



sights & sounds of where we belong

RE-create youth spend a lot of their time in Hamilton's downtown core, making use of public spaces like the Central Library, Jackson Square mall, and the King Street corridor. For the past two summers RE-create has partnered with the Resilience Research Centre at Dalhousie University, to do a research project on how our youth interact with the city. The project focused on where in the city they felt like they belonged, or didn't belong.

After our first summer of doing this research, we wanted to share some of the informal data that we had gathered. We received a grant from the Laidlaw Foundation and launched a nine-month project called "The Sights & Sounds of Where We Belong". Our youth artists, mentored by Brett and Meghan, discussed with them their sense of belonging in the downtown core. They then chose six spaces to focus on, evaluating how youth-friendly these spaces were, and what the spaces could do to improve.

These thoughts and suggestions were shared in the form of an interactive, multimedia art exhibition at the June 2015 Art Crawl. The Sights & Sounds team's goal was to have staff

from each of these six spaces come to the exhibition and hear suggestions about how they might adjust their spaces to be more youth-friendly. The six spaces featured were the hospital (specifically parts of the hospital utilized to treat mental health), Living Rock ministries, Hamilton Street Railway (HSR), Central Library (the downtown branch of the public library), the Ontario Works office, and finally RE-create itself.

In addition to the visual art made about each space, Brett led the youth in the creation of audio art pieces about each space. The youth recorded found sound in each space, which was then altered and re-mixed. Then the youth sang and rapped over top of these 'beats', expressing their thoughts on the space. These audio

pieces can be found at <http://recreatecollective.bandcamp.com/releases>.

The project was very successful, helping to foster civic engagement among our youth artists. They had the chance to raise their voices about how they are treated in spaces that house resources that are essential to their resilience. Their suggestions also did not fall on deaf ears. St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton sent staff to the exhibition from their Youth Wellness Centre (YWC), a new initiative that brings youth mental health services downtown. The YWC took to heart the suggestion of having art supply kits available for youth in the psychiatric ward and is pursuing making this suggestion a reality. ●



RE-create is a program of Shalem Mental Health Network
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life in the studio: meghan's reflections

Since I became Studio Coordinator three years ago, RE-create has experienced incredible growth. It has been a joy to participate in this blossoming. We recently realized that we had welcomed 160 individual youth through our doors in the past six months—an extraordinary increase from three years ago!

It has been a busy year, full of celebration, challenging times, and a lot of art-making! We are so proud of our Sights & Sounds project (see page 1), which helped us connect civic engagement, art and music-making, and resulted in a stunning art exhibition at the June 2015 Art Crawl. Other exhibitions we participated in included a spotlight on our youth artists at 541 Eatery and Exchange, an exhibition of self-reflective artwork on mirrors at the Hamilton Public Library, and solo shows by two of our youth artists in the Art Forms space, where our studio time takes place.

There were a few opportunities for us to focus on the link between mental health and art over the past year as well. In March we helped St. Joseph Healthcare Hamilton launch their new Youth Wellness Centre (YWC), an amazing new resource that brings youth mental

health care downtown, by participating in their #ReachOut campaign. Our youth artists advised the YWC on their branding, and created artwork on the theme of reaching out to hang in their new building. We have loved partnering with the YWC since it's opening, in order to connect our youth artists with important mental health resources.

In August we were blessed to receive a grant from the Hamilton Community Foundation that let us focus once again on mental health and art-making. We worked towards our 'Interior Worlds' exhibition for the summer, welcoming in guest artists who presented their own journey with mental health. Our youth used the inspiration provided by these artists to brainstorm ideas in focus groups, and to then create an exhibition of work for August Art Crawl. We see the connection between mental wellness and the creation of art on a daily basis here in the studio, but it was refreshing to focus closely on this connection for a few months.

Guest artist sessions are a highlight for our youth artists. We had special workshops on bookbinding, figure drawing, skateboard art, and Photoshop over the past year, led by many generous local artists. Another exciting session was led by a local youth artist, involving some fun (and messy) paint pouring! Our own studio assistant Mouse led another

workshop on packing tape sculpture in the spring, a medium he is particularly skilled at. Hamilton Public Library's Writer-in-Residence, Hal Niedzviecki, also came and led workshops for us on zine-making. All these new techniques and media became part of the fabric of daily life in the studio.

We've also had the chance to celebrate the community that has formed among the youth artists, volunteers and staff at the studio. We routinely celebrate birthdays with rousing rounds of 'Happy Birthday' and cupcakes, and find ways to celebrate graduations from Living Rock's Tri-Rock Employment program, as well as other successes that should not go unnoticed. Two of our regular participants gave birth in the past year, which we celebrated with a baby shower, and lots of oohing and ahing over the cute little ones. The youth artists organized a "National Meghan Day" celebration to recognize the work that I put into daily studio life. RE-create is a space of community, and we think that journeying alongside our youth artists is the most important part of our work.



Meghan Schuurman
Studio Coordinator

volunteer spotlight

Our volunteers are essential to keeping RE-create running, and we love them a lot! We will be featuring a new volunteer in each newsletter, and this time we're featuring Jillian Thalman. Jill is a marketer by day, and an illustrator by night. RE-create youth love watching her work in her unique style. We asked her a few questions:

What inspires your artistic practice?
So many things! I try and flood my

social media feeds with other illustrators, blogs and artists so that



I'm constantly exposed to new ideas or approaches. I also love folkore, fairy tales, and children's books - there's so much room to play with the stories - to find humour or absurdity.

What made you interested in volunteering at RE-create?

I think everyone deserves the opportunity to express themselves creatively. But art supplies can get expensive and not everyone comes from a place where their creativity is nourished and encouraged. I liked that ReCreate was providing that space for people. It's a really important role for them to play, especially in a city that prides itself on their homegrown artists and musicians.

What are some of your artistic dreams?

I am (slowly) working on writing and illustrating a children's book. I have an idea that mixes my interest in folkore and our natural history all up together in a Canadian bestiary but it's still in the works!

Mohawk student spotlight

When our youth artists graduate and move onto bigger things, we are so proud of them. Right now two of our youth artists, Erin and Jake, are attending their first year of school at Mohawk College. Jake is in the Graphic Design program, and Erin is in the General Art Program. They are both excited to be at school, and we love seeing their assignments as they work on them at Tuesday night studio time. We can't wait to see what these two artists will do out there in the world!



the motis partnership

RE-create is continually grateful for the community partnerships we have forged over the years. We were excited to re-connect with Paul Terpstra, one of our former summer students (2007), who now runs a small company called Motis Inc. Motis is an action sports brand that sells high quality, performance based action sports products and apparel, and also does as much as it can to give back to the community.

One of the products that Motis sells is skateboard decks, which you can customize yourself. Paul was incredibly generous and donated 15 skateboard decks to RE-create, which were used in a two-part workshop that Paul and his friend Mike ran together. The youth artists were very enthusiastic about getting to paint and customize their own decks, and loved working with Paul and Mike. Paul then featured quite a few youth boards at a display at August Art Crawl.

You can check out Motis Inc here:
www.motisinc.com



video spotlight

In 2014, we received funding from the Sea to Sea: Cycling to End Poverty to have two promotional videos made for RE-create in order help us tell youth and funders about our programming. With the generous and patient help of Jesse Korgemaa at Driftwood Film, we now have two beautiful videos that feature our program in all its glory. You can check them out on YouTube here.



battle of the brushes

In September 2016, we will come to the end of our generous World Vision funding, and so we are trying to fundraise in advance of this deadline. In September we hosted a high energy live painting competition called 'Battle of the Brushes', which was a huge success. Over 120 people attended to see 11 artists compete, who each had the same size canvas and half an hour to make a work of art. The audience voted for the winners, and five artists went on to a second round.



Phil Irish, painting professor at Redeemer University, won first place, with Rachael Bosma and Hannah Essex, two RE-create volunteers, coming in second and third. It was a great night of fun, and we raised over \$1300 for RE-create. We will be repeating this great event next year, in an even bigger venue, so stay tuned for details and dates.



LEAP 3



Betty Brouwer, our Artistic Director, and Meghan Schuurman, our Studio Coordinator, got away for two days in May to dream and strategize with the World Vision team at a workshop called LEAP 3. They found the time to intentionally think through RE-create's structure and programming to be invaluable and refreshing. In classic World Vision style, they also used a lot of sticky notes to process their thoughts!

Kristyn's run

Kristyn Free-land, a student at Guelph-Humber in the Psychology program, was one of our amazing interns this past spring. Kristyn is an avid runner, and approached us with the possibility of running the Toronto Waterfront Half-Marathon on October 18, 2015 on behalf of RE-create. In the months leading up to the run, Kristyn raised over \$1,900 for RE-create, and successfully finished the run! We are so grateful to have interns so invested in our vision, and are also grateful for our ever-widening community of support!



upcoming events

We always look forward to partnering with Hamilton District Christian High's art department every winter to put on a collaborative art exhibition. This year our project will focus on Cootes Paradise's Eco-Park, and feature artwork inspired by that geographic area. This exhibition will be on display twice; first at Hamilton Central Public Library, 4th floor for the month of December and then again May 1st at 541 Eatery and Exchange.



artistic director



Betty J.B. Brouwer

“Studio time, is the best... that’s the family time, gathering around the dinner table” (Brett Klassen; RE-create summer student 2014, 2015)

Ever since hearing those words the image of people crammed around a table during studio time creating art has stayed with me. Family mealtime at RE-create is unique: youth artist, volunteers, staff gathered together each with their own stories and backgrounds. Yet each person comes to the art table and finds space and nourishment as they share their ideas, their lives.

When asked about RE-create, I struggle to capture in words what happens in this creative space. It is about the art: creating and learning new techniques and creating pieces for art exhibits. But it is also much more than that. It is family mealtime. The studio table always has room for one more person to join. Truly RE-create is family. There is always enough to add another “plate” at the table.

I want to be clear these “RE-create meal-times” are not the idyllic kind depicted

by Hallmark. True to typical family dinner gatherings there are disagreements. At times they can get heated. Though hurts may happen, permeating it all is a sense of belonging.

The idea of family mealtime made me reflect on what families offer when they are working well. Family offers a place where you can come, where you are welcomed and where you belong. You don’t have to perform, you don’t have to pay dues, you simply are part of the family. Family time is about being there in the difficult times as well as celebrating joys and successes.

We witness this at RE-create when we join in celebration with youth over the success of finding new and stable housing, acceptance into school, the arrival of a baby, a painting completed. Yet we also share our hardships, whether it is the loss of housing, a break-up of relationship, rejection from family or struggles with identity. RE-create, like family mealtime, is about relationships, about being there for one another. Laughing at yet another silly pun, having empathy for someone whose life just hit rock bottom. It is about a give and take, reciprocity.

This summer I witnessed the power of relationship and the reciprocity that is born and needed when some of the youth decided that they wanted to show their appreciation to Meghan by design-

ating August 6th, as “National Meghan Appreciation Day”. The youth wanted to return to Meghan what she has given to them: deep caring and her time/presence as experienced through monthly birthday celebrations, encouragement and assistance to fill out various applications etc. The youth reciprocated; they chose snacks that Meghan likes and gave her flowers in her favourite colour. It was wonderful to witness how the action of the youth touched Meghan, whose eyes welled up with tears, and then to see how Meghan’s response impacted the youth. This is family sharing, giving back and forth. It happens while we are creating. We are creating more than art; we are creating and forging relationships. ●



how you can help

partner with us to impact the lives of street-involved youth

- I would like to give:
 - \$150 \$100 \$50 \$25 Other
 I can make this donation on a
 - monthly yearly one time basis.
- I would like to donate items such as: gift certificates to art supply stores, food vouchers, furniture for the studio space, etc.

Mail to:
RE-create | 1 Young Street Suite 512 | Hamilton, ON L8N 1T8
Or donate online at www.shalemnetwork.org

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Please email the RE-create newsletter to me.

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Please make cheques payable to RE-create Outreach Art Studio. RE-create is a program of Shalem Mental Health Network. All donations over \$10 will receive a charitable receipt. BN 13056 6011 RR0001