Art Studio Day
by Lauren Hayes, 2nd year

On April 10, students, faculty, family, significant others, and friends came together for an day filled with art making. The George Washington Art Therapy Student Association (GWATSA), along with members of the faculty, organized the “Art Studio Day” and potluck event to make art that will be sold at the American Art Therapy Association’s Annual conference, which will be held this year in Washington, DC! Art was also made to give away as gifts at the 40th Anniversary of the GW Art Therapy Program and Alumni Celebration that will be held at the Alexandria Graduate Education Center, July 8, 2011.

The artists came together to create art in a variety of forms. In one room, artists were working diligently to create acrylic and mixed media paintings on small circle and square canvases. In another room, artists were making beautiful paper and creating colorful tissue collage.

“Art Studio Day was a time for everyone to create art together and enjoy each other’s company.”

The Art Studio Day and potluck event served as an opportunity for 1st and 2nd years to set aside schoolwork for a few hours, and connect with each other; something that has been a rare occurrence through the school year. Students and faculty also got a chance to connect with one another, outside of the classroom. Taken together, the Art Studio Day was a success; but then again, when you have great people, amazing food, and art making, how could it not be? Thank you to all who participated to make this a successful and fun event!

(above) Students, faculty and family create art at Art Studio Day

(left) Lauren Hayes, the author, paints mini canvases; Katerina Evans makes paper, Rebecca Harmer creates tissue collage.
A memory, hopes, wishes, and dreams, what was the theme of your altered book? An altered book is the idea of taking a novel, a children’s book, or any other reading source, and simply altering the pages. The second year class developed an altered book round robin system in order to have a keepsake to take home at the end of the year. The idea behind this was to create our own personal yearbooks to take home at the end of the program, allowing everyone the chance to leave behind their contact information. By creating a round robin system, we were to pass the book they had in their possession to the next person each week.

"This time the books will have so much more meaning, memories to keep, wishes for others, and dreams to hold on to."

Starting at the beginning of the year, each student was asked to choose a book and create a lasting theme that would travel among the class. This plan seemed like a brilliant idea in the beginning, as we were so excited to pass along our creativity and create our own work of art for each other. The feeling of doing artwork, not for a class but for a peer, was a good feeling. However, as second years the amount of pressure began to build, and the stress levels began to rise. How were we supposed to get all of our homework done, find time for our clinic clients, attend our internships and classes regularly, and still have time to work in an altered book? Well the answer is simple; there was no time at all. Books began to pass out of order, and pass in groups. At times someone would be in the possession of three or four books. This began to seem like another homework assignment, and began to feel like a bad idea. But something had to give; this had been such an ongoing process it was too late to turn back. We had to remind ourselves of how valuable this book will be to us when all is said and done.

In receiving a new book each week, there was something exciting and pleasing about looking through the artwork created by your peers. Creativity really began to shine, as most of us can now identify a piece of artwork solely based on each person’s personal style. Each week it felt as though I was opening a new present! As the year comes to an end, we will have one final meeting in returning the books back to their original owners. Only this time the books will have so much more meaning, memories to keep, wishes for others, and dreams to hold on to.
Instructional Altered Books
by Kristin Young, 2nd year

The altered book round robin that we have been working on as a class throughout the year has been quite the learning experience for me. As someone who had never heard of altered books before, I did a lot of exploring in books and online to find different techniques I could try. About a month ago I introduced altered books to two women’s addiction groups that I co-lead at my internship. The women slowly gained interest in the project and have now become very enthusiastic and hungry for knowledge. The only problem, I see each group one day a week for an hour. While the women were working on their books I began one of my own so that I could demonstrate different techniques. I soon found myself repeating the same demonstrations over and over for individuals within the groups. That’s when I decided to make an instructional altered book that included all the new techniques I had learned. The book, once completed, will allow me to leave a parting gift with the site, and allow the ladies to continue on with altered books in the future while still having a resource to look back on. The basic idea of the book is to execute different techniques and processes and then include the instructions, written and drawn, so that any section can be reproduced. This has been a challenging, yet rewarding experience and the ladies seem to appreciate having the book for a reference on the days that art therapists are not at the site.

Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors
by Caitlin Santucci, 2nd year

The Rita Project is a community-based open art studio group for survivors of suicide and those who have previously attempted suicide. The nonprofit’s mission includes providing a space for those affected by suicide and promoting suicide prevention awareness. Last September, several hundred family members affected by military suicide came together in Arlington, Virginia for a Labor Day weekend of “Good Grief Camp” sponsored by the military group TAPS, or the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors. As part of its mission for survivor outreach, TAPS incorporated a multi-faceted approach to grief support including an open art studio facilitated by art therapists and interns represented by the Rita Project.

Over the course of the three days survivors were invited to use the open art studio and the art making process as a means of connecting with their feelings, their lost loved ones and other survivors. As an art therapy intern for Rita Project, I was given the opportunity to witness this incredible group’s creative and emotional process and aid in the collection of a culminating art show for all of the TAPS survivors to share in. This highlighted what a healing tool art making can be for a survivor’s mourning process. Additionally, it allowed me the opportunity to better understand the efficacy of the open studio model within art therapy.

Survivors, art therapists, and interns present were moved by the power of the creative process so much so that TAPS has requested that the Rita Project not only facilitate open art studios at the upcoming Good Grief Camp over Memorial Day 2011 weekend, but has also invited Rita Project’s art therapists to present their work on a conference panel. This is an exciting step for TAPS and suicide prevention education efforts, and an opportunity for art therapy to make a name for itself within the military population.
Initial GW Art Therapy Survey Course in India
by Heidi Bardot, Director, GW Art Therapy Program

The GW Art Therapy Program, in conjunction with The Prasad Family Foundation and Stella Maris College in Chennai, created our first month-long Survey of Art Therapy course in India. This course, a long-time dream of Sangeeta Prasad, GW alumna, was created to bring concrete art therapy tools and theories to professionals seeking additional training. The course was taught by Jen Kristel, an art and expressive therapist with experience in Bangladesh, Indonesia, and India. Excerpts of the course and images are taken from Jen Kristel’s blog (http://jenniekristel.wordpress.com) with permission of the author and the students in the Survey course.

We have 20 students from a variety of backgrounds: artists, housewives, teachers, and therapists. The participants are all interested in art therapy for use with their students or families. The energy has been tremendous. The use of the arts for healing, in general, is really taking off in India. In the last two weeks, we have talked about many subjects, including: how art therapy can be used in different populations; the evolution of art; looking at brain development; and using different materials. I am, of course, trying my best to ground the class in strong therapy process and ethics. There is also the important task of looking at all the learning within the viewpoint of the Indian mindset.

The course is highly experiential, so there are a lot of teaching activities to help ground the conversations and the theories being presented. The students are engaged and have worked really hard. Most importantly, we are trying to see how art therapy, which was created from a western perspective, will work effectively within the Indian culture and context. In class, hearts are connecting, and I am reminded that people are people no matter what the culture. We work for justice, raise our children, and connect. We fall down, to pick ourselves up again and walk forward. Hopefully we open more doors than we close, and we try to bear witness. With this group, it is clear that these are the goals. It is heart-warming to watch, experience, and be a part of.

GW, Stella Maris, and Sangeeta Prasad are in the process of assessing and determining how to continue, develop, and grow this program to meet the needs of the students and to bring art therapy to India in a mindful and ethical manner. Ideally, we would like to combine the training with our Summer Abroad Program (2009 and 2010 were held in Chennai with internships in the community) to connect students from both cultures in learning about art therapy as well as each other. This initial course has been a wonderful beginning and clearly there is a desire and need for art therapy.
ITT Training Trip—The company made it great
by Katerina Evans, 2nd year

Who Knew Trauma Training could be so much fun?

Trauma training—fun—really? Can those two concepts really fit together? Attending a weekend trauma training class 3½ hrs hours away in Morgantown, WV, highlighted the importance of relationships in this work we are learning to do. Even though the material was often heavy, having friends on the journey helped me to absorb the new information and made the weekend much more than just a class.

“**In trauma work, I am reminded that . . . it is in the relationships that healing happens, the give and take, the connections.**”

During trauma class at the Intensive Trauma Institute (ITT) with Linda Gantt, Lou Tinnin, and Paula Howie, we learned about parts psychology. We all have parts. Right now, part of me is happy to be ending this semester, but a part of me is sad that I am at the end of this part of my journey. We learned about the clay scribble and the graphic narrative process. We also learned very valuable information to support and enhance our education in working with trauma. Recognizing the many stages in the trauma response and what each of those stages looks like. The externalized dialogue process, which at first felt uncomfortable, has proven to be very useful with clients in many ways. As with the rest of GW’s Program, especially the Trauma Training coursework, this class helped to prepare me to work as a trauma focused therapist in the world I am about to join.

Reflecting on the weekend, I am reminded of what we learned about the importance of relationships. It’s in the relationships that healing happens, the give and take, the connections. Even though I began with an idea to write about attending the trauma training, this piece has become a reminder that the connections we’ve made during this two year program have formed the stable and safe environment which helped us to thrive. And of course, ice cream never hurts either!

(above) Attendees of the ITT class with Lou Tinnin and Linda Gantt
(below) Trip to Rita’s Ice Cream.
This year marks the 40th Anniversary of GW’s Art Therapy Program. Starting as it did in 1971 with Bernard Levy and Elinor Ulman, they created a vision of what art therapy might look like in the future. In the last 40 years, we have graduated 529 students, employed 75 faculty, built our internship sites to 100+, doubled our student body to 59 current students, and moved from our cozy Bldg. L in Foggy Bottom to our spacious, state-of-the-art facility in Alexandria. Though much has changed, at the core of our Program, nothing has changed. Our graduates are still some of the best clinically trained professionals in the art therapy field, our faculty still nurture and invest in our students to become the best art therapists they possible can be, and our alumni remain loyal and connected to our Program often becoming supervisors and faculty members.

So, join us in honoring our past and celebrating our future—each one of you is an important part of making GW Art Therapy what it is today! I have included here some of the past graduating classes. We would love to have a picture on our website of every year—send us yours to add to the collection (www.artx@gwu.edu).

(left top to bottom)  
Class 1976  
Class 1999

(right top to bottom)  
Class 1992-93  
Class of 2002  
Class of 2010

Director’s Cut
by Heidi Bardot; Director, GW Art Therapy Program
Sakura Matsuri: Japanese Street Festival
by Janna Mulholland, 2nd year

As a newcomer to the area for graduate school, my plan was to take in all that DC has to offer. Unfortunately the realities of school hit and that plan was “kyboshed” the first week of school. However, both last year and this year, Sakura Matsuri, the Japanese street festival has fallen on weekends when I could squeeze attending into my plans. Last year fascinated me with thundering drumming performances, larger than life sumo wrestlers, agile samurai antics, and colorful kimonos. This year also had an inspiring program of martial arts, traditional dances, sushi stands, and paper arts; however, this year the mood was dampened not only by the weather, but also the recent tragedies that have hit Japan. Instead of the traditional wishing tree being full of wishes for romantic love, well wishes for Japan were the first to be seen. There were many donation booths and the proceedings from the entrance fee to the 51st annual festival will go towards relief efforts. Just as the cherry blossoms bloom each year is a sign of renewal, it is believed that with time Japan will also be restored.

Power of the Drum
by Katryn Ellis, 2nd year

Frustrations, happiness, letting go, uncertainties, group dynamics, togetherness, love, friendship, connectedness . . . All these things that I am feeling towards everyone comes together as a solid beat. A mix of beats, loud, soft, varied. Do we really know how someone is feeling by the beat of their drum? Not exactly, but we do know how that beat makes us feel and how we show or can show our understanding of the emotion they are putting out into the world. Let it all come out, no one is judging you, they are responding to you. Express the feelings you hold so tightly. Loosen up and let it all out. It helps to release your energy, make a positive (hopefully) impact on your life and others. Get to know yourself. Get to know others around you. There is a beat in everyone. It may not be something you’ve heard before but get used to dealing with the unknown. Life is full of unknowns. Let it be.
Season of Life Mural
by Sara Oppelt, 1st year

To celebrate National ARTS+HEALTH month, Goodwin House Alexandria hosted a collaborative community mural project created by the resident intern in collaboration with the George Washington University Art Therapy Student Association (GWATSA). The 400+ resident's in all levels of care were invited to join in as several first year art therapy students busily brought canvases, paints, and brushes to four areas of the campus to create the “Season of Life Mural.”

The mural, made up of sixteen 16”x20” canvases, depicted a tree in each of the four seasons. Each level of care at Goodwin House Alexandria had an opportunity to come make their mark as the GW Art Therapy students aided them. After each season was completed, the canvases were arranged so that one out of each season, representing that particular level of care, was present on a given tree.

Residents were encouraged to explore the Art Studio, Hope Garden, the Healthcare Unit, and the Assisted Living floor in an effort to foster new meaningful interactions and facilitate communal creative expression. The event was marked by the resident’s conversations, memory-sharing experiences, and even some individual’s first interaction with painting.

The Season of Life Mural, over ten feet long, was installed, in the resident gallery hall of Goodwin House Alexandria and later entered in a Virginia Association for Continuing Care Retirement Communities event in Richmond in December. The event hosted an art show sponsored by the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts who gave the Season of Life Mural and Goodwin House Alexandria an “Honorable Mention” certificate.

A Special Thanks to Creative Arts Coordinator Pauline Daniels for all of her support in seeing this project through. A Very Special Thanks to volunteers: Cassie Gabriel, Rebecca Harmer, Jeeyoung Suk, Eun Hyojung, and Andrew Livingston.

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:

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Thank you very much to all our contributors!
Fanning the Flames
by Kim Gunelson, 2nd year

“M”y time at George Washington University has reignited my desire to be an artist. When I graduated from undergrad a few years ago, my fire for art seemed to diminish. I had forgotten all the joy and life that came with my own art making process. Being surrounded by fellow artists upon entering this program, my passion for art slowly started awakening yet again. I now find myself longing for the moments in the day where I can make art. This semester one of our assignments was to make a piece of art each day for seven days. The seven day project was when I realized how much of a hole I feel in my life when I’m not making art. I began questioning, how do I live at all when I’m not making art? I realized that if I’m not making art, the fire will not continue to grow. I can choose to let it die out or I can add more kindle to the fire and fan the flames. What have you chosen to do when you left the Art Therapy Program? I choose to keep my fire alive and I will carry this flame, however big or small, with me beyond my time here. Thank you fellow classmates and GW for reminding me what it feels like to be alive.

What I’ve Learned...
by Bette Peabody, 2nd year

M”any of the things I learned in the past two years in GW’s Art Therapy Program were unexpected:

1. I learned a new language: Today I “invite” clients to do art work. I say, “I wonder...” when I’m trying to find out something. I hold up art work and ask clients to “show me where you would be in this painting.”

2. I learned that I can function on 4 hours of sleep, if necessary.


4. I learned to “trust the process” (on most days).

5. I learned that I have many talented and accomplished classmates.

6. I learned how to “listen” from a teenage autistic client.

7. I learned that I will always be proud to be a GW Art Therapist.

8. I learned that there will always be more to learn.

THANK YOU!
Exploring Connections Through Encaustics
by Katerina Evans, 2nd year

Encaustics, which in Greek means to “burn in,” is the process of using melted wax as a painting medium. The wax is mixed with a resin and/or pigment for color and is then applied in layers which are fused together with a heat gun, torch or iron. This is a process which has fascinated me for years. I am drawn to the luminous quality of the wax, as it simultaneously conceals and reveals the layers beneath. I also like the possibility of embedding objects and scratching in, creating layers of texture or heating the wax for a smooth, gleaming finish. For the 7 Days project, I decided to try out this new technique—one which I had wanted to learn for a long time. Having the chance to focus on it for seven days felt exciting. As this was a response project, I chose the topic of connection, the basis of the therapeutic alliance and also, what can be a complex and difficult subject. What began as an intention to learn a new technique while contemplating connections, became an exploration of my relationship to myself and the world around me. Like the wax, this was a multi-layered and textured process, the art, as always, leading me along the path to a greater awareness of myself.

“What began as an intention to learn a new technique while contemplating connections, became an exploration of my relationship to myself and the world around me.”

Day 1—Wax and Discomfort
Day 2—The Lenses we Bring
Day 3—Women’s Circle
Day 4—Letting Go
Day 5—Reconnecting to Myself
Day 6—Time and Attention is Necessary
Day 7—Connection is a Multi-layered Thing
Seven Days in February
by Monica Salinas, 2nd year

These seven pieces of art are products of an emotional response. I created art in response to how disconnected human beings have become from nature. I sat and pondered our desires for technology and a faster pace, and kept thinking how these advances might push our natural tendencies to extinction. As humans we crave a meaning-making experience, and should strive to live in harmony with the natural world... yet most children spend time indoors learning how to take tests and people with mental illnesses must recover in artificial light without the healing components of nature. These pieces of art honor and embody my relationship with nature.

by Anne Hurley, 2nd year

My internship site working with military personnel and my experience in jewelry design inspired me to create “personal tags” (taken from the military dog tags) for the seven-day art assignment. I approached the assignment attempting to redesign the dog tag as a way to represent individuals in my life and the impact they were having on me. The tags provided me a means to apply subjective art making along with counter transference artwork I used cut illustration board, grommets, found objects, leather and mixed media for the art making process. I found the tags to be so successful for me that I used the directive at my site as a strength-based theme to increase self-awareness and self esteem. Each tag was created in response to an individual in my life but I did not title them individually. I could title it as a group—maybe “Personal Tags”. I hope this helps and please let me know if you need anything else.

(below) Days 1-3, 5-7
(top right) Day 4 enlarged
It is wonderful to hear about the creative endeavors of our former students. Alumna Marisa Lynn Taylor, who works at the Aurora Mental Health Center in Colorado has been busy. She, along with two other colleagues, created Horticulture Therapy, Sand Tray Therapy, and Art Therapy programs for children. They facilitated groups in a community garden all summer long, and plan to continue the program this summer. In another creative realm, Marisa is expecting—“I’m actually 28 weeks pregnant!! (Notice the baby bump on the figure and on me!)” Congratulations, Marisa!

Alumna Marisa Lynn Taylor, right, with colleague Mindy, and their spirit figures

(left) Marisa’s “Mama” and “Her Protector” spirit figures

Drawn from the Circle is going digital! Much of our newsletter is designed with beautiful, colorful art and photos; however, due to costs, sadly this copy you have received is in B&W. You can access color copies on the GW Art Therapy website (www.gwu.edu/~artx/alumni/newsletter.cfm). Additionally, in an attempt to save trees we will be transitioning to only digital copies and will send you an email notice with the link when a new edition has arrived. If you would prefer to continue receiving paper copies, please email artx@gwu.edu or call 703-299-4148 and let us know by November 2011.

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