global Arts display was set up at the Victoria Convention Centre, Saanich Room throughout the four day International Art Symposium - “artists of conscience” (Oct. 27-30, 2006). Artwork from children in Victoria, Vancouver, Iraq, Afghanistan, Vietnam, Belize, India, as well as a map and photographs from various artwork exchanges were attractively displayed on walls and display boards, and global arts resources (including promotional DVDs and *our new art note cards*) were highlighted on two 6-foot tables. Delegates of the symposium wandered through between talks and sessions. Those who took the time to stop and engage with the art and the project became highly inspired and interested in its plans and projects. Educators as well as members of our mental health associations, would re-visit the display throughout the four days, interested in continuing the conversation, and introducing the project to new members of the community - particularly those with a strong passion for health and education, and those who are inspired to change these practices for the better.

Mandy Leith, coordinator of Victoria’s Open Cinema stopped by the booth, and when she learned of the artwork from children in Iraq, she inquired about borrowing the display for Deryk Houston’s film and discussion related to his film “From Baghdad to Peace Country”. As it turned out, Mandy came to pick up the traveling art display Sunday evening at 5:00, set it up in the hallway of Hermann’s Jazz Club for the evening event, and then returned it to us at 9:00 Monday morning. Mandy commented on how timely and fitting it was to have the children’s artwork on display for Deryk’s film about Iraq, because the discussion turned full circle to the importance of education and listening to the voices of our children.

3 DVDs and 56 note cards sold: 7 new Friends signed on.

Nadine would like to express her gratitude for the following **Friends** and *acquaintances* of the Foundation who assisted with this Global Arts outreach event: **Ida Giordano** for bringing us children’s artwork from Vietnam Friendship Village and for volunteering time at our booth; **Catherine McCloud** for volunteering time and support at our booth; **Gita John** for helping to dismantle our booth; *Netanya Karmel* for helping set up the booth, **Budd Hall** and **Darlene Clover** for their visit and support at the booth; **Joe Karmel** and *Ron Cruickshanks* for their support at the home-front; and to *Kim Croswell* and *Stephanie Croft* for their inclusion of the Children’s Global Arts Foundation at the Symposium Market Place and Silver Threads Centre, and for their overall smooth running of this “artists for conscience” event.

Upcoming Events (Possibilities ?)

- 1) November 29, 2006: BCTF Global Education Conference, UVic (?)
- 2) December 10, 2006: Art Exhibition: Shawnigan Lake Community Centre
“Celebrating Creative Communities” event in honour of
UN Human Rights Day
- 3) January 2007: Art Exhibition: Lake Cowichan
- 4) February 16, 2007: BCTF Local 61; GVTA-595-0181; Local 62
(School Districts 61-Victoria, 62-Sooke)
Jack Greenwell-477-3549 (h) 595-2444(school)
- 5) April 20-22, 2007: Early Childhood Education Peace Conference (Spain)
- 6) May 2007: Vancouver Island International Children’s Festival - Juan De Fuca,
Langford (Cindy Moyer/Colin Gorrie/Kim Smythe)
- 7) Spring or Fall 2007: CGA Conference in Calgary (Theresa Lewis/Cheryl Zelmer) (?)
- 8) June 2007: Global Arts Day at UVic (?)
Day: Children’s art activities during the day
Evening: Children’s Global Arts Foundation “first” annual general
meeting & fundraising/gallery event
- 9) June 6-10 2007: EcoFest: The Spirit Bear Project (Royal Roads) (?)

Requests for “traveling art” exhibitions and presentations...

- a) Peace Education exhibit in New Zealand
- b) Don Wright from *Amnesty International* is interested in a collaborative “Human Rights”
conference at UBC or UVic.
- c) Dr. Carmen Rodriguez (UVic) assisting with arrangements to have Global Arts DVD sent and
viewed at the Early Childhood Education Peace Conference in Spain - April 20-22, 2007