



ARTS Bulletin

www.MarquisStudios.org

Summer 2008

Marquis Studios Brings the Arts to Senior Centers

This past year, the New York City Department for the Aging announced that it would award Senior Center Cultural Initiative Awards to eligible senior centers to enable them to partner with cultural organizations around the City. Grants are to be used for “a cultural project of recognized quality for older adults, in collaboration with a senior center program.” While ‘The Arts For Kids’ is Marquis Studios’ slogan, we were excited to have this opportunity to work with a new segment of the population.



Seniors at the Corona Senior Center

Would a senior center partner with an organization known for working exclusively with children? Would Marquis Studios teaching artists be able to make the transition from working with children to working with seniors? We sent out letters to the eligible centers, and the response was very positive. In the end, Marquis partnered with 18 senior centers in four boroughs, conducting such programs as

music, visual arts, and movement. What follow are two different senior center accounts from Marquis teaching artists, Aurelio Del Muro and Hiromi Niizeki.

Aurelio became a Marquis teaching artist in January of this year. He has

been teaching since 1998 and became a certified ESL literacy teacher in 2000. Aurelio was hesitant when approached with the idea of working with seniors, but became interested when he wondered if it would be similar to his

experience as an ESL teacher to adults. A native Spanish speaker, Aurelio was a perfect fit for the Spanish Speaking Elderly Council’s Raices Corona and Raices Gowanus senior centers, where many of the seniors are not English speakers. When Aurelio first started in the centers, he was met with resistance from most of the staff who thought he was fighting a lost cause and the seniors

who “felt very insulted to be offered what they believed to be childish things” like making masks and hats using sculpture techniques and painting still life using acrylics and watercolors. But as time went on and trust was built, the guards of the staff came down. However, the seniors weren’t as willing to give in easily as the “No’s” still persisted as they were a little embarrassed to show that they were actually interested in participating in the activities. “With many of the seniors I literally had to put the materials in their hands not forcefully, but playfully, like a game and things began to work out.”

Aurelio described. Aurelio arranged for the completed works from the Gowanus Senior Center to be put on display at the Atlantic Avenue branch of the Brooklyn Public Library. He also arranged for the works from the Corona Senior Center to be put on display at the local Banco Popular branch. The seniors also wrote artist’s statements to display along with their work. “We held a celebration the last day (of the residency) and they were quite impressed that their work was on- (continued on page 3)

Teaching Artist Spotlight: Hector Morales

Percussionist Hector Morales joined Marquis Studios in the 2006-2007 school year. He teaches percussion, world drumming, Taiko drumming, and instrument building.

Hector began playing music back in his native Peru around the age of 12: with no prior training, he began playing the cajón (a traditional Afro-Peruvian percussion instrument) at a

family gathering. Hector went on to study music formally at the National Conservatory in Peru, and, in 1999, he came to the States to study at William Patterson University’s jazz program in New Jersey. “I think that music—art in general—is probably the most power-



ful tool to self-discovery.” said Hector. Hector’s career as an educator started when he was 18, when he began teaching a variety of instruments on a private basis. He began teaching in schools in 2004. Additionally, Hector is the- (continued on page 2)

Hector Morales (continued from page 1)

proud father of a son, Caetano, and daughter, Omara. "They help me to understand how kids relate to music. I also try some of the instruments I make with them; and I may use some of the songs they listen to when I teach kindergarten." This year, Hector taught in schools throughout the five boroughs, including two pARTnership schools: PS 170 (The Esteban Vicente School) in the Bronx, and PS 8 in Brooklyn. Hector also worked at the Raices Astoria Senior Center in Queens.

In addition to his work as a teaching artist, Hector plays and records with musical groups: Shusmo, an Arabic fusion band; Afro-Peruvian band Alcatraz; and Afrodita, which he leads. Hector has played in local and international venues from New York to Peru as well as the Jerusalem Music Festival.

During a recent visit to PS 8 in Brooklyn, it was clear that the children were very excited to have Hector in the classroom, and they were eager to practice for their upcoming

show. At the time, PS 8 was participating in a school-wide green initiative in which the students learned about how they and their families can live a more environmentally friendly lifestyle. Hector incorporated this into his lesson plan by having the students write a song about what they can do to help the earth; students collaborated to write lyrics, and wrote their own raps. The instruments played were everyday household items such as coffee cans, buckets, and flip-flop soles. The students learned simple music terms. For example, the 'form' of the song is the song's structure. To make the form of the song easy for the students to learn, Hector separated the song into different parts labeled 'A', 'B', and 'C'. For example, the verse is considered part 'A', the chorus part 'B' and so on.

Hector does not simply teach the students a song to perform at the end of the residency, he also teaches them teamwork, and how to think

independently and voice their opinions. When the kids were setting up the staging of the three rappers (two girls and one boy), one student suggested that the boy rapper stand in the middle of the two girl rappers; it made for a more visually interesting presentation. Some of the kids thought this was a good idea, others did not. Hector suggested that the students try the idea and then vote to determine if the idea would stick or not.

"The truth is, the kids revolutionize me much more than I revolutionize them. What an important role the arts play in providing them a successful transition between childhood and adulthood."

We are looking forward to more revolutionary years with Hector as a part of the Marquis Studios family.

Celebrating the Life of Harriet Vicente

Harriet Vicente, philanthropist and wife of famed artist Esteban Vicente, was honored by friends, family, colleagues, and many other beneficiaries of her generosity at a memorial held this past February at the Rockefeller University, where she was a member of the university council. A chorus of children from PS 170 also known as the Esteban Vicente School, an early childhood school in the South Bronx that participates in Marquis Studios' pARTnership program, honored Mrs. Vicente and her late husband Esteban in song.

When public school PS 170 in the Bronx was renamed in honor of Esteban Vicente in 2006, Harriet conceived and helped organize the Friends of the Esteban Vicente School to raise funds for programs, art supplies, and books on Vicente and other modern artists for the school. Both this group and the Harriet and

Esteban Vicente Foundation continue to support the school and its partnership with Marquis Studios, working to integrate art into the education of the young children who attend. The Esteban Vicente School is one of six participating in the Marquis Studios pARTnership program; these schools have principals and faculty who believe that the arts can enhance the quality of their students' education and demonstrate a commitment to integrating the arts into the curriculum. Since these schools have limited resources to provide arts education to their students, Marquis Studios seeks grant funding to help offset the cost of arts pro-

gramming and provide additional residencies and other services.

Currently, residencies at PS 170 include visual arts, dance, and music. In the visual arts class, chil-

dren learn about Vicente and his work, creating their own interpretations of a Vicente piece. The first grade music students who sang at Ms. Vicente's memorial service worked with Marquis Studios

teaching artist Jennifer Raine to compose their own songs to honor Ms. Vicente, and the sentiments expressed in their song echoed those of many who attended the memo- (continued on page 3)



Chuck Close and Harriet Vicente at PS 170 opening

Goldman Sachs Teams up With Marquis Studios

Every year since 1997 Goldman Sachs employees have participated in Community TeamWorks, a company program in which employees get a paid day off in order to volunteer time with a non-profit organization. Goldman Sachs created Community TeamWorks in order to “make a tangible difference in our communities and foster inter and intra-divisional camaraderie within the firm.” This year, thanks to Marquis Studios board member and Goldman Sachs’ Managing Director, Principal Investment Area Stuart Katz, Community TeamWorks will be working with Marquis Studios.

On Wednesday July 30th, Goldman Sachs employees will partner with children from PS 307 and Marquis-Studios staff to paint a beautiful African savannah-themed mural in the school’s auditorium. This will be the culminating event of a visual arts residency the children have been participating in. PS 307 is a high need school in Brooklyn where 80% of students live below the poverty line. A team of twelve employees, led by Stuart, will work under Marquis Studios teaching artist Michelle Hinebrook alongside 60



A past Marquis Studios mural project

PS 307 Receives Much Needed Funding

We thank board members Stuart and Peige Katz for informing their colleague Christopher E. Austin of the international law firm Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton, LLP, about what we do here at Marquis Studios. Cleary Gottlieb generously gave us a monetary gift which is being used to fund the visual arts residency at PS 307, which has lost most of its arts programming this year due to budget cuts made by the Department of Education. We hope to raise more for this needy school and others like it so that the arts can continue to enrich students’ lives and open them up to new possibilities. If you would like to make a secure, tax deductible donation to Marquis Studios, you can go to our website at www.MarquisStudios.org and click the ‘donate now’ icon.

children aged 6 to 12. By depicting the savannah habitat and its wildlife, the children will make connections to their studies of ecology and biology.

The project will take place from 9:00 AM until 4:00 PM, with children coming in two shifts. Teams of three (two children and one adult) will work section by section to complete the mural.

from images or other visual aids (such as stuffed birds and flowers) was very effective as well as providing ample one-on-one interaction with the seniors.

Hiromi has been teaching art for a combined 22 years in the States and in her native Tokyo. Marquis is very pleased to have had Hiromi as part of our teaching artist roster for over 8 years. She has primarily worked with children, but also has experience working with adults. Hiromi’s residency took place at the

Vicente (continued from page 2)

—rial: “Thank you Mrs. Vicente... We will never forget all the things you helped us do.”

Born and raised in the Crown Heights section of Brooklyn, Harriet’s involvement in the art world began in the late 1940s, when she began to assemble a significant collection of abstract expressionist paintings. In 1958, while working as a volunteer in the Leo Castelli Gallery, Harriet was introduced to the Spanish painter Esteban Vicente, who was having a show of his drawings. Among artists’ wives, Ms. Vicente was considered a rarity because she was so deeply involved in the day-to-day affairs of her husband’s career.

Harriet was also an avid gardener, a supporter of reconciliation in the Middle East, and an advocate for the treatment of mental illness.



Work by one of the seniors

Woodhaven Senior Center in Queens.

Hiromi has two sessions on the days she is at the center. Hiromi finds that when she is at the center, she has to be as kind as possible, or a “good girl” as she says. “I need to be flexible to change the plan often, which I don’t mind doing at all. Some of them (the seniors) make requests like making shadow boxes. I try to bring what they may like to do.” Hiromi said.

(continued on page 4)

Senior Centers (continued from page 1)

-display. They seemed quite proud and I was very glad.”

Aurelio then worked at College Point Senior Center and is currently working (at the time this article was written) at Northside Senior center in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. At these centers, he felt welcomed by the directors and even the seniors and he has an average of 13 participants a session. Aurelio found that painting

Senior Center (continued from page 3)

Some of what Hiromi does with the seniors is usable art such as making tote bags out of paper, and candle making. They also do more traditional activities like figurative sculpture and collage projects as well as traditional origami. "I have been learning a lot from my experience," said Hiromi. "Now I am seeing and experiencing the next level of life, senior life. It is a very strong reality which many of us may not want to see yet, but we will be there. I am glad to see that part of our lives."

One thing Hiromi and Aurelio seem to agree on about their senior center experience is that one learns to have patience and to slow down. Hiromi believes that we use a different part of our brain when we slow things down a bit. Aurelio learned that "with seniors an individual is an individual regardless of age, and if I treat them as such (independent spirit, independent mind), they appreciate it."

Carnegie Corporation Helps Teachers First

The Carnegie Corporation has committed to providing Marquis Studios with a grant of \$20,000 over the next two years. This funding will be used to continue our Teachers First program, which aids in the professional development of teaching artists and improves the camaraderie among them. With this increase in funding, Carnegie has helped to ensure Marquis' ability to provide the best quality of service to schools by helping our artists perfect their craft as teachers. The Teachers First program includes professional development meetings (of which we had five in the 2007-2008 school year); these are two-hour long evening sessions that focus on topics relevant to teaching artists. This year, topics ranged from challenges associated with after-school residencies as opposed to in-school residencies to a session where classroom teachers from two schools joined us to discuss what they would like to

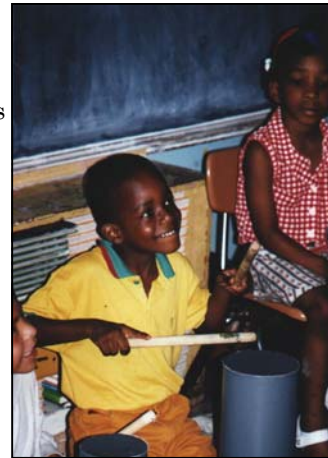
Latin American Percussion in Staten Island

We thank the Staten Island Foundation for their grant of \$10,000, which will be used to place a Latin American percussion residency with featured Marquis teaching artist Hector Morales in pARTnership school PS 45 in Staten Island. Two hundred 2nd and 3rd graders will benefit from this residency at this K-5 elementary school. PS 45's student body reflects the growth of the Latino population in the United States; Latino students currently make up 30% of the student body, and the percentage continues to grow. All students at PS 45 will benefit from exposure to Latin American music as a way of building cross-cultural respect and understanding.

The residency will take place during the course of the 2008- 2009 school year, and will end with a performance by the students. This residency will give children an opportunity to

learn about and discuss different cultures and ethnicities and to gain an appreciation for Latin music, all while developing their general knowledge of and fluency in musical concepts and improving their ability to work as a team.

Marquis Studios has been working in Staten Island since the late 80's; in that time we have worked in 30% of its public schools. We had 35 teaching artists working in Staten Island schools in this 2007-2008 school year alone. We again thank the Staten Island Foundation for helping



see teaching artists doing in the classroom.

Just before the beginning of the school year, we take all of our administrative staff as well as our 38 teaching artists on a two-day retreat in New York's Bear Mountain State Park. During the retreat, artists participate in workshops on topics such as lesson planning, as well as in art-making activities led by their peers. Everybody gets to know each other better, and each artist receives feedback from the Marquis administrative team.

We plan, with help from Carnegie and other funders, to reinstate our mentor/observer program, which began in the 2006-2007 school year but was put on hold this school year due to lack of funds. As part of the program, a teaching artist can go visit or be mentored by another teaching artist, as well as outside educational

consultants. After two observations, there is a discussion between both parties about what was observed.

Teachers First is further effective because after each of the seminars and observer/mentor programs the participants are given evaluations to fill out. This allows us to know what worked and what did not so that we can further improve this professional development of our teaching artists.