Just Another Joy of Being an Art Therapy Student at GW

There are many gifts that we receive at GW. I think all of us know how lucky we are to have the history and experience that our program and professors provide us, but there is so much more. The last year and a half, I have had the unique experience of simultaneously pursuing graduate degrees in two programs. Not only am I an art therapy student at GW, but I am also working towards my masters in social work at Catholic University. From my perspective, I believe that the real blessing from our program at GW is the community.

The fact that there is only one section of each class offered each semester, paired with our small graduating class size, and the nature of our work, has created an intimate learning environment where I can safely describe each and everyone of my classmates as my friend. Through joint art making and sharing our art with one another, I have gotten to really know and feel comfortable with all of my peers. This level of closeness allows me to be more open and personal when engaging in class discussions and to have less fear of making mistakes or asking “dumb” questions. I think most of my friends at GW take this comfort level for granted, but because I have another class environment that I alternate with my experience at GW, it is always apparent to me and always a welcome homecoming.

This difference has made the gift of my GW education that much richer and more valuable.

“I believe that the real blessing from our program at GW is the community.”

Revealing the Self: The Mask Making Process

By Vanessa Mazza, 2nd year student

“What color am I?” This question was heard circulating around the room. Second year students were busy preparing to paint or otherwise decorate the masks they had made the week before. Students were told to paint the outside of their plaster gauge masks to represent how they thought people saw them, and they were to paint the inside of the masks to represent how they saw themselves.

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Revealing the Self: The Mask Making Process

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A week before this, the same students were busy covering their faces with Un-Petroleum jelly. Bowls of water were placed on the tables, students paired up, and everyone began to cut gauze.

"Want me to do you first?"
"Sure."
"Do you want your whole face covered? Your eyes covered? Do you want a mouth hole?"

Some students had made masks on their faces or on other people's faces before. Others had not, and were looking to the veteran mask-makers for guidance. Pieces of gauze were dipped into the water, then run between two fingers, and placed carefully on the faces of those who were seated and ready to be masked. Piece by piece, faces were covered over with white. Looking around the room, one could see partially covered faces as well as fully covered faces as students were trying to stifle laughter and communicate without talking.

"Nod your head if you're doing alright!"

Some students felt the need to reassure their partners while they were hidden behind the wet plaster gauze. A couple students began to emerge from their face cocoons after much face wiggling. Soon, others followed. It was quite an experience to be able to hold your own face in front of you, to be confronted by your own face, and to be able to examine it with your fingers and eyes.

"You never see yourself like this." This was a shared sentiment, and I think the mask-making experience was a poignant and profound one, even for those students who had had the opportunity to do it before.

HIV AND AIDS: LESSONS I LEARNED

By Erin Breslow, 1st year student

I am interning at a day treatment adult clinic for HIV and AIDS. I had little experience with the disease, and decided to do some reading so that I could have a better understanding of both the medical conditions and the disease as a whole. Unfortunately, I found that sources are quite scarce. I went to a Barnes & Noble as well as a Borders in the D.C. area and found very few resources. So, I decided to go to a Barnes & Noble in suburban Pennsylvania when I was recently home for a visit.

As I had expected, there were no books about art therapy and HIV or art therapy and death. Actually, there were only a few art therapy books in the store, but that is for another editorial! I started looking in the health section and found 2 books. I thought that there must be another area that housed more books, so I searched the medical section, the psychology section, the self-help section and the gay and lesbian section. I found nothing. So, I went to the information desk and asked.

"When I asked this girl to look up my topic of choice, she was so taken aback that she looked up and stared at me."

The first person I encountered was a middle-aged woman. I asked her to look up art therapy. I was told that there is little demand and therefore few sources. I understood and made a note to check Amazon—thank goodness for Amazon! I then asked her to look up HIV and AIDS. She entered the keywords into her database and then told me to follow her. She led me to the first section I had checked, pointed to the two books I had found and then remarked that it was disgraceful that there were no other sources. I thanked her and continued looking around. It then occurred to me that maybe they were cross-referenced with terminal illnesses. I went back to the information desk, and this time a young girl was at the computer. (I should note that two days prior to this I had had a blood test and I was wearing a short-sleeved shirt. I should also mention that I have recently cut my hair quite drastically from my waist to a pixie.)

When I asked this girl to look up my topic of choice, she was so taken aback that she looked up and stared at me. First looking at my face, then noticing my bruised arm, and then again at my face. Processing her reaction and mine in turn, she quickly punched in the keywords and told me to follow her. Again, I (continued on page 3)
HIV AND AIDS: LESSONS I LEARNED

continued from page 2

was taken to the health section and presented with the same two books.

I asked her to cross-reference it with a few different words and she
agreed to, saying that she would be right back, and walked back to her
computer without making eye-contact with me. Needless to say,
she did not return.

I walked around for awhile, feeling confused and flooded with different
emotions. I was outraged that there were no sources and at the way I
was both perceived and then treated because of that perception.
I purchased the books that I had in
my hands and then sat in my car for
a while. Eventually, I started
to laugh to myself because of the
absurdity of the situation.

Misunderstandings happen everyday,
even in the most common interac-
tions. The bookstore clerk's percep-
tions and my own reactions are just
one example of how judgments cloud
our understanding of HIV and AIDS.
This was an excellent example of
what people with these diseases en-
counter daily.

I went into a bookstore, as a student,
hoping to better understand the
medical components of a terrible
disease so that I could better relate
to and help the population that I am
working with and have a genuine
sense of empathy. Instead, I got a
lesson in social implications of hav-
ing this illness, and the narrow-
mined view of our so-called ad-
vanced and progressive society.

Second Year's Re-Orientation

By Jenny Padden
2nd year student

On September 9th, second year stu-
dents received a special gift from
the program. Our faculty arranged
for us to participate in a re-
orientation workshop at Wendy
Miller's Creative Therapy Institute in
Chevy Chase, MD. For two hours
we were given the space to re-
connect after summer break in a
confidential, faculty-free session.
In making art alongside one an-
other, we were able to share com-
mon feelings of excitement and
frustration through both visual and
verbal channels of expression. I, for
one, found safety in the fact that
our individual stressors had com-
mon themes, for identifying with
the struggles and anxieties of an-
other can be deeply comforting for
both people. In a similar manner,
joy has the capacity to become all
the more joyful when experienced in
a group setting. This phenomenon
was evident in the morning's closing
activity. Wendy used a combination
of sand tray play and music

Get Together Colloquium

By Catherine Harris, 2nd year student

On September 6th, both faculty and
second year students met
to welcome this year's
incoming class. Over re-
freshments prepared by
the second years, stu-
dents and faculty were
able to put aside the
books for a moment and
focus solely on getting to
know one another a little better.

In addition to good food and good
company, the first years were
surprised with the introduction
of their big sibs, a pro-
gram tradition in which new students are
paired with returning classmates who
serve as their guide through their
first year at GW. Once paired, first
years created art with their big sibs
in the style of their new friend's fa-
vorite artist. By the end of the col-
loquium, the walls were covered with
drawings, paintings, and collages,
quite a colorful illustration of this
year's art therapy community at GW.
Warm wishes to the class of 2008!
**Director's Cut**  
By Heidi Bardot, Acting Director, GW Art Therapy Program

We have begun an exciting year here at the GW Art Therapy Program. We have 17 returning second-year students and 18 new first-year students—motivated and enthusiastic to be exploring the field of art therapy. The faculty has grown with Tally Tripp, Director of Graduate Studies, increasing her hours and Lisa Garlock becoming fulltime as Clinical Placement Coordinator. These increases allow for more advising time and for new internship sites to be put into place. Our well-known faculty Paula Howie, Barbara Sobol, Audrey Dimauro, Cheryl Doby-Copeland, Terry Svat, and Deni Branschke remain dedicated to the Art Therapy Program and we have added to our adjunct faculty with alumni: Tracy Cowell, Leslie Milofsky, Gisea Chilton, Diana Bermudez-Rodriguez, Rachel Albert, Emmy Lou Glassman and Phyllis Frame. We are very excited to have such a strong faculty to educate and support this group of students.

There have been changes in the building recently. The graduating class of 2006 created a mural in the entrance of the building depicting their journey through the art therapy program, part of the new “Make Your Mark” project. The graduating class of 2002 created tiles which are now mounted in the courtyard entrance of Blg. 1, and the 2nd years are determining how to make their mark in the next few months. New tables and chairs were purchased last year and GW workers are currently replacing ceiling panels in the main classroom.

We continue to settle into the new curriculum, which was initiated last year; one of the additions is an Advanced Issues in Psychotherapy and Art Therapy course. Topics have included: Adlerian Art Therapy and The Artist’s Eye: Creative Methods to Build Clinical Wisdom. In coming semesters we will be offering: School-Based Art Therapy, Sand Tray Therapy, and Secondary Trauma and Self Care for Therapists. These courses are 1 credit each and are open to alumni after student registration. If you would like to present a course, please send a proposal and preliminary syllabus—we are always looking for new ideas. We are also currently exploring some exciting international opportunities for coursework and collaboration.

We are in the process of redesigning and updating our website (to launch this fall) www.gwu.edu/~artx including new information on GW’s history; access to the newsletter online; and a gallery of faculty, student and alumni artwork. If you would like to include artwork in the gallery, please contact artx@gwu.edu and attach your image with name, graduation year, and artwork title.

One of the strongest aspects of the GW Program is the community of alumni and the local art therapists in the DC area interested in the program and our students. This support is invaluable for our students’ education and for the growth of art therapy in this region. We look forward to future collaborations and a growing sense of community.

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**PATA STARTS THE SCHOOL YEAR STRONG**

By Allison Leed  
1st year student

The first Potomac Art Therapy Association (PATA) meeting of the school year was held on Sunday, October 15th at GW. This group has many ideas for the upcoming year and could really use the help of the students. PATA needs volunteers to help work on the website: http://www.potomacarttherapy.org. They are also looking for people to participate in the planning of a symposium and other initiatives that are in the works. If you are interested in being involved please email one of the student representatives, myself: Allisonl@gwu.edu or Erin Breslow at: esb23177@yahoo.com.

Erin Breslow, GW first year student, was granted the Nancy Schoelbel Award for excellence in writing. Congratulations to Erin on her scholarship!

Overall, the meeting was very informative. It was nice to meet local people active in the profession. I encourage anyone who is looking to further the field to become a member. The president, Phillip Pradier, will be coming to GW to speak sometime this semester. There will also be an open meeting on December 2nd from 12-2pm. The committee will be addressing legal issues in Art Therapy and the protection of licensure. The next Governmental Affairs Committee (GAC) meeting will be on December 10th at noon; the location is yet to be announced.
Student Organization Receives a Makeover

2nd year Task Force officers Chrissy, Catherine, Meredith

By Christine Wheeler 2nd year student

Over the summer the officers revitalized the organizational structure by:
adding two new positions
incorporating the production of the biannual newsletter
registering for an email specifically for the Task Force
utilizing space in the classroom to publicize Task Force events
updating the organization's binder
revising the constitution, mission, and budget

The new Art Therapy Task Force Mission is threefold and addresses aspects of community, service, and networking:

* Community: to be a place at GW where all art therapy students are welcomed and encouraged to enjoy fellowship with peers

* Service: to reach out with support to those outside the Art Therapy Program, advocating for the use of art therapy and educating fellow students and staff about the benefits of art making

* Networking: to keep alumna abreast of the events taking place at GW and make connections with other practitioners in the field of art therapy

A BIT OF WIT FOR YOUR ENJOYMENT

Meredith Cox, 2nd year student    Brooke Telhan, 1st year student    Christine Wheeler, 2nd year student

Art Therapy In the News

By Crista Linn Kostenko 1st year student

Art therapy slipped its foot in the door of the September 29th Washington Business Journal. The article features Tracy Council - George Washington University alumna and head of the Art Therapy Program at Georgetown University Hospital's Lombardi Comprehensive Cancer Center. Tracy's focus is to help kids hold onto their creative energy as well as their autonomy while they undergo cancer treatments. The article touches on the increased use of art therapy in helping cancer patients. Although the article does not attempt to define art therapy sufficiently, it presents the discipline as "a new kind of language" for kids who find it challenging to verbally express themselves.

(Jennifer Nyce-Couny, Therapist helps patients discover healing hands, September 29-October 5, 2006, Washington Business Journal)
Sheppard Pratt Placement

By Gretchen Kircher, 2nd year student

As a second year student I was given the opportunity to interview at Sheppard Pratt in Towson, Maryland. The environment is extremely professional and dedicated to its various units of trauma, dual-diagnosis, crisis, and various inpatient and day schools for children and adolescents. I was offered an invitation to interview in the center for eating disorders. I was both excited and nervous at this prospect. I was concerned about my ability and comfort level working with adults that were experiencing eating disorders—something I had not previously experienced. I explained my doubts and hesitation to my supervisor who assured me my fears were valid. I was accepted for the internship and began my long commute two days a week.

Working at Sheppard Pratt has given me an opportunity that most art therapists, unfortunately, are not able to experience. Within the first week I attended an expressive arts meeting that included art and movement therapists. This meeting was for the full facility and consisted of 9 art therapists and 3 movement therapists. It was amazing to be surrounded by this amount of creative therapy in one mental health facility.

Working in the center for eating disorders is also an amazing experience. I am given the pleasure of working with 3 other art therapists and 2 movement therapists. Not only am I able to see different styles of art therapy, I am also able to work with each therapist in this concentrated population. Most of my day is spent working with the adult inpatient population. This work consists of trying to connect the clients with their feelings about their bodies. One way this is achieved is by doing body tracings. I have heard other therapists advise caution against doing such a project, especially with clients who may have a distortion with their body. Watching a skilled art therapist (who has been working with this population for 10 years) administer the tracings, as well as process the procedure and the reactions within a group, is humbling.

I highly suggest any student who is willing to have a long commute to try for a placement on this unit. Not only will you grow as a professional art therapist, but you will be able to participate in rounds which include nurses, social workers, nutritionists, psychologists, psychiatrists, and doctors. This opportunity is not to be overlooked, though the commute may be long, the outcome is worth it.

Corinne’s Corner

By Corinne Shea
2nd year student
1st Year Students: The Drum Circle

By Jill Chieciak
1st year student

What would one usually expect to occur at an orientation for beginning graduate students? Perhaps faculty introductions, an overview of the program, student introductions, a discussion on why we are here, etc. And yes, those are some of the things that took place on September 5 when we attended orientation as beginning art therapy students. But something else unexpected took place that day.

We were led to the downstairs classroom for a drum circle led by Lisa Garlock. As we entered the room, the chairs were arranged in a circle surrounded by various wooden and metal objects that resembled pieces of artwork from far away lands. There were recognizable tall drums, interesting water drums, and intricately carved wood pieces. One piece was even carved into a frog with a spiny back! There were carved out gourds covered by colorful beads and other pieces that resembled metal cheese graters. Grown up with musician parents, I felt like a kid in a candy store!

"How do I play this?" my classmates asked eagerly as they fiddled with their various instruments. Soon, Lisa began the drumming ritual by turning over a large painted stick that produced a calming whooshing sound, similar to that of a waterfall. She produced a simple rhythm which everyone followed. After we played for a while, the rhythm and the sensation became a meditation.

After playing various rhythms and experimenting with the instruments, we switched seats and chose new instruments. This time we closed our eyes and pretended that we were alone in a village at night. We responded to each other by playing a couple of notes on our instruments. What a wonderful and connecting experience this was! I found it amazing as we responded to each other how we all found the same rhythm! When one person decided to play fast and loud, we all followed with enthusiasm. When it seemed time to slow things down to a quiet whisper, everyone calmed down. We were literally communicating with one another using the sounds of the instruments.

Even though I wished there was time to try every instrument, this was a truly wonderful experience for me. What a unique way to connect with and get to know my fellow students.

Thanks Lisa!

Art Therapy In the News

By Crista Lim Kostenko
1st year student

Across the world from Washington an exhibit opened at Mount Elizabeth Hospital in Singapore. On display are paintings and other art work created by about 20 mental patients. The display, called New Horizons, opened in honor of World Mental Health Day (October 10). A psychiatrist at the hospital says that an ability to express emotions through art may be especially helpful for Asian individuals who may not be comfortable verbally expressing some emotions.

(Julia Ng, Exhibition at hospital shows how art therapy heals mental patients. October 8, 2006, Singapore News)
Drafts of Resilience: A Reflection on Research in Process

By Dorothy Dvorachek continuing student

At this point my research project is “in process,” our beloved art therapy word for having a long way to go and still appreciating the moment at hand. Therefore, instead of offering the neat details of my ongoing research, this article serves as an opportunity to speak to my research process.

When I started in The George Washington Art Therapy program, I had no idea that I would develop a passion for research. I started out more focused on the interaction with clients and thought myself too much of a pragmatist for research. However, as I moved through the program, I became more and more drawn into a mix of frustration, need, and opportunity. My frustration lay in the lack of science behind our current practice of art therapy. I saw a great need to shore up our credibility as clinicians, and I saw this need as an opportunity. Where in some fields it might be hard to contribute anything new to the scientific dialogue, in our field so much remains to be said, explored, and tested.

This driven mixture has compelled me to read and write reams of paper on resilience. Over the course of nearly a year focused on this topic, my pursuit has included an additional psychology research class, an initial IRB application, my practicum paper, and a Fulbright application. I am currently focused on completing a resubmission to the IRB in order to conduct a pilot study of a resilience intervention at the School Without Walls. If all goes well and I make it over a few more hurdles, I will be able to start this pilot study towards the end of November.

With my process-orientated perspective, though, I look at this research endeavor as defined by what has kept me going with this project. In these last months, a nagging idea has taken hold and gotten me excited, and kept getting me excited despite the drafts filling the recycling bin. This project has meant improvising and improvising again to make it work (and somehow enjoying this while at the same time it drives me bonkers). It’s been asking more critical questions, one hand tearing apart as the other hand builds. It’s become an inspiring mixture of chasing and meditating, skepticism and trust. I can only hope that the eventual results are as intriguing as the route to get there.

A View Down Memory Lane

The Class of 2006 leaves their mark in the entryway to Building L. Although graduated, they are not forgotten. Their legacy lives on, greeting us each and every day.

Congratulations ladies!

You are missed and fondly remembered.
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 Building "L" 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:

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Fall Photos
Student Presenters at the AATA Conference

By Christine Wheeler, 2nd year student

This year five student researchers have been given the opportunity to present their research at the AATA national conference in New Orleans. Down in the Big Easy they will be offering their insight on the use of the Diagnostic Drawing Series with various populations. If you are attending the conference, please stop by and give your support to our George Washington University program representatives.

Mary Mullis will be presenting a poster session on Friday, November 17, from 12:00-1:15pm. Her study is titled Diagnostic Drawing Series: Substance Abuse Sample Analysis.

Anna Ford and Allison Stroh will be presenting a paper alongside Anne Mills on Saturday, November 18, from 11:30-12:20pm. Their work is titled The Diagnostic Drawing Series: The Post-traumatic Stress Disorder Sample.

Catherine Harris and Christine Wheeler will be presenting a poster session on Saturday, November 18, from 12:00-1:15pm. Their study is titled The Diagnostic Drawing Series: A Sample of People with Eating Disorders.