Art Therapy Program at Miriam’s Kitchen Welcomes First Lady Michelle Obama

By Kate Baasch, 2nd year

From the day I began my second year practicum placement at Miriam’s Kitchen, I have been privileged to learn about and participate in a non-traditional approach to clinical art therapy treatment. Miriam’s Kitchen is a low-barrier soup kitchen in Washington, DC that serves hundreds of people in our nation’s capital area who are experiencing homelessness. Services at Miriam’s include case management, daily complimentary healthy gourmet breakfasts, and an after-breakfast program that includes an art therapy group.

Upon arriving at Miriam’s, I was impressed by the way staff respect clients by referring to them as “guests,” and those that participate in art therapy are called “artists.” This small expression is intentional, and it is emblematic of the unique experience created by Miriam’s. One unforgettable experience was when First Lady Michelle Obama visited in March 2009 while I was interning. Mrs. Obama spent time at our establishment to get to know the innovative and collaborative work we do within our community, and her visit was

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Mirrors Mirrors On The Wall: Intersections of Art Museums and Art Therapy
by Roz Vanderpool, 2nd year

Louise Bourgeois is an amazing artist, and I urge anyone who wants to treat him/herself to seeing incredible artwork to go to the Louise Bourgeois exhibit at the Smithsonian’s Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden. Bourgeois’ work is filled to the brim with metaphors of her personal life, which are also abstract enough to reflect universal experiences. One particular work that stands out to me is Cell (Twelve Oval Mirrors), and a recent fieldtrip to the Hirshhorn included a talk by GW art therapy professors Heidi Bardot and Lisa Garlock, who spoke about this intriguing piece in relation to art therapy.

Cell (Twelve Oval Mirrors) consists of twelve mirrors that vary in convexity and concaveness, and are placed in a circular track with two chairs facing each other in the center and twelve chairs outside the circle facing in. It is massive in size, and replete with experiences to be had from any angle. Garlock

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THE "ART OF HEALING" AT THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF HEALTH

By Kim Ottinger, 2nd year

The Clinical Center at the NIH serves patients undergoing treatment for rare medical disorders. These patients may be at the hospital center for anywhere from a few hours to sometimes years; often their families take up residence nearby on campus. The hospital can be a frightening experience for children and their families. Additionally, patients may become isolated from peers and family, often traveling cross-country to receive treatment not available elsewhere. The Clinical Center at NIH responds to the unease of medical experiences by providing a welcoming and warm environment, and the art therapy program is a big contributor to creating a healing environment.

Megan Robb, an art therapist at NIH and alumna of GW, developed the "Art of Healing" project to give patients and family members at the hospital a voice. Last summer, I had the pleasure of participating as a facilitator of this project with several other dedicated volunteers. We offered 6"x6" tiles and paint and provided the theme, "paint about your experience at NIH." Artwork was created by children, teens and adults, and all seemed eager to express their experiences through art. Some of the themes that evolved were hope, fear, faith, isolation, and a sense of being cared for. I was struck that themes of strengths and good health emerged as much as illness and hardship did. The project gave patients the ability to voice experiences, and it humanized the "patient role" to medical staff, highlighting the patient as a person rather than a diagnosis.

Half of the tiles were mounted as an exhibit at the Center. During the opening reception, Robb and several artists spoke about their experiences with the project. The artwork will continue to serve as a permanent reminder of the power of art and its ability to give voice to the patient experience.

First Lady Michelle Obama, continued from page 1

exciting for all of us. Most importantly, in my opinion, her visit was a symbolic act that represents valuing individual experience—no matter a person's role in a community.

During Mrs. Obama's visit, Catherine Crum, Deputy Director of Miriam's Kitchen, told Mrs. Obama about the uniqueness of our community and the structure of our therapeutic programming. She also highlighted the art therapy group and noted its affiliation with the GW Art Therapy Department.

At one point, Mrs. Obama took note of a painting of President Barack Obama created by a Miriam's artist, and she inquired about taking it home with her. The artist, who had always wanted to have a painting displayed in the White House, was approached during breakfast and asked if he would grant permission for Mrs. Obama to take the painting with her. The artist smiled and agreed.

Homelessness in the District is all too prevalent. A recent survey conducted by the Community Partnership for the Prevention of Homelessness revealed that on any given day more than 6,000 men, women, and children are classified as "literally without a home." I have been told by many guests I've worked with, and from people who are homeless that I pass on the streets of DC, that taking the time to acknowledge a person's presence can mean more than we realize. For me, watching Mrs. Obama serve, speak with, and shake the hands of our guests was a reminder about the power of presence and how presence in relationships is the framework for therapeutic work.

Miriam's is a welcoming space where our most vulnerable community members voluntarily seek treatment in the form of their choosing. I am grateful to have had the opportunity to be present in relationships at Miriam's, which fostered self-discovery for artists I worked with and for myself. It is the relationships we are present in that are the threads that interweave to form the fabric of the community in which each one of us is a part.
HONORING THE ART OF SURVIVAL

By Kelly Hartland, 1st year

Outside of the classroom, the GW Art Therapy Program dispenses a number of dedicated students into the realities of life. As those students embrace and offer the creative process to others, many of them encounter individuals living with trauma.

Being a member of this learning community, I serve as an art therapy intern at RCASA, the Rappahannock Council Against Sexual Assault. As a first-year student, I was not sure what to expect nor how I would fair the realities of working at a crisis agency. How would I respond to the challenges before me? Who and what would help me maintain the ability to care for others? For the past year, I have found the answers to these questions surrounded by a supportive network of professional women who are passionate about serving a growing population of survivors. We have all grown alongside each other.

Reflecting on the past eight months of this journey, I was touched to think about how far the women I have worked with have come. Many of the women have accessed healing by drawing and reprocessing graphic narratives of their stories, using Lou Tinnin and Linda Gantt’s Instinctual Trauma Model. I have had the privilege of witnessing their recoveries.

Through RCASA, the women I’ve worked with have added their artwork to a traveling exhibit, “The Art of Survival,” in which survivors receive an opportunity to display the creative manifestations of their experiences. I feel that not enough trauma survivors receive recognition or justice regarding atrocities they endure. Art therapy has the ability to offer a sense of recognition and acknowledgment to survivors, which is one reason it can be so healing for this population. I watch eyes glimmer with hope as the women I work with prepare to send their artwork to the gallery — carefully framed, protected, and publicly honored.

Mirrors Mirrors, continued from page 1

commented that the piece has “many layers and layers of reflecting and being reflected” which “serves as a real treat for art therapists” because it is a great metaphor for how the therapeutic relationship works.

Visitors were invited to interact with the piece and sketch their perceptions (special permission was granted for this event only — otherwise it is off limits to touch and enter inside). A wide range of thoughts, emotions, and behaviors were commented on during the experiential, from childhood memories of fun house mirrors, to distorted body perceptions, to extraterrestrial associations.

It always amazes me how one piece of artwork can create a bounty of responses that seem never-ending, and this is what keeps therapists guessing and curious about their clients. Even if an artist has one intention when communicating, the creative mind is always working with multiple layers.

Masks

by Rachel Galbreath (left)

and Rachel Schreiber (middle and right)
Director’s Cut
By Heidi Bardot
Director, GW Art Therapy Program

This year has been one of change, growth and loss. As described in our Fall 2008 newsletter we moved to our new campus, doubled our program and added new programs (i.e., Trauma Track, Art Therapy Center). We have all undergone changes as we adjust to being in a bigger space, interacting with other programs, and having a larger student body and faculty. For those of you who have visited our new location—it is wonderful and the students and faculty seem happy with the updated equipment; the large, sunny classrooms; the Open Studio; and the comfortable gathering spaces, such as the kitchen and veranda. Those who knew Bldg. L well and have seen where we are now are thrilled that the university and dean believe so strongly in us. The facility has become our new home—though we have a remembrance wall planned to remind everyone of how we began and hopes to name each of our Center rooms after one of our founders.

I believe we have weathered the loss of our little, old building well. There have been additional personal losses within our program—in February my older sister died unexpectedly from cancer and in March Steve Lorenz’s father died from complications of a stroke. Additionally numerous students and coworkers in the building have lost relatives within the past few months. It brings into focus what is important, in our lives as well as in our work. At the same time as these losses, I was teaching the new course Trau-

mantic Loss and Resiliency. I recognized the importance of these events coinciding and wrestled with stepping over the boundary of professor and modeling normal grief. However, because of these numerous losses, the students were able to experience grief firsthand and even ask the unaskable questions that all of them feared in beginning the class—“how will I survive someone close to me dying” and “how will I sit with a client experiencing these overwhelming emotions?” Each of us must come to terms with these questions in order to do this work well—I believe our students are now one step closer.

Other events that have affected our Program—President Obama took office and created an uproar in the Washington, DC area, with millions of people coming to take part in the inauguration ceremonies. The historic moment was not lost on our students, faculty, and student internship clients—many of whom waited for hours on the Mall in the freezing cold to take part in the event. So many students have spoken of how this event has changed their interactions with their African American clients. The children who now believe that they can change their lives, the homeless who feel there is now hope, and the teenagers who question their current path—all exciting and deep issues to explore in art therapy.

So, we have become a Program of change and growth, but we hold tight to our traditions, strengths, and our goal—to assist our students in becoming the best possible art therapists that each of them can be. This aspect of the GW Art Therapy Program will never change.
A Heartfelt Goodbye

By Lauren Marshall, 2nd year
It seems like it was only a week ago that I sat in orientation in a room full of strangers. Then, just the other day, we were making the transition from Building L to the Circle in Alexandria. And, now before I know it, I will go to sleep, wake up, and it will be the morning of graduation.

When I think about graduation, my body is bombarded with a rush of emotions; excitement, nervousness, fear, pride... I am excited to no longer be a student, so I can spend my free time on anything other than homework! And I know I will always be learning something new – my clients will forever teach me.

I am nervous about entering the “adult world” to look for a job. Hopefully I’ll find one that will cover all my necessary expenses and I’ll still have money left to buy that pair of shoes I just cannot live without. I am also afraid to say goodbye to the program and all the wonderful people I have met along the way. We started out as strangers, and I think we have become a family somewhere along the way.

I am so proud of myself and my classmates for the accomplishment we are about to achieve when we cross the graduation stage and are handed our diplomas (even if it is just a sheet of paper that says a real diploma will be received in the mail in six to nine months!). I think of all the obstacles along this journey, and the moments when I asked myself if I could reach this point. I am almost in disbelief that it is just around the corner. Can someone pinch me so I know this is real?

As I think back over these two years, I can still hear Heidi Bardot telling us that this experience will change us, that we will all be different from the time it started. At the time, I have to admit, I was skeptical. But now I think she couldn’t have been more right.

I feel so lucky to have watched my classmates grow and learn in this process. Words can’t express how this program and the people in it have helped me to grow and change. All I can say is thank you.

2009 Art Therapy Awards

Hanna Kwiatkowska Award
for Research in the areas of Family or Multicultural Issues

Abigail Cutler

Chelsea Kennedy

The Prasad Family Multicultural Student Award
Katherine J. Williams Fund
for Multicultural Awareness

Catherine Baasch
NEW COURSES: TRAUMA I AND TRAUMATIC LOSS & RESILIENCY

By Chelsea Kennedy, 2nd year

This spring semester, the GW Art Therapy Department offered two classes as part of the Trauma Track that count towards requirements for LPC licensure (four counseling classes are required past the masters in art therapy, as well as residence hours). Tally Tripp taught one of the courses, Art Psychotherapy and Trauma I: Theory and Approaches to Treatment. The course included an overview of the theory, practice and treatment for complex trauma-related problems. It is part of a year-long course, and Trauma II will be offered in the Fall.

The course began with studying neurobiology, neuroplasticity and the social and emotional functions of the brain. This created an understanding of how the brain reacts to trauma and how traumatic memories are stored. The class created artwork to enhance understanding of brain functioning. Attachment theories and interpersonal neurobiology explained the importance of relationships and social development, and how trauma interrupts these.

Our class learned about the effects of trauma, such as hypo- and hyper-arousal states; a decreased window of tolerance; and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and dissociative disorders (e.g., DID). Somatic and non-verbal approaches to healing the effects of trauma were also explored. The class participated in several exciting and beneficial experientials, such as mindfulness meditations, guided imagery, body-oriented psychotherapy, anxiety reduction through art making and bilateral stimulation.

Heidi Bardot taught the other course, Traumatic Loss and Resiliency. This course explored the issues of traumatic death and dying, resiliency factors of survivors, and bereavement and political violence. The course also included theoretical, practical, moral, cross-cultural, spiritual and personal aspects of loss and resiliency.

Bardot’s course introduced me to the emotional aspects of grief and loss, including the attachment to the deceased; developmental stages of the bereaved; and how grief becomes complicated.

The process of resiliency, including protective factors for resiliency, have been demonstrated in clinical settings, and the course used this knowledge to teach me how to foster resiliency through tasks in art therapy. Issues of ambiguous loss and disenfranchised grief were also discussed. Interesting approaches to working with the bereaved that we learned in class include rituals and meaning-making through art. Our class created a group mural in response to personal feelings about a loss. We also had several guest speakers, including an art therapist who works with grieving children, a doctor who works... continued on page 7
New Courses, continued from page 6

in palliative care, a social worker who spoke about community trauma and self-care, and an art therapist who works with the military. Weekly journaling on topics of personal experiences helped to increase personal awareness of beliefs about death, grief and resiliency. Self-care was an ongoing discussion throughout the class, since it is a vital component in doing art therapy that deals with loss and grief. The classes I took were extremely powerful. They were both thought-provoking, challenging, exciting and certainly emotional. The two classes also intersected with one another regarding topics, which deepened my understanding of the material in each course.

They seemed to pull together everything I have learned over the past two years in the GW Art Therapy Program.

Together, the courses have given me an enhanced perspective on how to assist my clients in their healing journeys. The courses have inspired my clinical work and my academic work. They seemed to pull together everything I have learned over the past two years in the GW Art Therapy Program, and they increased my understanding of the power of art therapy and what I can do for my clients. As I near the end of my education, I feel grateful for having taken these courses, and am inspired to move forward to utilize these experiences in my professional work!

Learning from the Masters
By Kelly Hartland, 1st year

Art therapy students at GW have the opportunity to learn among pioneers in art therapy, and absorb the knowledge of well known professionals through lectures and workshops. Speakers this year have brought insight to topics including multiculturalism, trauma, and assessment.

Through Diversity class, students had the opportunity to dialogue with Jordan Potash over ever-present cultural issues that enter the therapeutic setting. Potash brought insight to the concepts of White privilege, and discussed the use of art therapy in social change advocacy. Notable speakers on issues of diversity included Elva Anderson and Gwendolyn Short. Anderson offered an experiential workshop that focused on Native American healing traditions, and Short facilitated a discussion on substance abuse and cultural issues.

Other lectures and classes featured art therapists and researchers Linda Ganit, Lou Tinnin, Ana Gardano, Anne Mills, and Carol Cox. I enjoyed the opportunity I had to ask these therapists meaningful questions. Through understanding the roots of art therapy discussed by these professionals, students were left with knowledge and experiences that will influence the work we do in our field!

(left) Ana Gardano with Martina Martin (1st yr)
(right) Gwendolyn Short

DRAWN from the Circle

Statement of Purpose:

Our goal is to provide a channel for communication among students, faculty, and alumni as well as to introduce prospective students and the art therapy community to George Washington University's Graduate Art Therapy Program.

DRAWN from the Circle will provide articles, commentary, notices, poetry, humor, and anything pertinent to art therapy. If you wish to respond to anything presented in this issue, please send materials to:

DRAWN from the Circle
The George Washington University Art Therapy Program
1925 Ballanger Ave., Suite 250
Alexandria, VA 22314

Editors: Rachel Schreibman and Kelly Hartland
Faculty Editor: Heidi Bardot

Contributing Writers & Artists: Nomita Advani, Kate Baasch, Heidi Bardot, Joe Emick, Rachel Galbraith, Kelly Hartland, Christopher Kelly, Chelsea Kennedy, Jessica Lee, Lauren Marshall, Andy Nelson, Kim Ottinger, Katherine Phlegar, Rachel Schreibman, Roz Vanderpool, Lindsey Vance, Li-Chun Wang, Hannah Wilson

Thank you to all contributors! It has been a pleasure serving as Editor.
- Rachel Schreibman, rschrei@gwu.edu
1st Year Student Responses

My Poem to the Art
by Christopher Kelly

From within the darkness emerges a figure.
It provides life, energy, and hope,
soaring above where it once lingered.
Mustering everything from within
its inner being,
emancipating itself from mental encampment.
It is free, its own soul, and released
into never-ending.

Reflections
By Katherine Phlegar

For the third time this week, I struggled to find a convenient parking place, and gave up to walk the additional three blocks to the building that has become a second home to me. With the original intention of copying a few articles and making a quick getaway to the weekend, I paused upon my entrance into the building. There stood a nostalgic sign reading “GW Art Therapy Interviews.” Wow. Had it really been a year since I was frantically searching for that same sign on the door of a place called Building L? As I went upstairs and walked down the hallway, I could not help but peek into the classrooms to see many new faces. I thought to myself, “Do they really know what they’re in for?”

It has certainly been a wonderfully wild ride, full of new friends and future colleagues, plenty of lessons (whether or not I was prepared for them), many challenges, and amazing experiences. As the spring semester draws to a close and the preparations for next fall begin; some are ending their chapter here, while others prepare to join the program. It is exciting to know that there is more to come. It is thrilling to realize the ride is not over yet.

#1
A poem by Li-Chun Wang

The daffodils draw the curtain of grass,
welcome the spring with pleasant grace.
winter takes a bow and waves goodbye,
after singing the lethargic lullaby.

Nice and gentle the breeze,
soaring the castle and little horse above the sky,
nice and gentle the music,
dancing notes on the staff are marble-like.
Nice and gentle the ovenbird,
brooding creativity in a solid nest
Nice and gentle the abstracts,
catching the spirits of azalea and anthurium exact.

Close your eyes and sit still,
in the darkness with dimly light,
what colors depict on the pages is simply life.

This poem was inspired by the internship experiences of working with a woman with a visual impairment.

The creation of this 5-ft mandala (below) has provided a therapeutic outlet for students during their group supervision during the semester.
Dear Heidi, Tally, Lisa & Steve,

Thank you for all of your hard work, passion and care during these past two years! With your guidance and support, we look forward to graduating knowing that we will be the next generation of art therapists to make a difference in our clients' lives.

We will miss you!

With Love,

Class of 2009

HEIDI
- keystone
- strong
- doesn't wear t-shirts
- cheeky, mentoring
- big sister, coral, warm-hearted
- best-laugh-ever!
- patient
- her rings
- hardworking and guide
- role model, humor, caring, best dressed!

TALLY
- standard classic
- makes presentations while SVU is on
- warm
- impressive
- daughters
- auntie, sandy brown, small woman with big visions
- so knowledgeable!
- thoughtful
- nurturer
- fun!

LISA
- eclectic innovator
- sensitive
- collects the eclectic
- funky, sharp
- the cool aunt, marble, mystical bohemian
- dedicated!
- rainstick
- inclusive
- imaginative
- empathy

STEVE
- is never not saying something funny
- know-it-all
- mellow, patient
- multi-tasking liason
- "Ask Steve", earthy orange, hardworking steward
- one-of-a-kind!
- rubber band ball
- dry-wi
- always there for you
- helps, helps, helps!
A VISIT TO THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

By Joe Emick, 1st year

On April 10, members of the first-year Research classes attended a lecture at the National Gallery of Art. The lecturer focused on portraiture and the creative intent of the master artist. Focusing on Dutch and Italian painters, our docent elaborated on specific techniques the artists used to convey the thematic content of portraits. Rich damasks, incredible contrasts and the pomp of Renaissance life in Europe were the initial focal points. Contrasting religious iconography included paintings of extreme piety, sorrow and joy. The final series included still life works inspired by the spirituality of the humble, everyday life. The interactive discussions and insights were new, inviting and stimulating.

The lecture tour was especially revealing considering analysis techniques provided by both the research classes and the assessment classes that are part of the first year curriculum. Building on information gleaned from the tour group, the docent provided a qualitative analysis based upon the artists’ intent and upon the interpretations provided by the viewing audience. As art therapy students, we were able to contribute our perspective and understanding using tools based on techniques of the integrative method by Cox and Cohen. The method provided a new way of understanding the intent and formal techniques of past masters.

The lunch time lectures at the National Gallery are an incredible resource for inspiration and education. Ranging from 30 to 50 minutes, the gallery talks offer a range of styles, artists and subject matters. Traditional art lectures begin in the rotunda of the West Wing; Modern art lectures begin in the East Wing concourse. Lectures change month to month, so there are always new talks being offered as well as more in-depth lectures given on weekends.

Seminar-style luncheon discussions of art history readings followed by gallery tours of relevant art are two hours long. Participants may bring their own lunch or purchase it prior to class in the Cascade Café. All lectures and talks are free to the public. Given the enormous collection, free cost and the insightful array of lectures, students, faculty and alumni would be remiss in forfeiting this incredible opportunity.