



The Well

January 2010

I found I could say things with colour and shapes that I couldn't say in any other way - things I had no words for.
Georgia O'Keeffe

Message from the President...

Greetings to you all,

It is a pleasure to send out a special message to all of you who have supported Artswell with such enthusiasm in the past year. We are making promising progress which makes this an easy task.

A year ago the move to charity status was barely on the horizon. Today we have submitted our application and we await a government decision. We are hoping for a successful outcome in January or February.

A year ago we were in the early stages of making solid use of the two-year \$60,000 grant given to us by the Trillium Foundation. Today, thanks to Trillium, we retain two terrific people whose job it is to propel Artswell to the next level. Mary Pfaff is the inspirational founder of Artswell and the artistic brains behind our progress and Kimberley Sanders is a welcome newcomer with boundless energy and ideas.

When we were granted the Trillium grant, the two-year goal was to be sufficiently well established to keep moving forward and to be financially self sufficient when the term ended in July 2010. I believe we will be able to achieve this with help from everyone who sees the value in our organization.

We are looking forward to embarking on some exciting projects with new partnerships.

I would like to thank our Board of Directors for their intelligent, enthused approach to our future. We are a dedicated group with an optimistic outlook and a camaraderie that gets things done and bodes so well for 2010 and beyond.

We also thank our high quality band of facilitators - art, music and drama therapists, visual artists, potters, drummers, flutist, violinists and creative & expressive arts experts who contribute diversity and excellence to our arts programs.

We will continue to track our progress in future editions of The Well.

Best Wishes to all for a very Happy New Year!

Regards

Richard Starnes, Chair

Artswell is privileged to "share the easel" with a litany of extraordinary collaborators. In this edition of The Well, we are delighted to introduce you to Betty Kwong, one of our remarkable volunteer Art Therapists.

As far back as she can remember, Betty Kwong has been passionate about the arts. Inspired to honour a profoundly creative calling, Betty accepted an invitation from the Art Therapy department at the University of Western Ontario, embarking on a two-year creative expedition that would change her life.

As an intern, Betty worked with immigrant and refugee children, and street youth. By the time she graduated from the program in 2002, her passion for art had taken a quantum leap forward. Not only did she develop a comprehensive knowledge of multi-modal therapies, she had seamlessly united her love of art with more scholarly pursuits in psychology and sociology.

In art, as in life, Betty follows a philosophy that promotes a comfortable fusion of art and individuation. She believes the most important tools in the Art Therapist's strongbox are empathy and patience. Listening to her, it is clear that she honours her community of clients with inspiration, integrity and an invitation to explore.

"It's important for clients to come to the group and participate. Engagement in the Arts offers a certain amount of independence. Each week they make choices with paint and projects -- each piece is unique. You see their work evolve. They are excited to see what they've accomplished and it raises their self-esteem."

Betty Kwong

Today, Betty works as a volunteer Art Therapist with Artswell. On her day off, she joins Visual Artist Fortunée Shugar and the residents at Granite Ridge in Stittsville, ON. With pride, she shares how engagement in the arts measurably improves the quality of life for the residents, many of whom suffer from dementia - a progressive, degenerative disease. She comments that although a common behaviour of dementia patients is to back away from life, Art Therapy works to bring residents forward, into the present.

As Albert Einstein famously said, "Problems cannot be solved by the same level of thinking that created them."

Clearly Betty Kwong understands this. She has seen, first hand, how Art Therapy works like a key, unlocking the door between a life lost, and a life found.

Art is the only way to run away without leaving home.

Twyla Tharp

We have celebrated many years since my modest sketch of a colour wheel named “artswell” first appeared in my visual journal. Thanks to many generous, far seeing people Artswell has become a shared picture and a cooperative effort.

This is the season of gift giving and it seems timely to reflect on the gifts Artswell has received this year. It has been a productive year for making friends, partnerships, connections, plans and creative solutions. Here are some bright moments to share.

We are moving to charity status and look forward to a favourable outcome. Once that is achieved we will be able to step up the fundraising efforts we need as we grow.

The Trillium Grant has allowed us to make strides. With Kimberley Sanders providing such a positive attitude, the roles and responsibilities vital to making change happen have started to evolve.

Thanks to our dedicated Board, which has undergone structural changes this year, for their wisdom and commitment.

Client partnerships are growing, including Autism Ontario, Immigrant Women’s Services and the Oasis Drop in Centre. We are also expanding our program ideas with Ottawa SALUS Corporation and are confident of a strong future between us.

Our office has been enlarged - actually doubled in size - thanks to support from the City of Ottawa. We are fortunate to have such willing assistance from Lisa Zanyk and her Nepean Creative Arts Centre staff.

Our number of volunteers is expanding and we are extremely grateful for their assistance. We could not manage without them.

We are privileged to have facilitators who have been with us from the early days and it is exciting to be able to expand our collaborators to include drummer Derek de Beer and drama therapist, Amelda Brand.

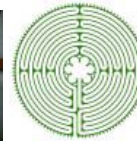
Looking ahead a little, we will be working with clients to set goals and outcomes and to build a library of evidence-based research. We are committed to broadening both public and professional interest in Artswell’s mission to recognize exposure to and engagement in the arts as an essential part of health and wellness.

Happy Holidays - may you be blessed with good health and happiness throughout 2010!

Mary Pfaff, Director of Arts & Development

Creativity - like human life itself - begins in darkness.

Julia Cameron



*As a follow on to "The Power of the Labyrinth" in the July issue of **The Well**, we are pleased to provide our readers with a short Q&A, with Barbara Brown.*

1: How have residents and staff responded to the labyrinth since its installation at Perley Rideau Veteran's Health Centre?

Positively! We have established a monthly labyrinth walk, in the evening, with tea lights and live music. After the labyrinth experience, residents and staff are invited to participate in an art-based activity such as clay, pastel or watercolour painting. These evening labyrinth experiences have provided me with some of the most sublime moments I have experienced in two decades with the Perley.

2: Please speak to the benefits of the Labyrinth experience for individuals who do not wish to use this as a form of spiritual connectivity.

There are parallels between walking a labyrinth and relaxation (see relaxationresponse.org for details). The repetitive action of walking in a slow and methodical way engages the body in mild activity that allows the mind to quiet itself. The more you repeat an action, in this case walking a labyrinth, the stronger the response.

3: When travelers have reached the centre of the labyrinth, both physically and metaphorically, what do they typically discover about themselves - and the process?

We talk about the centre of the labyrinth as being a place of receiving. I tell my elderly residents it's a resting place and they can stay as long as they like. When a person is calm and relaxed their innate, deeper wisdom rises to the surface. You may find answers to questions or solutions to problems that previously eluded you.

4: Recently, on October 03, 2009, the labyrinth at Christ Church was dedicated by Canon Catherine Ascah. Please tell our readers how it felt to witness this project blossom.

While it was an accomplishment to have the Cathedral support the labyrinth process from idea to installation, I find myself at the beginning again. Although we have promoted the labyrinth to congregants, we still have community-based outreach to ahead of us. It is affirming to know we have a home. Everything will unfold in good time.

5: On September 26, 2009, a transformed baseball diamond became the 5th Annual McKellar Park Candlelight Labyrinth. For readers who do not have access or are not able to walk a labyrinth, please describe how "moments of peaceful calm" can be achieved using portable, paper labyrinth drawings.

A finger labyrinth can be used as a substitute to walking a full sized labyrinth. Finger labyrinths can be as simple as a photocopied drawing or can be made of clay or wood. The idea is to slowly trace the pattern with the non-dominant hand. With practice it is possible to find this kind of meditation will also quiet the mind. As part of our art-based response we offer a labyrinth pattern printed on watercolour paper for participants so that they can make their own personalized finger labyrinth.

6. What other labyrinth projects do you have seeded in your creative greenhouse?

I would like to see a full sized outdoor publicly accessible labyrinth in downtown Ottawa. Although I would love to see an outdoor labyrinth at the Perley Rideau, our next is to offer training for the staff on how to use the labyrinth to address issues of stress and compassion fatigue. At some point, we hope to offer a workshop for families of residents.

On a final note, on New Year's Eve I will be co-creating a temporary labyrinth at the Dovercourt Recreation Centre. I welcome all of your readers to join us, and **walk with intention** into the New Year!

To learn more about Barbara and her exciting work as a Labyrinth facilitator, please visit her blog at:

<http://walkingcircles.wordpress.com> (Note: The above photos are provided courtesy of Barbara's blog.)

Creativity involves breaking out of established patterns in order to look at things in a different way.

Edward de Bono

Board Profile: DANNIE HORNE

Artswell is pleased to welcome Dannie Horne to its Board of Directors.

Dannie comes to us with 30+ years of experience as an art teacher and community leader/advocate. Although she began her career as a teacher, she eventually advanced to Head of the Art Department, a position she held in various public schools in Windsor and Toronto.

Dannie has worked with veterans in a long-term care environment for the past 25 years. Although the Perley and Rideau Veterans' Health Centre initially hired her as an instructor, she eventually became their Creative Arts Service Manager and directed a full range of creative programs for hundreds of veterans and community clients. Dannie has always been committed to providing high-quality diverse arts-based programs, and is particularly fond of her programs in mixed media, visual arts, woodworking, pottery, dance and horticultural therapy.

Dannie, who is passionate about the positive, health-affirming effects of the Arts, can be reached at artswell@magma.ca.



Staff Profile: KIMBERLEY SANDERS

With her clear aptitude for communication, research and fundraising, coupled with strong administrative and artistic skills, Kimberley Sanders is an exciting addition to the Artswell team. Her experience is widespread. She has undertaken considerable work with young people as a youth association executive director, a counselor of at-risk adolescents, and a community youth developer. In the business world Kimberley spent several years working as senior executive assistant to VPs and CEOs.

Kimberley's eagerness to help further Artswell's vision to live in a world where **the arts are recognized as essential to the well being and health of everyone** is fuelled, to a major degree, by her passion for the power of writing and poetry. Moved by the late Kingstonian poet Bronwen Wallace, Kimberley discovered the therapeutic benefits of creative writing at a young age and cites John Fox, Caryn Miriam-Goldberg and Patricia Cranton as her primary sources of inspiration. Kimberley's narrative and poetic compositions have appeared in various publications.



Life is short, art is long.

The purpose of art is washing
the dust of daily life off our souls.

Pablo Picasso

Experience the transforming power of the arts for self-expression, insight, empowerment, recovery, respite, rehabilitation and prevention ...

At Artswell, our vision is to live in a world where exposure to and engagement in the arts are recognized as essential to well being and health. We provide specialized arts programs for people of all ages.

Engagement in the creative process enhances the quality of life for individuals living with the effects of aging, illness or injury. Our programs are led by professional artists with demonstrated skill and experience in their respective disciplines. We deliver a wide range of customized arts programs, projects and workshops for individuals and communities, within hospitals, long term care facilities and community support centres.

Please partner with us and help ensure the continuance of our programs and services in the community. Your support - whether time, talent or financial - can make a difference. Join us in the journey to our destination of living in a world where the arts are recognized as essential to the well being and health of everyone.

Become an Artswell Ally!

Application forms are available for download at www.artswell.ca. Simply print and return the completed form to us, along with a cheque for \$30.00 (annual registration fee).



*Personality is everything in art and poetry.
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe*



To learn more about the work we do at Artswell Arts and Healthcare, please contact:

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SUBMISSIONS to The Well:

If you would like to contribute a story, article or picture to our April issue of *The Well*, please contact Kimberley Sanders at artswell@magma.ca

Special Thanks to:



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