

life in the studio

This past year has been filled with many creative endeavours. It has been great to witness the RE-create youth artists taking ownership over the studio and the community that is forming here. In June we had an Outdoor Pizza Fundraiser Evening (thanks to Tineke and Marcel Vanderhoeven), which many youth volunteered at. The evening was a great success and a lot of fun for the youth as well as those who came out to enjoy the food and live music.

We have been busy creating art, exhibiting and throwing creative art events, giving our youth many opportunities to share their work with the community. In April we put up a full show of artwork about our favourite song lyrics at the Freeway Coffeehouse. At the opening of "The Lyrics Show" a few youth had the opportunity to sing and play music. A few weeks later we showcased art made from altered books at the Hamilton Public Library. We participated in the Steel City Bike Festival in June, with a number of youth artists submitting pieces to a larger Bike Art show at the Baltimore House. Throughout July and August our youth created submissions for The Living

Rock's 'Arts of August' showcase. In August, we received a \$500 pop-up grant from The Laidlaw Foundation, a grant designed to bring summer fun to people who usually are excluded from it because of poverty. We decided to host a barbeque with a tie-dye t-shirt making station, an event dreamt up by one of the youth a year ago. The youth worked hard the whole day of the event, making food, setting up, taking photos, and leading the tie-dye station. It was a lot of fun, and over 25 youth came and took part in the event, dying 50 t-shirts by the end of the night!

This summer began the first of a three-year research project that looks at youth resilience, done in partnership with the Resilience Research Centre at Dalhousie University. We successfully profiled 6 youth, spending the whole day with them to find out where in the city they felt they belonged, or didn't belong. There will be more opportunities for our youth to grow and learn in the coming months, as we have received another Laidlaw grant to run a 9 month program, "The

Sights and Sounds of Where We Belong," that will let youth respond to the above-mentioned research through song, audio and visual art. Keep your eyes on our Facebook page (REcreate Meghan) this spring for the announcement about when 'Sights and Sounds' is coming to an Art Crawl near you!

Supercrawl is a large arts and music festival that happens every September in Hamilton, a spin-off on the monthly art crawls that have played a part in revitalizing Hamilton's downtown core. For the past two years we've engaged the public on the street throughout the festival, and this year was no exception. Kristina Jidkova and Natalie Vanderveen, Redeemer University College students, came up with a collaborative sculpture based on the theme "RE-create Your Hamilton." They created the skyline of Hamilton out of chicken wire and then invited the public to write their dreams, hopes and prayers for Hamilton on strips of fabric. These strips were then woven into the skyline, turning barren chicken wire ▶



into a colorful tapestry.

Once again this fall we have embarked on a joint art project with Hamilton District Christian High School's (HDCH) senior art class. The youth at RE-create work collaboratively with HDCH to come up with a theme to work on, and then all make artwork that hangs together in the final exhibit during November's Art Crawl (November 14). Throughout the project HDCH students come down to visit RE-create, and RE-create youth go up to HDCH to work in the art room at the school. As

in previous years we anticipate that this final exhibit will be excellent, and inspire cross-cultural friendships and connections.

It has also been a pleasure to forge more community at RE-create through conversations over coffee and art-making, celebrating birthdays and meals shared together. This year we celebrated Thanksgiving in the studio with a Swiss Chalet feast and lots of apple and pumpkin pie. We took a moment to write down what we were thankful for, and to relax together in the studio for

an evening. It was a great chance for youth new to the studio to experience our hospitality and generosity, and also a chance for more seasoned youth to feel at home in the space.

We hope to do more of these meals, in addition to the community building that happens each time the studio doors are open. ●



Meghan Schuurman
Studio Coordinator

handle with care

Randy Neudorf, RE-create Youth Outreach Worker

Every year a number of youth organizations contribute to a summer art

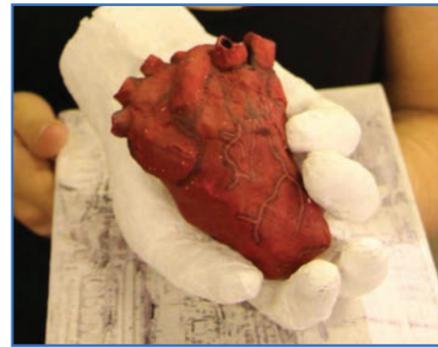


exhibit called Arts of August, submitting pieces based on themes of Love, Equality, Culture and Peace. A number of RE-create youth rose to the challenge. We were working in plaster and created mummified sculptures of our hands. Some youth created peace symbols, and others sculpted hands doing sign language. One youth named Marie took this project to "heart." She created a hand holding a realistic medical heart. Both the hand and the heart were sculpted and painted separately and then the heart was gently fitted into the plaster hand. The hand was stark white and the heart was blood red with veins and arteries painted in a stark black. Weeks and weeks were spent working to get this piece done in time for the show. With

honest candour Marie revealed that she hasn't always taken good care of herself and she has done some things that were very harmful. She is moving past that darkness and made this sculpture to remind herself that she needs to handle her heart with care, that she needs to learn to love and take care of herself. It is a risky thing for an artist to expose their life story in their work but the resulting piece was spectacular. The Arts of August judges must have agreed because they awarded Marie first place in the Love Category. Thank you so much Marie for having a brave and bold heart for telling your story and expressing such a profound truth. Everyone needs to handle their own hearts and the hearts of those around them with great care. ●

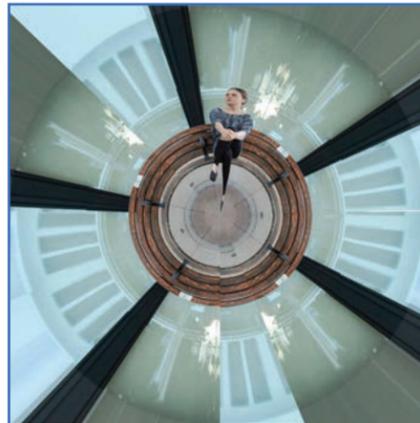
spotlight on a youth artist

Tiff is a youth artist who has been coming regularly to studio time since February. She first found out about RE-create when she met Meghan doing outreach at Notre Dame youth shelter, and finally came after Meghan pestered her continually to come. She kept coming back to studio time because she "liked doing art, socializing and making people laugh," and it was a place where people were friendly. Tiff is known in the studio for her deadpan humour, and for filling in the sign-in sheet in with all kinds of ridiculous names.

The aspects of RE-create that she likes the most are making art, the people she gets to spend time with in the studio, and that the studio is a place where she can really be herself. She expresses how art making and her time at RE-create has had a positive effect on her life in that it has "shown people and myself what I'm capable of doing and accomplishing." She says that when she makes art in the studio it gives her

a chance to be herself, and that she really likes how no one judges her, or the art that she makes, while she's at RE-create.

She describes RE-create as "a place where you can be yourself, where you can put your whole life, past, present and future, on canvas and paper. It's also a place where you can make new friends or acquaintances." We're grateful for the lightness that Tiff brings to the studio, with her humour, reflection and meaning-filled art pieces. ●



resilience is alive and thriving!

Brett Klassen, RE-create Summer Student

"Resilient" is not a word that people readily associate with at-risk youth. However, this summer I was hired as RE-create's summer student and saw first hand that it is one of the most accurate words to describe at-risk youth. Through pregnancy, school, job-searching, parenting, working, talking their friends out of suicide or whatever happens to be pressing at them that day, these youth show incredible strength while working toward healthy lives.

As part of RE-create's partnership with the Resilience Research Centre, Meghan and I filmed 6 youth for 6-8 hours each as they shared and invited us into spaces and places they felt they belonged or did not belong in the city of Hamilton. The footage for each youth was then edited down to 15-20 minute videos, which the youth then watched and offered their reflections. We are very thankful for their willingness to be open and vulnerable and allow us a glimpse into their lives.

It is to this research that the youth will



be responding with our new 'Sights and Sounds of Where We Belong' project, thanks to a Laidlaw Foundation grant. For this project the youth will be combining visual and sound art to show the community, community leaders and politicians where they feel unwelcome or welcome. This grant allows me the opportunity to extend my role at RE-create as I will be teaching how to create music and sound art using sounds from the spaces we are focusing on. I will be able to use my

expertise as a sound and field recording artist. Already during studio time I have been teaching a few youth how to make use of the digital audio programs we have on laptops at the studio. The youth and I are very excited to create pieces that speak to their view of the city and affect positive change.

Brett Klassen is currently attending McMaster in the Humanities program and will continue to be involved with RE-create in its "Sights and Sounds of Where We Belong" Project. ●

buttons - a gateway to creativity

Twice a week I get to walk around downtown Hamilton talking to youth about all the creative opportunities offered at RE-Create. I must confess that it is not always easy to convince youth who are complete strangers to come and try something new, but I have an ace up my sleeve. It is our custom button press. I tell the youth about the drawing supplies, the canvas, and all the other interesting projects but nothing sparks a new youth's interest like the possibility of getting to make a custom button. During outreach walks I wear a name tag button that I made in the studio, and I point to it and say "You can make your own buttons!" It is always a great feeling to see these youth make their way to the studio an hour later, asking to learn to make buttons.

Even someone who has never considered themselves a visual artist can draw or collage a cool button. Some youth have even taken photos of their family and created beautiful tributes to their family and heritage. Buttons also foster generosity. I've

heard youth say they want to make a button for their friend, teacher, dad, or sister.

The most beautiful part of the button maker is that the creativity doesn't stop there. A youth might tell me on outreach that they don't do art, but they come anyways to make some buttons. They do that for about a week and the whole time they get to see other youth working on paintings, sculptures and collages, and before you know it this youth "who doesn't do art" is staring at some really big creative projects, getting their hands dirty with paint, plaster, and paste, creating their own original masterpiece. In the end they found out that they were more of an artist than they had given themselves credit for, and it all started with a little custom button.

Since January 2014 Randy Neudorf has been RE-create's outreach worker. He comes with years of experience working with at-risk youth and as an artist. ●



artistic director

Betty J.B. Brouwer



RE-create is a special, almost magical space. This uniqueness comes from

more than the fact that one enters the studio not through door 126 or 128 James Street North, but rather through the door in between, 126 1/2, something akin to Plat-form 9 3/4. The doorway is not always easily noticed by those walking by but for those who know the door, they know that it leads to another world - a creative, safe and inviting space. To all who enter an invitation to imagine is extended. RE-create is a space brimming with creativity and potential. It is not that those of us at RE-create are

finished masterpieces, all nicely polished and perfect. Rather, we are all works in progress with unfinished edges. We are a community of people-in-progress connected by a desire to create, to imagine and to share our stories.

In the studio not all stories are spoken: rather in the art and in our very presence we provide opportunity for stories to be released in ways that escape words. RE-create is a place where shared stories are honoured. It is a place where people can come and rediscover that their worthiness lives inside their story. It is in the sharing of our lives, our stories, that we co-create stories and gain a sense of belonging and community. Threads of narrative swirl around the studio, some pieces shared by many, others by just one or two people and other

threads offer new possibilities to someone who was feeling without hope.

Together we open up space, discover possibilities and plant seeds for new narrative possibilities – that there can be a new and safe place to live, clarity to see that the relationship we are in is not healthy, an ability to see ourselves returning to school, an ability to volunteer at a soup truck, the potential to create. It is in the sharing of our stories that lives become intertwined. We celebrate the graduation of youth from high school, we welcome a new life born to a youth, we celebrate the wedding of our studio coordinator, we celebrate a new job, we support one another in our pain and anxieties and we encourage people to keep adding to their stories. Together we co-create our stories, weaving in hope, possibilities and always, endless imagination. ●

Thank you!

RE-create is thankful for the generosity of our many volunteers, local agencies and funders both corporate and personal who enable RE-create to offer the depth of programming that it does. Once again we would like to thank



Turkstra Lumber for inviting us to participate in their Friday Charity Barbeques held throughout the summer. The proceeds from the BBQs goes directly to RE-create programming and supplies. We also are thankful to Tienieke and Marcel Vanderhoeven for opening their place and pizza ovens for our Pizza Fundraising Evening. We appreciate the partnership we have with Art Forms that provides us with a great studio space from which to operate creative art-making. We appreciate the support we receive from funders, such as World Vision Canadian Programs, Laid-law Grants, as well as the many individuals and corporate donors that continue to support all the creative endeavours that take place at RE-create. It certainly takes a community of supporters to be able to run RE-create!



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 new studio space, etc.

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

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

Province _____ Postal Code _____

Email _____

Please email the RE-create newsletter to me.

Phone _____

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