



celebrating our studio youth worker

After 10 years Mouse is poised to retire in February 2019

Betty J.B. Brouwer

It is hard to imagine RE-create without Mouse, as he has been involved since the early days. First as a youth artist who came and created and then as a staff who helped out during studio time. He initially came as he had nothing else to do but then continued to come to give expression to his creativity. Mouse has participated in numerous projects and art exhibits over the years. He has taught me about the spirit of generosity when he returned the earnings he made at an art exhibit even though at the time he did not have stable housing. And yet again his generous spirit shines forth as he announced he will retire after 10 years in order to give room for another youth to benefit from an opportunity like he was given. I am honoured to have been invited in to his story. My hope is that as I have been impacted by Mouse that RE-create has in turn left a mark on him.

The following is from an interview with Mouse reflecting on his years with RE-create.

Q: How long have you been coming to RE-create and why/how did you get involved?

A: I started as a youth coming to RE-create when it was using space at the Living Rock Ministries. The reason why I first started coming to RE-create is because I was at the Living Rock doing chores for bus tickets and they had no chores for me to do but there was an art program available for something for me to do while I was there. I've always enjoyed doing art so it was "Oh this is here this many times a week? This is art and I don't have to

pay for the stuff I'm using? I'm here!"

Q: Why do you like to make art and what is your favourite kind to make?

A: I don't have a particular kind that I like. I will bounce from one medium to another medium to another medium to another medium and enjoy what I can do each time I pick up that medium. It's a way to express myself without having someone give their opinion in a verbal statement or body mannerism. They see the art and see what they see in the art. Everyone sees something different.

Q: What have been some of your favourite RE-create projects or art shows and why?

A: There were a few shows over the last few years that I really enjoyed. The first one that I got to take a lead in was when I was still a youth and it was a project called From the Other Side. ... the show went over really well. I know a number of other artists that were participating had made some money and that was the first time I had ever tried to sell any of my photos. I walked away with about \$250 - \$280 from the show. I enjoyed it and the first thing I did when Betty handed me my money from the show was hand her the money back and say thank you."

Q: How have you seen RE-create evolve in your 10 years?

A: Over my 10+ years I've watched RE-create evolve from a little itty bitty closet with a shelf on the side that was for mops and cleaning supplies at the Living Rock, to doing one or two studio spaces in a church or in a

park. Then we advanced into actually having some open space at the Notre Dame house, to the studio space we are in now.

Q: What will you miss the most about RE-create?

A: For as much as I have anti-social issues, I will miss having random youth showing up after they have been gone for a while. It shows that as much as you plan life there is no plan.

Q: How has RE-create impacted your life?

A: RE-create has been the first long term permanent job that I've ever had which has allowed me to get stable housing and a stable mentality. Because not having something and then having something makes all the difference mentally and as well as financially.

Ever since I was a little kid I wanted to be an art teacher. Technically an art studio assistant isn't an art teacher but I have taught a number of youth various little artsy things over the years and it counts. And 10 years will mark it off - I've done this for enough time, now it's off the bucket list. ●





The DIY (Do It Yourself) work ethic is at the core of creativity.

Painters, writers, photographers, and all kinds of other creative people are the embodiment of the DIY lifestyle. That being said it takes more than one person to live into a lifetime of creativity. That is why at the RE-create outreach art studio we say "DIY-together!"

DIY-together is a one-year mentorship initiative that partners creative youth with artist mentors from the wider community. Youth & Mentors commit to meeting twice a month over coffee to talk about art, life and, most importantly, goal setting. Our Mentorship Coordinator, Randy Neudorf, has been instrumental in building the foundation for this program.

Having a mentor helps youth to think about their creativity and life holistically. DIY-together is empowering youth to make decisions about their art, health, employment, education and community in a way that moves them towards their creative goals. We look forward to watching this program grow.

For more information about RE-create's DIY Mentorship Program, contact Betty Brouwer at bettyb@shalemnetwork.org



Anthony at the Maker's Market

volunteer spotlight

Our volunteers are essential to keeping RE-create running, and we love them a lot! Let us introduce Matt Linzel to you.

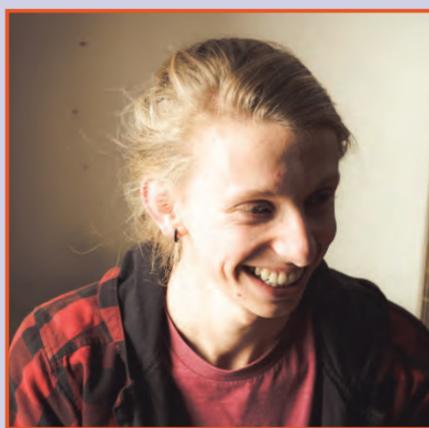
Matt Linzel volunteered at RE-create every week for the four years that he attended Redeemer University College. This past summer Matt moved to BC to continue his education. Here are some excerpts of our conversation with Matt on his last studio day.

Q What do you like about RE-create?

M I love that there are so many good returns for both youth and volunteers, I felt so much happiness there. Creating a safe, welcoming space for youth was a really wonderful thing, but what you don't always realize is that you as a volunteer are also benefiting from creating a space of respite. Besides that, there is so much joy in watching the youth grow and evolve as both people and artists. I saw a lot of people become more confident and accepting of themselves, and learn to open up to others. I think that art is an inherently vulnerable activity, and creating something is ultimately revealing a piece of yourself for others to see.

Q What will you take away from your time at RE-create?

M I learned that sometimes the best thing you can do for someone is to just be present. As a first-year psychology student, I went into RE-create thinking that I was going to work with youth very formally, and had an ultimate goal of going right in and "fixing" things. That was initially frustrating for me, because I felt like I wasn't getting the results I had expected. When I finally



learned to let go a little, and that what I was really there to do was hang out and just connect with people over art, I started to feel so much happier in my role because I was building relationships and growing alongside people. Sometimes the things that don't need to be said are more important than anything we can say aloud.

Q What kind of art do you do?

M Initially I was primarily into photography, but when I realized that sitting in front of a laptop editing photos with my headphones in wasn't exactly the best way to foster relationships, I took up drawing Manga (Japanese comics) as a more social art form.

Q What kind of connections have you made during your time here?

M I have made so many close, personal relationships here. We've been through a lot together, and at the risk of sounding a little cheesy, it's an almost spiritual connection. Sharing a creative space and being encouraging to one another has been a very intimate practice. It was so hard to say goodbye to everyone as studio time ended today, it was kind of a surreal experience to have a going-away party after having volunteered here every week for almost 4 years.

Q What's next for you?

M I'll be moving to British Columbia this weekend, just outside of Vancouver. I'll be studying Psychotherapy at Trinity Western with the hope of maybe one day working with at-risk youth in the LGBTQ community.

Q What advice do you have for someone who is new to RE-create?

M It's such a great place. You're going to learn so many cool new things from people here, and art is serious business. RE-create promotes life in a place where life can be very hard. Enjoy your time here, because it's going to be awesome! ●



It's Fall and we have just recovered from Battle of the Brushes 2018. I feel like I only just wrote my reflection for the 2017 newsletter! My year as Studio Coordinator has flown by and I'm hustling to get everything

in order to set our new Studio Coordinator, Megarrah, up for success. Things moved so quickly, but, we fit a lot into this year. We had a Christmas market, hung three Art Crawl shows, forged a new partnership with the Lynwood Charlton Compass program, said goodbye to some RE-create veteran volunteers and completed our first Artist-in-Residence program. We are coming up to the end of our one year pilot project for the DIY-together Mentorship program, where youth artists and their mentors sold art at every Maker's Market this summer, and we had another successful Battle of the Brushes with 17 competing artists. Needless to say there was lots going on! I am filled with grief, awe, excitement and curiosity about ending my time at RE-create. I don't know exactly what I will be doing in this next chapter yet, but I feel at ease with the unknown at this moment.

I will miss witnessing youth helping youth, sharing techniques, and learning new skills. I will miss the community of brilliant artists I have met. I will miss putting weird things (including our faces) in the scanner, talking about TV over tea and cookies and the belly-laughter commonly experienced in studio. I will particularly miss the youth, volunteers and staff. Many of them have become my friends, and people who I trust enough to share my own art and life with. These relationships have shaped me.

life in the studio

I am looking forward to learning more about counselling and psychotherapy while continuing my Masters at Martin Luther University College, and I know that RE-create will shape the way that I work in the future. I can thank RE-create for boosting my confidence in decision making, practicing tough conversations, respecting people who have different life experiences than me, and for increasing my flexibility and fun in my life. I have felt privileged to get to know every person who comes through RE-create's doors, and to have been given permission to hear their stories is a real gift. So, a thank you to all the youth, staff, and volunteers who have made this year fantastic—there will always be a glittery, gluey, weirdo-sized hole in my heart. Keep being you! - Emma

Introducing Megarrah Buxton: New Studio Coordinator

Megarrah joined RE-create as Studio Coordinator just five days before this year's Battle of the Brushes. "You'll be baptized by fire," both Betty and Emma joked. "What an introduction! Witnessing first-hand the incredible community that surrounds RE-create; the artists, volunteers, staff and youth banding together to pull off such an energizing event. In my short time here, it has become evident that I have very big shoes to fill, but I'm thrilled to have the opportunity to try. The youth, RE-create staff and volunteers have been so welcoming, making me realize just how lucky I am to be part of such an inclusive space." ●



Megarrah Buxton



Emma Silverthorne

Studio Coordinators

youth spotlight

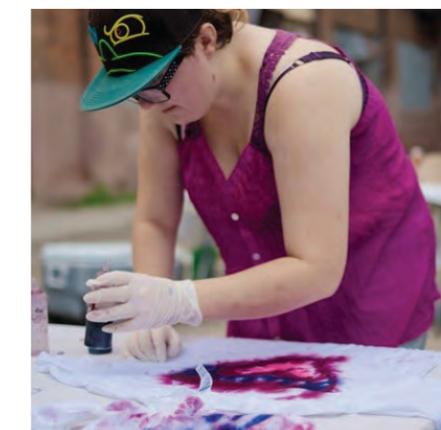
The following is taken from an interview with Grey, a youth who has recently aged out of RE-create's program. Grey prefers the pronoun they. We hope that Grey will come back someday and lead a workshop for RE-create youth.

Grey has been attending RE-create about two years, after being introduced to RE-create through Tanner, a long-time RE-create youth. Grey tends to create art that falls under the painting or illustration category, but they are willing to dabble in other mediums. This past spring we said goodbye to Grey when they "aged out" of RE-create.

When asked what it is about RE-create that they like Grey said it was more than just having access to a huge array of paint that they would never have been able to afford before and learning new techniques and skills. It was that "RE-create felt like home. It's just so warm and

welcoming. It's devoid of judgement, and everyone is just there to share in the joy of making art together. I like that I am able to try new things, and having supplies readily available to just experiment with and grow as an artist." Grey went on to talk about how RE-create has shaped them. "It's given me more of an artist's personality. It has made me more willing to expose my art to others and share a part of myself. I used to keep it all to myself, but now sharing art has become a source of joy to brighten someone's day." Grey talked about someday having their own art show, whether in a café or art gallery to continue to validate their experience as an artist. Reflecting on leaving RE-create and what they will miss most, Grey said, "The community, more than anything. I have access to other sources of supplies, but RE-create feels really different and I feel like I belong here. It's going to be sad to leave, but I am looking

forward to a new chapter. Community is a really good summary of RE-create. It's accepting, and expanding, and moving, but it's still a huge community and a reliable network for everyone involved." ●



Grey at RE-create's annual tie-dye BBQ

artistic director



Betty J.B. Brouwer

I have a love-hate relationship with change. I know that change is inevitable. I know that change creates space for growth and new opportunities. I also know that change is hard and that change is, well, change.

Art and being creative involves being flexible. It involves the ability to be responsive to what is happening on your canvas and to be able to let go of preconceived ideas and allow yourself to welcome happy accidents in the art-making process. Change can make beautiful things.

At RE-create we get to bear witness to the transformative power of change in the lives of the youth we are privileged to make art with, as well as with our staff and volunteers. There are always new youth coming in and other youth "aging out", or moving onto different chapters in their lives (read about Grey on page 3). Not only do our youth artists experience change, but our staff and volunteers do as well.

RE-create has recently experienced a number of changes in our staff and volunteers. Meghan, Studio Coordinator

from 2012-2017, took a year off on maternity leave to be with her new daughter. Her daughter is such a joy and delight and it is fun to watch her grow from a newborn baby into a mobile and expressive young child. Emma, a former RE-create volunteer and who ran our "Growing up Queer in the Hammer" project courageously and seemingly effortlessly, stepped into Meghan's role. The year flew by (read Emma's write-up to find out all that went on) and RE-create youth did many creative ventures. It is our hope to have Emma stay connected to RE-create in some capacity. Meghan let us know that she will not be returning to RE-create at this time and will instead focus on her Master's program and her young family. Once again RE-create is excited to embrace a new Studio Coordinator, Megarra Buxton.

This coming February RE-create will experience another change as we say goodbye to Mouse, a former youth artist and RE-create studio assistant for the past 10 years (read more about this on page 1). We will miss Mouse and are grateful for all that he has given to RE-create. In true Mouse fashion he let me know that he was aiming to retire in February 2019 as that would mark 10 years of working with RE-create. He wants to step aside in order to provide another youth with an opportunity like he had.

RE-create has also had a number of

long-term volunteers move onto different opportunities in their lives. RE-create would not be able to do what it does without the commitment and energy of our volunteers. We so appreciate them. It is always bittersweet to say goodbye as they have made a mark on RE-create and we hope that we have made a mark in their lives as well (read about one of our long-term volunteers Matt on page 2).

Change is inevitable. Change creates space for growth and new opportunities. Change is part of the creative flow of life. While change may be a regular aspect of RE-create, one thing that remains constant is that RE-create continues to be a safe and welcoming place where youth on the fringe can begin to connect with themselves, others and their community in the context of creative art making. ●



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