



GL-CAP

By Michelle Kimber

The Creative Art Project is a wonderful program that is offered to expose CMH consumers and the general public to art in many ways. I had the chance to take part in a couple of these over the last few weeks and I wanted to share some of my thoughts on this amazing program and the awesome women who run this.

Amy Smith and Laura Ritchie are the two main minds behind these extraordinary occasions. I had the great pleasure to participate in the photography class they offer. They supplied me with a digital camera to use and set me loose at certain parts of Muskegon to take shots. We visited Hackley Park and Central UMC. We went to Hoffmaster Park and the Scolnik House. I took tons of photographs and some even turned out pretty good. Chris Wyns, the instructor, has an excellent eye and helped me look at shots in different ways. The experience was a fun way to try a new skill and see the city in a different light.

I also had the pleasure of joining a group of consumers with my daughter to go to Art Prize in Grand Rapids. We loaded up in a van on a weekday morning and headed to the city. Once we parked in a general location we headed out looking for the art installations all over the city. We saw a dragon and a sand castle right on a busy sidewalk. There were driftwood and stick horses near the museum in the Grand River. We stood in line at the Grand Rapids Art museum to see some of the top ten picks. They were amazing examples of what people can do with just paper or a pencil. I registered there and made my vote and it won in the end. We had a great time of talking about the difference in the things on display and just had a great time being together.

The Creative Art Project or the Art Project as it is becoming known as, is an amazing way for people to experience art and get a chance to create something wonderful themselves. Whether a photography or a painting or just learning how to dance some great moves, it gives us a chance to express ourselves and helps us to interact with others. I will be signing up for more classes. Watch for their schedule and take a class.



Sponsored by

Great Lakes Creative Arts Project

Friday, December 7, 2012

**Community Mental Health
Lobby**

9:00 am – 4:00 pm

**Original works of art, prints and
cards will be available for sale.**

Recovery is a life full of meaning

Every year MPAS sponsors a Disability Advocacy Essay contest by soliciting real life stories from people who have achieved personal success or have made a significant impact on the lives of others with disabilities.

The first, second, and third-place winners in this year's contest are respectively: **Florida Harris** from Detroit, **Deanna Foose** from Ontonagon, and **Scott Spicer** from Kalamazoo.

Second Place Winner

Employment Discrimination Dispute Resolved - by Scott Spicer

In fall of 2009 I was fired from my job after six weeks of paid leave and being forced to see a psychiatrist due to concerns about my health and behavior. This came about after I witnessed my co-workers making stigmatizing remarks about people with mental illness, not knowing what to do or whether I would lose my job if they found out about me.

In an effort to advocate for myself during the six weeks that I was on paid leave and following my termination, I went to my local Center for Independent Living to talk with a Disability Rights Advocate. I shared my situation with him and was referred to MPAS. With their guidance, I was able to obtain a private attorney who only charged me a small retainer fee, helped me win my unemployment appeal and file a charge of discrimination with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). After nearly a year and half, and many exhaustive efforts, I won a settlement from the EEOC Charge of Discrimination.

Since November of 2009, (about two months after I was fired), I have been a member of the Board of Directors at my local Center for Independent Living and working to help others with mental illness as a Peer Support Specialist for over two years now. This was a long, difficult and life changing process as I struggled for months just to keep a job and maintain my finances while fighting my case with the unemployment appeals process, EEOC investigation, preparing a legal complaint and even until the end with obtaining the final settlement.

There were so many moments where I wanted to give up not just on this process, but on myself, with very little hope that I could get my life back. Through the support of professionals, co-workers, friends, family, my own determination and strong will, I was able to find victory for myself and feel the personal gain of being able to help others who are going through similar struggles. I have long been privileged enough to have the opportunity to advocate for others and it wasn't until I faced my own personal situation that I realized completely what it takes to fight for your rights. Thankfully, I can say that all the hard work was worth it in the end.

The mission

of MPAS is to advocate and protect the legal rights of people with disabilities

What we Do

People with disabilities have to deal with a wide variety of issues. We try to answer any questions you may have relating to disability. We have experience in the following areas: discrimination in education, employment, housing, and public places; abuse and neglect; Social Security benefits; Medicaid, Medicare and other insurance; housing; Vocational Rehabilitation; HIV/AIDS issues; and many other disability-related topics. If you need more information about what we do, or want to learn more about any of the topics referred to on this website, please call 1-800-288-5923 (in Michigan, voice/TTY) or 517-487-1755 (in Lansing, voice/TTY).



Recovery Policy and Practice Advisory Michigan Recovery Council

Recovery is choosing and reclaiming a life full of meaning, purpose and one's sense of self. It is an ongoing personal and unique journey of hope, growth, resilience and wellness. In that journey, recovery builds relationships supporting a person's use of their strengths, talents and passions. Recovery is within each and every individual.

Guiding Principles of Recovery

The following principles outline essential features of recovery for the individual:

- 1. Recovery is a Personal Journey* and each person can attain and regain their hopes and dreams in their own way. Each journey is grounded in hope, and a sense of boundless possibilities. The strength, talent and abilities of each individual provide an opportunity to reach his or her own life goals. Everyone can attain and maintain recovery and move to a place of independence beyond the public mental health system.
- 2. Recovery includes all Aspects of Life* and is driven through the services and supports selected and controlled by the individual. Partnerships are formed based on trust and respect. Recovery will be attained and maintained with the support of friends, family, peers, advocates and providers.
- 3. Recovery is Life Long* and requires ongoing learning. Each individual has the courage to plan for and achieve wellness. Increased personal knowledge builds experience in advocating for services and supports.
- 4. Recovery Supports Health and Wellness* and is the responsibility of each individual with support from others who provide physical and mental health services. Integrating physical and mental health is essential to wellness. Through self advocacy and support, the highest attainable quality of life will be achieved with the integration of mental health and physical health, increased length of life is possible.

Let's Start the New Year Off by Giving the Gift of Hope!

Our Next WRAP Workshop will begin Monday,
January 7th!

We had so many people wanting to attend the "Current" WRAP Workshop that we had to add another available day!

A Big "Thank You " goes out to all of you for your promotion of ,and referrals to WRAP. It is a reflection of your commitment to Wellness and Recovery for All!

Remember that WRAP is for "Everyone"! It is an individual choice and there is no "readiness" standards. It is also open to the public.

I look forward to hearing from you. All questions are welcome. Flyers will be available soon and I have informational pamphlets available.

April Elliott

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"How To Draw Better Pictures"

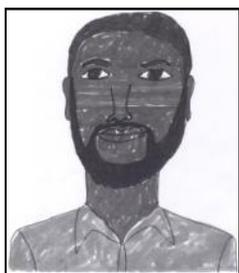
By Dwayne Harris

Since my very first day at the Lakeshore School of Fine Arts I wanted to learn how to draw better pictures. I started out with a color wheel and I had to do something different by making a great big circle and then I had to color it in with light and dark colors in water colored pencils.

My favorite part was to make a portrait of a celebrity by the name of Stacy Keibler who is a famous woman who stars in TV shows like Dancing With the Stars. First I started with her head and face and it must be real just like in an 8x10 photo, then I had to draw her eyes, lips, eyebrows, teeth and hair so it looks real. It took me 14 months to make it complete and I was in some stress, but I had to keep my cool and try again.

Every Tuesday afternoon I ride the bus to art class to meet some people who know how to draw. I made a landscape once and acrylic painted it. In fact I want to do more acrylic painting and I love it. Maybe I should go to Hobby Lobby to check out some art supplies like water colored pencils and come up with an idea like making pictures of animals. It could be a horse or a parrot or a rabbit. Needless to say I'm used to try new things at art class when I first come in.

Maybe someday when I have a picture whether it is in acrylic painting or water colored pencils I'm going to sell it. Bottom line is a true work of art transforms in to a complete masterpiece.



National Disability Rights Network NDRN

NDRN Position on Employment: People with disabilities can, and do, work in all areas of the American workforce. They thrive when they fully participate in their communities, and in turn, the nation thrives. However, statistics show that many people with disabilities remain unemployed or under-employed. In addition, thousands of people with disabilities are being paid less than the minimum wage and/or work in isolation and segregation in programs which lead them nowhere.

The Client Assistance Program (CAP) and other Protection and Advocacy programs are working at the state and local level to change these outcomes. The National Disability Rights Network is advocating at the federal level with Congress and the Administration to make changes in laws, regulations, policies and practices to further the ability of people with disabilities to be employed in integrated environments at competitive wages. Learn more at www.ndrn.org

Are you ready to learn about disability issues? Do you have an idea? Do you want to get involved?

The **RICC**:

Regional Inclusive Community Coalition is inviting People with Developmental Disabilities, Family Members, Advocacy Organizations, Support Systems, and Interested Citizens to come together to educate ourselves and others about the issues that impact community life.

The **Disability Connection WM** is holding Community Conversations about building communities that include welcome the participation of all its members.

Call CMH Customer Service for more information 724-6618

See Dwayne's work at the sale on Friday, Dec. 7th