



CDS Artfest leads to a colorful calendar for 2009



Sophie DeMesee, left, with Lauren Vannucci and Danielle Cherry.

Creating art during artfest.



1:44 p.m., Dec. 11, 2008---For two hours on a cloudy morning in September, more than 30 people of all ages and abilities shared a very colorful and rewarding experience: Artfest 2008 at the University of Delaware [Center for Disabilities Studies](#) (CDS).

Individually and collectively, the participants created several murals by applying vibrant shades of paint to wide expanses of paper that covered tables and white boards in a CDS conference room. But there wasn't a traditional paintbrush in sight.

Using rollers of many shapes, foam rubber mitts, Koosh-type balls, printing implements, and their own hands, participants and helpers expressed themselves through this unique art project.

CDS invited individuals with disabilities to participate in the workshop to create artwork for use in the 2007-2008 CDS annual report, which has been published as a calendar for 2009.

A similar workshop was held last year, and the individual pieces of artwork that were produced were incorporated into the design of the 2006-07 Center for Disabilities Studies annual report.

Students with a minor in disabilities studies, CDS graduate assistants, and other volunteers partnered with the participants who have disabilities. Sophomore Danielle Cherry said she volunteered "because it seemed like a great teaching opportunity, a chance to get out into the field I want to work in and gain some experience."

However, after the workshop, she observed, "I might have ended up learning more from the participants than I could have ever taught them."

The best part of the day for Sophie DeMesse, a junior, "was seeing the participants' happy faces as they created beautiful artwork."

Leading these creative activities was Lisa Bartoli, art therapist and executive director of the [Art Therapy Express Program, Inc.](#), an instructional art education/therapy program that allows children, teenagers, and adults to explore alternative means of communication through visual arts, drama, music and movement.

According to Bartoli, the main goal of art therapy is self-expression for everyone, especially those unable to communicate verbally. Artfest 2008 achieved this goal in living color.

To request a copy of the CDS 2009 calendar, contact Michele Sands at (302) 831-3038 or via e-mail at [\[msands@udel.edu\]](mailto:msands@udel.edu).

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