



ARTS CORPS
YEAR 11



F I N D Y O U R V O I C E

DEAR EVERYBODY

by Elizabeth Whitford
arts corps executive director

I SIT HERE ON A CRISP FALL AFTERNOON, WITH MY HEART FULL AND MY MIND INSPIRED, having just read through the stories that fill the following pages of this magazine. I am overwhelmingly grateful for the many voices that continue to shape Arts Corps; voices that also grow clearer and louder because of Arts Corps.

In these pages, many voices come together to tell a singular story of inspiration. It's a story of the creative power of youth and a reflection of a transformative year at Arts Corps. Amidst a struggling economy and major challenges facing our schools and partners, Arts Corps went leaner, but became stronger by being flexible, courageous and determined.

We scaled back on workshops and one-time engagements with students to prioritize longer classes with greater impact on individual student learning. As a result, we served slightly fewer students this year at fewer sites, but we increased our total hours of instruction—**meaning more time for each student to develop their creative capacities and unique voice.**

This past year was both reflective and forward thinking as we embarked on a process to develop a new vision and strategic plan for Arts Corps that drew from the wisdom of students, teaching artists, partners and supporters. Our new vision – our guiding star – shines clearly, as do the steps we need to take in the coming years to get there.

Arts Corps' vision: **all youth have the courage to imagine and the freedom to create a just and vibrant future.**

A vision this ambitious requires forward thinking. Arts Corps is poised to take on this challenge with generous investments of \$100,000 each from the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation, JPMorgan Chase Foundation and musician Dave Matthews to grow the role of teaching artists in public education. In 2012, Arts Corps will launch a whole school arts learning model that will include arts integrated into classroom curriculum and after school classes in two high need Seattle middle schools, demonstrating the positive impact of arts learning on students' creative capacities, motivation, academic achievement and behavior, as well as on teacher practice and school climate. We will work to inspire others to invest in this program, which will further the systemic change that is integral to our vision.

Shaping new frames for understanding what is valuable about arts learning and its impact on long-term success in school and life is another area of ▶



Hip Hop Music Production with Laura "Piece" Kelley,
Rainier Community Center

advocacy for Arts Corps in the coming year. As a key component of Seattle Public Schools' planning grant from the Wallace Foundation to enhance arts instruction, the district has asked Arts Corps to help define and develop assessments around the district's desired outcomes of a quality arts education in terms of critical thinking and creative habits, which will add to current assessments of artistic skills development.

We are also sharing our experience and knowledge with another reform initiative, the Roadmap for Educational Results, focused on closing the achievement gap in South Seattle and South King County. We are now collaborating with a set of leading youth development organizations to develop a common assessment framework around 21st Century Skills for use by schools and youth development organizations throughout the region.

Arts Corps' history of effectively evaluating creative habits of mind places us in strong stead to inform these significant initiatives. We will continue to deliver and demonstrate high quality, powerful arts learning, while collaborating with schools and communities to create new avenues for

consistent, engaging creative education for all youth in our region.

The power and beauty of Arts Corps' work grows and carries on in the classrooms and community rooms of our partners. Arts Corps' programs change individual lives in powerful ways, which will always be our greatest achievement. The following pages tell these stories. Enjoy. ■



Elizabeth Whitford
Executive Director

OUR IMPACT IN 2010/2011

Read our newest program evaluation report at www.artscorps.org/evaluation.

1,905 youth in grades K-12 learned powerfully through the arts in Arts Corps' in-school residencies, after-school classes and workshops.

12% of middle and high school youth reported that their Arts Corps class was their first arts class ever.

68% of partner sites served a population in which the majority of students qualify for free and reduced price lunch.

26,176 hours of high quality arts instruction were delivered by 30 professional teaching artists in myriad art forms, including dance, music, visual arts, spoken word and theatre.

154 classes, workshops and special projects were brought to 32 schools, after-school sites, community centers and residential treatment centers.

88% of program parents strongly agree that their Arts Corps teaching artist challenged students to learn and fostered an environment that supports creative learning.

77% of Arts Corps students were children of color.

85% of youth said their teaching artist inspired them to take creative risks.

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For a list of our teaching artists, visit www.artscorps.org/roster.

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Na'una
Low Income Housing Institute

EXPLORATIONS IN ART



NINE-YEAR-OLD NA'UNA LOVES ART.

This is her second year taking Arts Corps classes at the Low Income Housing Institute's Denny Park apartments where she lives with her parents, brother and sister – both Arts Corps students as well. She eagerly awaits the two times a week when teaching artist Lauren Atkinson brings a world of art making to the youth at LIHI, guiding them on a creative journey where they discover new ways to see and move through the world.

“Arts Corps has a significant impact providing the children an opportunity to be creative, have fun learning and make new things. It gives them an opportunity to feel connected with one another in an environment that wasn't designed with that in mind,” says Lauren.

The group at LIHI is vivacious, ready to explore, get their hands messy and let their imaginations free. Na'una is no exception. She jumps into every activity from making a peace mandala to learning how to draw a self-portrait. She says that there is always a lot of fun things to do, like painting. She possesses wisdom that belies her age as she explains the importance of young people making art, “it makes me learn more things about art and myself. You can come up with great ideas.”

Na'una's parents also see a change since she has been taking Arts Corps classes. Her mother says the classes have given her chances to try new things and she sees her daughter opening up.

Lauren, as the teaching artist, has the front row view of the transformation students go through. She says she can see how Na'una has become more confident in herself and the way she expresses her creativity. She has become a leader in the class as well, mentoring children younger than herself.

This kind of self-discovery is what Lauren aims to bring to her teaching artistry; it's how key teachers from her own childhood influenced her.

“I remember the teachers who inspired curiosity, who questioned the norm and encouraged me to do the same. They pushed me out of my comfort zones to see and to seek a better understanding of what life holds from many perspectives and encouraged me to discover solutions that would benefit the whole.”

“When a child finds their voice, they become confident in expressing how they experience the world they participate in. I find them to be powerful communicators and community participants. They discover how important their way of seeing and being is when shared within community.” ■

Photo on right: Agreements and poster by Stephany Koch Hazelrigg with the Aki Kurose RISE UP! Program



STEPPING INTO MY POWER

by Henry Luke
Arts Corps alumni and Youth Speaks Seattle coordinator

Photography by Kari Champoux



IN 2008, I WALKED INTO MY FIRST POETRY SLAM.

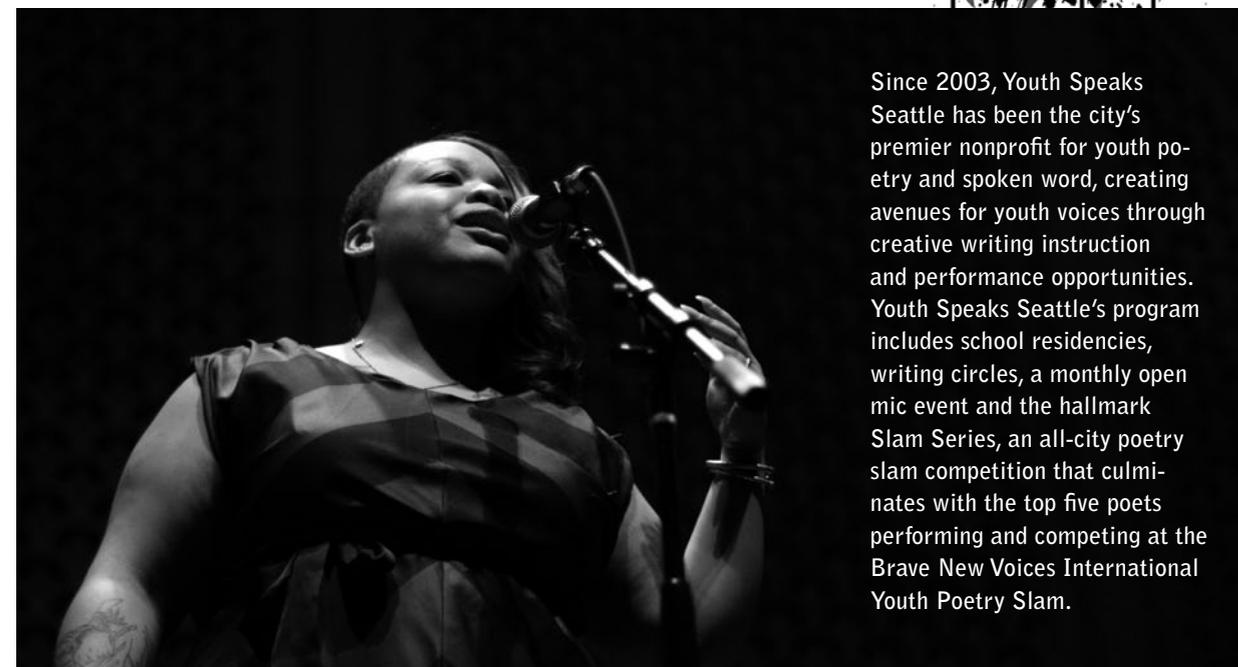
I had never been to any event featuring spoken word. When I heard the word poetry, I thought of dead white men like Shakespeare and Robert Frost. I never expected to enjoy poetry, let alone perform it.

When I arrived, people were laughing, dancing and freestyling. I wanted to know them! It was an atmosphere of spontaneous energy and emotion that I had never experienced before. At the time, very little felt sacred in my life, but when the poets began performing

I felt a kind of reverence for the power of their words. The audience clapped and snapped their fingers, gasped and shouted, even cried. I was moved by the power of a poem to pull me into a story, make me feel so many emotions in a few minutes. I had never seen anyone declare themselves like that, to get onstage with nothing but their story and say "This is who I am! This is what I believe in!" I saw nothing ironic or self-conscious in their celebration of life and love. Each word was a piece of their truth.

My introduction to Youth Speaks Seattle coincided with a massive change in my worldview: I realized I was a part of many massive and

unjust systems that disconnect and silence people I know and love. At the same time, I came to see myself as a fragment of something even larger, an interconnected universe filled with meaning and mystery. Poetry became the piece that tied everything together: when writing, ▶



Since 2003, Youth Speaks Seattle has been the city's premier nonprofit for youth poetry and spoken word, creating avenues for youth voices through creative writing instruction and performance opportunities. Youth Speaks Seattle's program includes school residencies, writing circles, a monthly open mic event and the hallmark Slam Series, an all-city poetry slam competition that culminates with the top five poets performing and competing at the Brave New Voices International Youth Poetry Slam.

Moni Tep, Youth Speaks Seattle Grand Slam Final Competition 2011

autumn
is not made of maple leaves
cut from orange
construction
paper
with safety scissors
autumn is sharp
it's a violent breath
autumn is second-hand-school-bus-fumes
and counting my fingers
just to make sure

-Henry Luke



Henry Luke, Youth Speaks Seattle Grand Slam Final Competition 2011

I never had to compartmentalize the personal and the political. Performance gave a sensation of release, speaking my stories into existence made them that much more real.

At Brave New Voices International Poetry Slam (the national Youth Speaks gathering), I met poets from Philadelphia, Honolulu, San Francisco, New York and Guam. I sat twenty feet from Bobby Seale as he spoke about the founding of the Black Panthers and compared it to the work Youth Speaks does today. I have realized spoken word is not just an art form. It is a movement. There are young people across the world speaking their truth and creating spaces where that is safe to do. We are storytellers of our generation.

Today when I hear the word poetry, I think of my friends, I think of myself. And my journey continues in my new position at Arts Corps as the Youth Speaks Seattle Coordinator.

I am honored to hold space for other young people across Seattle to express themselves and step into their power, whatever form that takes. ■

In 2011, Youth Speaks Seattle came under the umbrella of Arts Corps. This partnership strengthens the impact of Youth Speaks Seattle's unique approach to addressing social justice and empowering marginalized voices.

"Youth Speaks Seattle in partnership with Arts Corps is destined to achieve its full potential as a transformative arts organization."

-Matt Gano, former Youth Speaks Seattle Arts in Education Director and Writing Mentor

EACH ONE, TEACH ONE

A STORY OF RECIPROCITY

Fever One has been breaking since 1982 and is a world famous dj and bboy with Rock Steady Crew. He has been an Arts Corps teaching artist for two years.

Jerome Aparis is an international breakdancing champion with the crew Massive Monkees. He is a veteran master teaching artist for Arts Corps and has been teaching since 2003.

Robert Eyerman studied breakdance with Arts Corps for seven years. He is teaching his first Arts Corps class this fall and is a member of the Vicious Puppies Crew.

Sammy Tekle took breakdancing classes for over six years and is now the dance cohort's intern, preparing to be a teaching artist. He is also a member of the Vicious Puppies Crew.

Fever: Jeromeskee was one of my first students who I took under my wing. He was one of the only kids who sought out individual instruction and he would soak up information like a sponge. He would go home and work on it and then flip it with the way you were actually supposed to.

Jerome: I read an article about DVS crew – which was Fever's crew – telling about how great they were as individuals and as a crew. I memorized their names, trying to figure out who was who. When I went to Jefferson Community Center (in 1994), I was like "That's Fever One! That's Sneke!" They were like rock stars.

The first time I met Fever he was with an entourage of kids and I was the new guy trying to get his attention. But I remember the first move he taught me. Everyone was outside at a barbeque and I stayed inside to practice. It was just me and Fever and he taught me the first step going into this power move. It was the NY way of going into a power move. I was so fortunate to be under his wing. From then on, I wanted to be disciplined to show and prove I was worth his teaching.

It's just been amazing. I went from there, to co-founding Massive Monkees and being part of Rock Steady Crew due to Fever One connecting me to that. It's just been an ongoing, beautiful process. Now I am passionate about teaching this legacy. I was so fortunate to have good mentor and model to show that it's not about glorifying yourself. It's really about having a talent and how can I give back. And for me that all started with Fever One. ▶



Jerome Aparis, Break Dance, Youngstown Cultural Arts Center





Robert Eyerman, center, Festa Del Arte 2011. Photo courtesy Scott Wellsdant

Robert: I got to breaking after moving up here from Sacramento. I thought I couldn't do it but my dad convinced me to just try it. I would work on stuff in my own little corner. The other kids had all been dancing for a year. There were two really dope dancers. Looking at them I thought, "Wow, that's going to take a long time to get to that level."

I stuck with it and eventually I started seeing people fall off. I ended up being the only experienced one in the class. And I think Jerome started noticing that. I would start helping lead groups and then more people came in. Sammy came in. All the guys that would become VPC (Vicious Puppies Crew) came in. We just all stuck with it. That's my story.

Sammy: Back in the day, 7th grade at Denny Middle School, I had no originality, no style. I was just a plain kid in musical band. And one day I saw a group of people dancing on stage in the commons. The instructor – that was Jerome – turns around and asks me if I'd like to join the class.

Jerome: Sammy was the shy guy. I remember him saying everyone was getting better than him. We told him – no matter what, just practice hard, just keep moving forward. He was the shyest kid of them all. And now he's leading! He has a strong voice and is an outstanding leader. And people are following him.

Sammy: Through dancing I get to experiment with all my feelings, whether anger or sadness or happiness, and put that out there and people would be amazed at what you could do. I got



Sammy Tekle, Break Dance, Youngstown Cultural Arts Center

into dancing it because it's the best way to express myself. It's not just an art, it's my life. Thank you for teaching me, Jerome.

Jerome: "Each one, teach one." If it wasn't for Fever, I wouldn't be doing what I am doing. I'm aware that someone gave back to me and put hours and hours of their time into me. That's part of my responsibility – to make sure I continue Fever's legacy and teach other students. I've gone through so many rich moments with my dance; if I don't share that it's selfish. Period.

Fever: It's a full cycle, it's a circle. The dance becomes a part of you. And [teaching] gives back to the dance, back to the culture where it maintains its identity.

That's why I'm here at Arts Corps, because Jerome introduced me to this great organization that really cares about art. And the mentorship keeps going with Sammy and Robert. They're going to do the same thing. It's an ongoing cycle. The proof is right here where we are sitting.

Jerome: Fever and I taught hundreds and hundreds of students. But there are only a handful who are willing to take it to the next level, willing to be mentored. It takes courage and character and an ongoing discipline. Every time I see VPC I am very proud. It's an honor to be Fever's protégé and to mentor and coach VPC.

Fever: It takes a particular type of person to seek out the truth. To seek out the history and to humble themselves enough to always learn something. Jerome and I are students to this very day. It's been almost 30 years for me and I'm learning things every day. I learn from Vicious Puppies.

Jerome: Discipline outweighs talent, period. Being humble is the next key. Fever has taught me to always be humble and be hungry. That's the reason VPC is VPC. They'll win a competition but they'll still be humble.

Sammy: I was the shy kid. I felt like I said all the wrong things. It wasn't a good feeling. Now I dance. And I feel free. I'm not shy to show



Fever One, Break Dance, Hamilton Middle School

myself. I just did it and now I am the Sammy you know today.

Fever: I would never know you were shy. Now, when I look at Sammy and Robert, they are turning into grown men before my own eyes. For a young man, to be able to take an art and discover what it can do for you, it's a great outlet to express yourself.

Jerome: In its simplest form, with the Massive Break Challenge, with kids who have only been dancing for a month, putting their hearts on the line, putting it all on the

floor. You can see it from head to toe, from their faces to their mouths how they're breathing. They won't stop. Then you see the teachers and the principals and the families. And they can finally see why the kids are so passionate about this dance. You know that them dancing for that one minute is going to change their life forever. We went through that process. We're still going through that process. We continue to be students of life and do our best to inspire people. ■



BUILDING CREATIVE POWER

by Sean O'Neill
Arts Corps community outreach coordinator, MLK VISTA

NAMING THE PROBLEM

Patterns of racial and economic inequity are widespread across Seattle Public Schools. This is most significantly shown in discipline and graduation rates, the racial representation of teachers and tracking into advanced placement courses. Creative learning is not an exception: young people of color have dramatically reduced access to arts education relative to their white peers.¹

Across the nation, arts education programs are increasingly focusing on low income youth of color to address this opportunity gap. Although this work is inspiring, the staff, faculty and leadership of these organizations are predominantly white adults.² Arts Corps reflects this pattern, requiring us to critically reflect on strategy, leadership and accountability as we push forward on our mission.

HOLDING OUR STORIES

In winter 2011, Arts Corps' teaching artist faculty were asked the question: "What are the barriers to building trust and community in your classrooms?" As we listened to the stories, it became apparent that barriers our faculty witnessed

were not individual conflicts, but rather were deeply connected to large and complex patterns of inequity.

- In a language arts class, a student of Filipino descent is sent to the principal's office for "acting out" after a white teaching artist repeatedly called him by the name of fellow-student, who is of Japanese descent.

- At a historically black school, a new cohort of predominantly white parents has become one of the primary funding streams for arts programs. As these parents deepen their involvement with the education of their children, there is an undercurrent of tension as budgetary cuts threaten the already underfunded, black-led afterschool program with which Arts Corps historically partnered.

- In one of the most racially and economically diverse high schools in the area, theater teaching artists witness each year that, relative to their peers of color, white students are often the only ones who can afford private theater coaches and disproportionately receive awards and scholarships for higher education.

A COMMITMENT TO LEARNING AND GROWING

Through a lens of creativity and community building, Arts Corps has made an intentional effort to embrace a racial justice framework

in our work. This includes the development of personal and organizational competencies necessary to address both structural and interpersonal inequity at all levels of the organization.

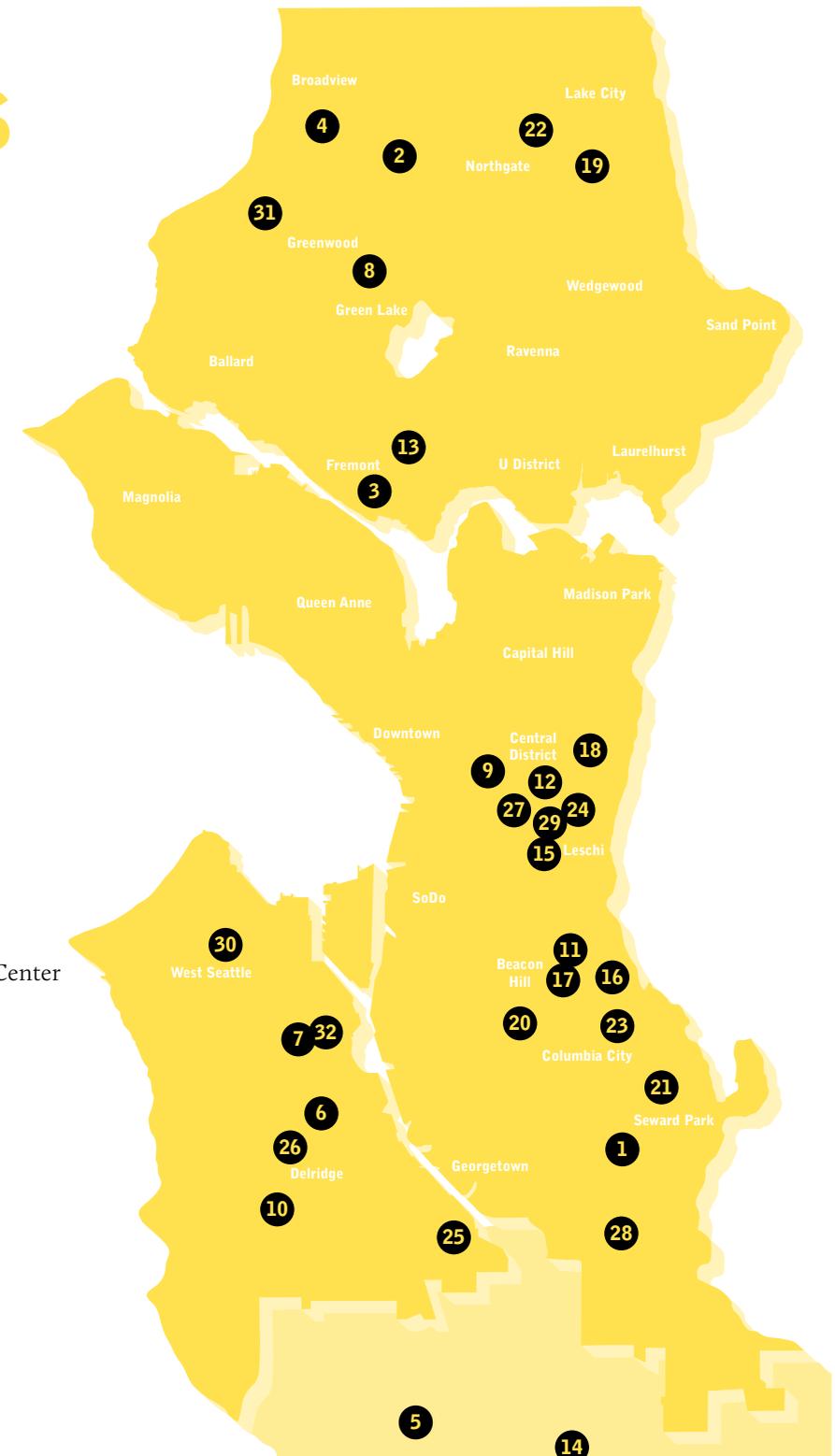
This work has included: racial justice and anti-oppression trainings with our faculty, staff and board of directors; prioritizing community representation in hiring practices; new avenues for youth leadership; and growing collaborations that position Arts Corps in a broader movement for education justice. By tapping into our collective courage and creativity, we are taking steps to challenge oppression and build community.

As a result of this work, our teaching artists report increased personal awareness and capacity to address racial conflicts in their classrooms, as well as a stronger sense of belonging and shared values with Arts Corps. Staff and board members also report increased organizational pride and commitment to racial and social justice. This work has involved a great deal of courage and humility, and has not been without its missteps and lessons learned. Nonetheless, our confidence and capacities have grown, and Arts Corps is increasingly stepping into leadership on this critical issue within the arts education field both locally and nationally. ■

PROGRAM PARTNERS

1. Aki Kurose Academy*
2. Aki Kurose Village **
3. BF Day Elementary School
4. Broadview Thompson K-8
5. Cedarhurst Elementary School
6. Chief Sealth High School*
7. Delridge Community Center
8. Denice Hunt Townhomes **
9. Denny Park Apartments **
10. Denny International Middle School*
11. Franklin High School*
12. Garfield High School
13. Hamilton Middle School*
14. Hilltop Elementary School
15. Interagency Academy
16. John Muir Elementary School
17. Kimball Elementary School
18. Madrona K-8
19. Meadowbrook View Apartments **
20. Mercer Middle School*
21. Orca K-8
22. Pinehurst K-8
23. Rainier Community Center
24. Seattle Girls School
25. South Park Community Center
26. Southwest Community Center
27. Spruce Street Secure Crisis Residential Center
28. Van Asselt Elementary School*
29. Washington Middle School*
30. West Seattle High School*
31. Whitman Middle School
32. Youngstown Cultural Arts Center

** Low Income Housing Institute
* YMCA Community Learning Center



¹ The National Endowment for the Arts: Survey of Public Participation in the Arts (2011)
² The National Guild for Community Arts Education: Benchmark Survey (2011)

spruce street
secure crisis residential center

FINDING CREATIVE SPIRIT IN CRISIS

by Lara Davis
Arts Corps program director

I am what I am
I am what I've been through
I have accepted life
The lies
The beatings
In the end everything
Is what it seems to be
I am who I've become
So numb
But play dumb
And scream silently
Smile widely yet
I am pretending
So who am I?
When I am what I'm feeling
When reality turns to dreams
And nothing is as it seems
But I am real
So ask me anything

-Angelina

THE YOUTH AT SPRUCE STREET SECURE CRISIS RESIDENTIAL CENTER ALL HAVE ONE THING IN COMMON—THEY ARE IN CRISIS.

Youth are brought to the center by police when they are found as a runaway or are in dangerous circumstances. Some are fleeing a home of domestic violence. Some are in gangs. Some are bouncing around the foster care system. Some are battling mental illness.

They are all in crisis.

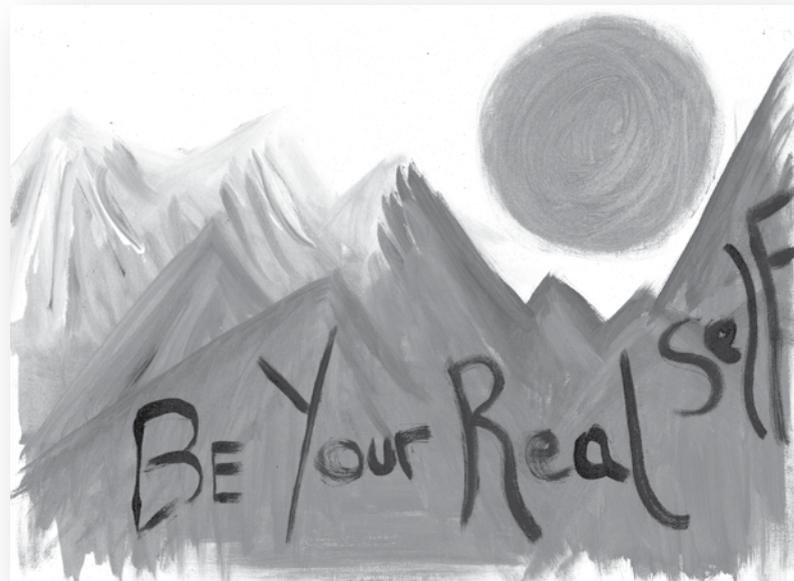
Their stay at Spruce Street ranges from 1-2 weeks. To keep everyone safe, the youth – ages 12-17 – are given facility clothing upon arrival and are required to hand over all of their belongings. Aside from special trips, they are kept in a sort of lock down. Except instead of locks on the outside of their bedroom doors to keep them in, they have locks on the inside to keep people out and keep themselves safe (staff all have keys).

Services are intensive – counseling, behavior modification, coping skills, self-awareness, group therapy, substance abuse screening. The hope is that once they return to the outside world, they are better equipped to begin creating their own stability and imagine different possibilities.

Arts Corps has been a part of Spruce Street's program since 2006. It's unlike any of our other sites. Instead of building relationships with students over a 16-week quarter, teaching artists at Spruce Street see each youth once or twice at the most. During that short and intensive

time, they have to act fast, read the youth and determine how to help them reach into themselves and express something meaningful. Often they are confronted with hostility, indifference or verbal attacks. But the teaching artists we send in are compassionate and highly skilled in creating safe spaces for youth in crisis to learn a different way, even if just for one moment. Sometimes that moment carries with them.

Spruce Street Youth Supervisor Jim Marsh tells a story about one young man who came through the facility. "He was hostile, very angry at his family. Vicky [Edmonds, Arts Corps teaching artist] came in and we did poetry and he wrote a poem about his family. It wasn't the nicest



youth artwork from Spruce Street

spruce street
secure crisis residential center

poem but it was real. Later, we were sitting at a family meeting and all these adults were talking at him and about him. He referenced that poem to express how angry he was. Before, his anger was expressed with foul language and behavioral issues. He said writing that poem helped him get to how angry he really was. That was so powerful; he was finally able to articulate something that had been plaguing him for a long time."

"I think about this a lot – this is a place where people go in crisis. How can art address that? We can explore the commonality of crisis. In that hour [of art] is a whole new world they become part of. They see other opportunities for their lives," says Jim.

Arts Corps Teaching Artist Geoffrey Garza teaches visual art at Spruce Street. He is adept at reading the emotional vibe of the students, and Jim says Geoffrey has taught youth and staff alike that there are no mistakes. It's all learning.

In a blog, Geoffrey tells the story about a particularly oppositional student at Spruce Street. He antagonized Geoffrey, threateningly circling around the art table. Geoffrey set out a piece of paper and the youth stood over it. "I want to throw paint on it," he said. Geoffrey found tubes of paint and told him to go for it. For 45 intense minutes, the youth intensely sprayed, smeared and splattered paint across the paper, hands and body covered in paint, guttural noises accompanying every move. Geoffrey then showed him pictures of Dale Chihuly using a broom to push color around, his feet covered in paint splatters. The youth studied it, said, "cool" and asked for another piece of paper.

A life-changing moment? We can never really know. But in that moment, that youth saw a totally different possibility. And he made it happen himself.

This year, Arts Corps will be taking the partnership with Spruce Street one step further, helping develop a framework to evaluate and measure the success of their programs. This work is part of Carnegie Hall's Musical Connections program, of which Arts Corps is a national network member. It was the strength of Arts Corps' programming in high-need community settings like Spruce Street that drew the attention of Carnegie Hall for this program.

With this national resource, Arts Corps' goal and hope is to provide the Spruce Street staff with an assessment tool to measure the impact of arts programs in their facility. ►

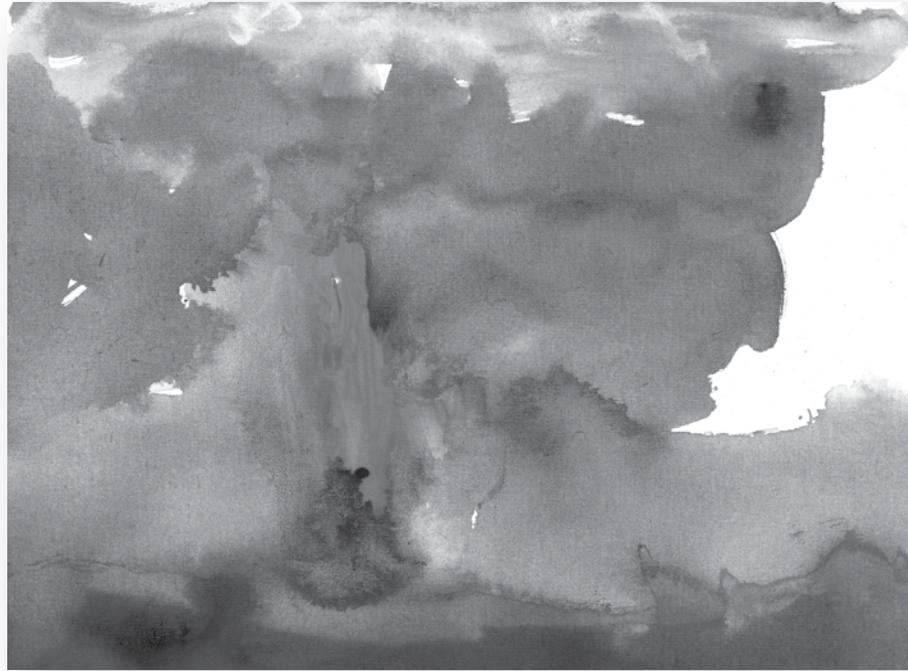
DON'T JUST DO SOMETHING, STAND THERE

A counter intuitive approach to students demonstrating oppositional behavior

By Geoffrey Garza, Arts Corps teaching artist at Spruce Street Secure Crisis Residential Center

- Be well rested – this environment calls for full engagement.
- Be flexible with your curriculum.
- Avoid anything that looks like "a therapy session."
- Be funny.
- Read the room.
- Find the leaders and let them lead.
- Find the shy kids and let them slowly engage.
- Be foolish.
- Be outrageous – it shows them that you are not here to tell on them or discipline them.
- Partner closely with the facility staff.
- Listen, I mean really listen.
- Know their names, even if it is just what they want to be called.
- Assess success by participation then by duration of activity.
- Ask about their world, gangs, drugs, family, licks, fears, other foster homes, youth services.
- Get them talking – about anything.
- Redirect the conversation when it becomes too drug focused; talk about the future.
- Don't wait for buy-in, just do it.

spruce street
secure crisis residential center



youth artwork from Spruce Street

Lana Crawford, executive director of Spruce Street, says she knows there is an impact, but it's often hard to know how much. "We can't put the whole fire out, but we can start," says Lana. "Art is key. Art is huge in helping them express themselves."

An assessment tool will help them – and Arts Corps – understand what they intuitively already know: somehow, in some way, they are making an impact.

"We're trying to create a safe space for these kids. A space where no one is hurting them, no one is threatening them, no one is putting them down. A lot of them have never had that. That's a big deal. It's to get them stabilized and thinking about what's going on in their life and what they are going to do," says Jim.

Jim says watching Arts Corps teaching artists at Spruce Street has taught him about how to connect to the youth and help them see their own strengths and talents.

"I love it when the kids find their voices. Some days I tell the kids, 'Anything you want to say to me, you have to do in a poem.' And then they find their creative spirit." ■



As I walk down the empty hallway in doubt
somehow, somewhere there's always faith.
When I turn, I end up not knowing which roads to take.
But that's when you come along and help me see.
There's so much in this world that is waiting for me.
People to talk to, people to trust, people to walk by, people to hug.
You are like an empire.
Everywhere I run you always find me.
You are like love, you never fade away,
and that's what I believe is the main reason
I'm standing here today,
because of your love and faith,
because of your doubt and hate.
Because we argue and yell,
because we both live in hell.
But for some odd reason you always help me see.
There's light in you,
but there's also light in me.

-Alicia

Az'Jion
Washington Middle School

MINUTE BY MINUTE

Az'Jion is an 8th grade student at Washington Middle School. He has been in Arts Corps' music classes with teaching artist Aaron Walker-Loud for three years.

I HAVE BEEN PLAYING DRUMS FOR THREE YEARS NOW, and what I have learned over the years is that a good drummer must be able to not only play good, but read, listen, have self control, and most of all not be cocky. Mr. Walker-Loud has taught me all of that. He taught me that there is more than just one type of drumming; there is Latin, African, Hip-Hop, etc. I have had the chance to play on some very nice stages and do things that I've never done before, such as playing for B-Boys, playing at the Triple Door, Paramount, Moore Theatre and even winning first place in a drum line competition at Garfield High School.

In order to play drums you have to be extra committed. "You put in one minute of drumming, you get one minute better. You put in an hour, you get one hour better. But if you stop for a while then you can't get better." (quotes of Mr. Walker-Loud) I have been so committed to my drumming that I have done things such as parades, play in Portland and Las Vegas. I'm even about to go play in Reno and San Francisco. I barely get sleep the

way I play. I mean, I play in Sr. Jazz Band, Sr. Concert Band, Washington Middle School Drum Line and a drum line out of school.

Being in Washington Middle School's Drum Line has showed me that everyone can play drums. I have a friend Kaiji who one year ago was playing a tenor drum and he wasn't too good yet because he was just starting, but he hated it. Over the summer he practiced really hard and made the A-Line playing like a lead snare. Now he

is teaching others how to play in our drum line.

Drums are also very cool because you get to meet very nice people. Me personally, I've met some of the Massive Monkees, Vicious Puppies Crew, Big World Breaks and tap dancers.

So in all essence I've learned self-discipline, not to be cocky, you have to be extra committed, everyone can play drums and drums are very cool. ■



Washington Middle School's Y.M.C.A. H.O.S.T. Drum Line at Arts Corps' La Festa del Arte photobooth. Az'Jion stands far left. Photo courtesy of Joshua Trujillo.

CREATIVITY AND EQUITY

By Elizabeth Whitford,
Arts Corps executive director



Rock Out!, West Seattle High School

“Education in the arts is more important than ever. In the global economy, creativity is essential. Today’s workers need more than just skills and knowledge to be productive and innovative participants in the workforce ... The best way to foster that creativity is through arts education.”

—Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, 2011 (President’s Committee on the Arts and Humanities, 2011)

An Education System in Crisis

If you haven’t heard, there is a crisis in our education system.

- Dropout rates have hovered at 25-30 percent nationally for a decade, and are considerably worse for African American, Hispanic and Native American youth.

- Only 27 percent of all students in South Seattle and South King County complete a college degree or career credential.¹

- Colleges are reporting that too many students arrive without sufficient capacity for critical thinking and personal discipline needed to succeed in post-secondary study.²

- Creativity scores in American children have been on a steady and significant decline since 1990.³

This is happening at a time when 67 percent of jobs in Washington state will require a college degree by 2018⁴ and in the home of creative industries that depend on imagination and critical thinking.

Arts Education: A Needed Part of The Solution

Arts education plays a critical role in addressing this crisis. Studies show that arts learning increases attendance, motivation and rates of graduation; this is especially true for low-income students.⁵ Finally, arts learning can cultivate the personal characteristic and capacities that help young people thrive in

school, college and career including critical thinking, perseverance, collaboration and creativity.

Nonetheless, arts education remains underfunded and fragmented nationally and across our region. Parents seeking to address this problem often supplement the arts education in their children’s schools, which has unintentionally led to greater inequity in access to arts education by income and race. A recent survey by the National Endowment for the Arts underscored this problem: African American and Latino youth are half as likely as their white peers to have any arts education.⁶

Arts education has an important role to play in the education we want for all children. To achieve this, arts educators must better demonstrate their impact on student learning, especially around the higher order thinking skills intrinsically cultivated through art making.

This set of characteristics – persistence, critical thinking, imagination and collaboration – are often referred to as habits of mind or 21st Century Skills, capacities needed to thrive in today’s rapidly changing economy and technology.

Despite clear evidence that arts learning can cultivate these thinking skills, the majority of school and community arts education programs currently do not assess

their impact on students’ creative capacities.

Breaking Through Tradition

Arts Corps is one of a small handful of arts education organizations nationally to evaluate its impact on the creative capacities of its students. Arts Corps has focused on cultivating five creative habits of mind in our students—imagination, critical thinking, persistence, risk-taking and reflection. We have documented statistically significant increases in our students’ practice of these creative habits of mind.

Historically, schools assess arts learning in terms of artistic skill development. This focus has its roots in the tradition of elite arts and music conservatories, which maintained a strict focus on the advanced technical skill development of an elite group of gifted artists and musicians for the future production of art and music for an elite.⁷

While this approach can produce technically outstanding artists, its primary downside is that it is not aimed at providing arts education for all kids. Today, select intensive school programs provide powerful opportunities for students to excel artistically. But these programs reach only a fraction of their students.

The limitations of the traditional approach to arts education are particularly significant when we consider that national research,

Arts Corps’ own evaluation and common sense all tell us that arts learning has profound benefits for all learners in terms of engagement and creativity.

Encouragingly, this view is gaining ground. A national effort has emerged to rewrite the national arts standards to include 21st Century Skills. And our local district, Seattle Public Schools, has contracted with Arts Corps to work with its arts specialists to develop goals and assessments around several key habits of mind.

This work is a part of a \$1 million Wallace Foundation-funded project for Seattle Public Schools to develop a plan to provide enhanced and equitable arts instruction across the district. This assessment project will serve as a key underpinning to the district’s ability to link learning in the arts to district-wide goals around college and



Comic Illustration/Graphic Novel with David Lasky, Kimball Elementary School

career readiness, thus justifying the resources needed to make arts learning a part of every student’s K-12 education. At the same time, this project will serve as a model for arts educators and school districts nationwide as they move to cultivate students’ critical and creative thinking skills, so that our young people are better prepared for college, career and life.

It’s what all young people deserve and need in their education. And we are helping to make it happen. ■

¹ The BERG Group, www.collegetracking.com, 2011.

² David T. Conley, “The Challenge of College Readiness,” *Educational Leadership*, April 2007.

³ Po Bronson and Ashley Merriman, “The Creativity Crisis,” *Newsweek*, July 10, 2010.

⁴ Georgetown University Center for Education and the Workforce, <http://cew.georgetown.edu>, 2011.

⁵ James S. Catterall, *Doing Well and Doing Good by Doing Art: The Effects of Education in the Visual and Performing Arts on the Achievements and Values of Young Adults* (Los Angeles/London: Imagination Group/I-Group Books, 2009).

⁶ Nick Rabkin and E. C. Hedberg, “Arts education in America: What the declines mean for arts participation,” *National Endowment for the Arts*, February 2011.

⁷ Nick Rabkin et al., *Teaching Artists and the Future of Education* (NORC, University of Chicago, September 2011).



Susie Fitzhugh, photographer



photo © 2011 Stefanie Felix

Susie Fitzhugh is a documentary photographer and the mother of Arts Corps founder, Lisa Fitzhugh. Susie has been donating her services as a photographer to Arts Corps for over a decade.

Tina LaPadula is Arts Corps' education director, a founding member and a theater teaching artist.

CAPTURING TRUTH IN PHOTOGRAPHS

Tina: When did you discover photography?

Susie: I got a Brownie camera when I was 10. I've always loved photography, but it never occurred to me that it was an art until I was in college, in an art history class. The professor asked us to make a collection of illustrations of something - anything - with our own drawings or paintings or even photographs. So with my old Brownie, I took pictures of the trees around campus. My teacher loved them, which surprised and delighted me.

Tina: Was there anyone in your family who was an artist?

Susie: My grandfather was an artist. Not for a living, but he was always making art. My grandfather and my mother took a lot of pictures. She knew what went into a good story and that carried over into what photographs she took. They were wonderful. As a child, I would study her box of pictures over and over.

Tina: What made her photographs so special to you?

Susie: The aesthetic was very honest. My mother felt it was important not to be hokey when making pictures or telling a story. "Too contrived" - her way of describing it - was a profound criticism.

Tina: You do that with your photos. I feel like you are capturing the moment in its honesty and truth.

Susie: That's what's so thrilling about taking pictures in classrooms where everyone is interested and involved. Really important things are happening.

Tina: More than anyone perhaps, you have seen the impact of Arts Corps' classes over the last 11 years. With your camera, you somehow blend into the background while capturing individual moments of magic for each student. What has that been like?

Susie: The classes of Arts Corps are wonderful. The children are so focused. The teachers are involved in what the students are doing. You get a lot of delight. And I always learn something when I'm in an Arts Corps class.



photo © 1952 Albert Bruns

Susie Fitzhugh, photographer

Tina: Your pictures help show what it's really like in our classrooms; they help tell our story. Do you remember the little Showcases we had in the beginning, when we started showing your work? They were - and still are - so special.

Susie: The first time I hung my pictures for Arts Corps was at the Rep. After putting them up I stood back and really saw them for the first time. I thought "Oh my god, this is wonderful."

At first, I had just made the pictures as a favor to Lisa. When I saw how thrilling it was to see the excitement and the intensity in the photographs, I realized these images could really help Arts Corps to do its work, and to grow.

Tina: What are your thoughts about arts education and the role Arts Corps plays for so many people?

Susie: I think there are two areas of study that are important for children to explore but which may not always be accessible to them. One is arts education, and the other is education about the natural world.

I think it's valuable that Arts Corps has real, practicing artists as their teachers, artists who can transmit the joy and excitement of their craft. The students pick up on it, and it helps them to look at life differently, with a wider and, at the same time, more focused lens. Looking at things in this way helps you appreciate all kinds of things in your daily life; you begin to see art everywhere.

Tina: What do you think is the lasting impact of Arts Corps on youth in our programs?

Susie: I think many of your students will remember this experience as long as they live. I think your students love you because your teachers appreciate the uniqueness of each child, each person. Arts Corps gives them a unique opportunity to be experimental, and at the same time they are learning to channel these wild and creative energies into a form that speaks to others.

It's been a unique opportunity to follow one story over such a long period of time - to see the breadth and diversity of the work Arts Corps is doing. The way I work, my pictures can only be good as what is before me. I'm only the reporter. Arts Corps is the story. ■



July 1, 2010 - June 30, 2011

THANK YOU

Please accept our apologies for any omissions, misspellings or other inaccuracies. Contact our office with corrections at (206) 722-5440.

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July 1, 2010 - June 30, 2011

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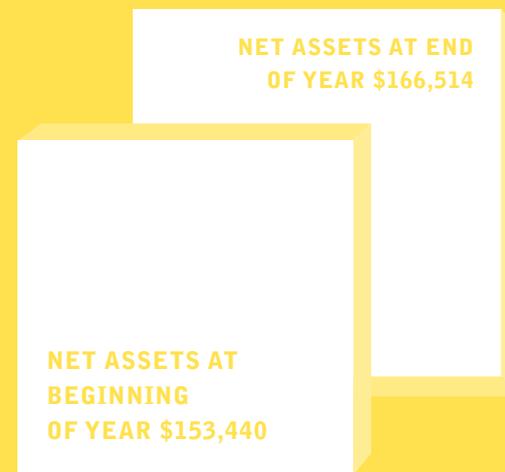
July 2010 - June 2011

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

Current assets (cash)	\$104,435
Accounts receivable	\$69,053
Fixed assets (equipment)	\$21,506
Depreciation	(\$17,994)
Total Assets	\$177,000
Less liabilities	\$10,486
Net assets	\$166,514

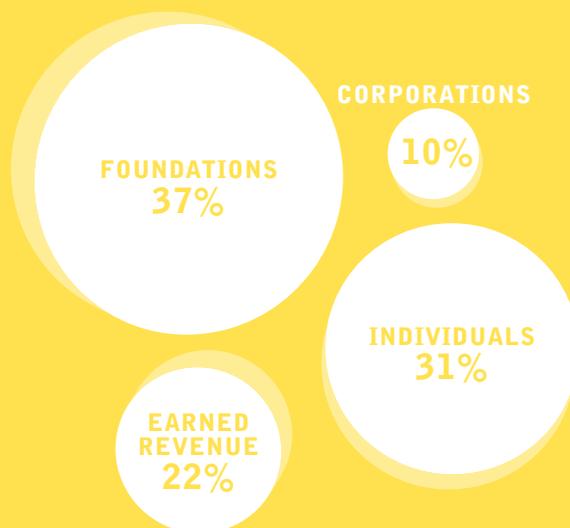
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS

INCREASE OF \$13,074



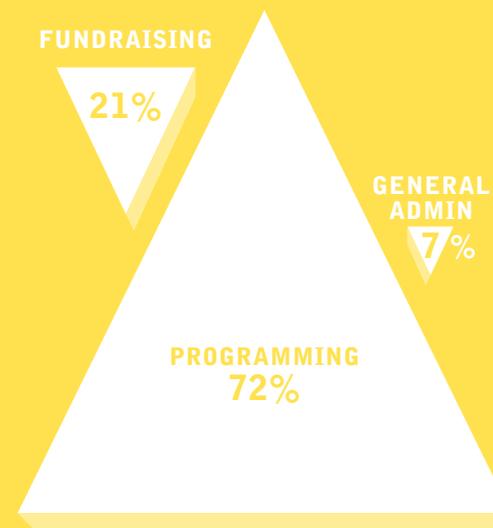
INCOME BY PERCENTAGE

TOTAL \$697,113



EXPENDITURES BY PERCENTAGE

TOTAL \$684,039





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I am like a book
finding it's pages
piecing them together
to find my story,
my life.

I am the universe,
finding my planets
and my stars
piecing them together
to find who I am
as a person,
the black holes are
my obstacles.

I am like a hiker,
trying to find my trail
while trees and rocks
are blocking me.

-Zoe, age 11

Creativity is like a seed
it grows and grows over time.
But if you are not creative
then the plant will shrivel and die.

-Holden, age 8

