



For Immediate Release

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## ART EXPRESSION RECEIVES BENEDUM FOUNDATION GRANT

*\$33,000 brings Art Expression programming to four school districts*

**Pittsburgh, PA (November 12, 2014)**—Art Expression Inc., a nonprofit charitable organization that is a fully inclusive afterschool program focusing on developing the social skills of children in the Pittsburgh area and throughout western Pennsylvania, this year received a grant from the Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation in the amount of \$33,000 to support its programs EcoSmART and ARTchitecture: Building Bridges, which incorporate science, technology, engineering, art and math (STEAM).

The grant furthers Art Expression’s mission to facilitate positive socialization with children and adolescents through expressive art activities in an inclusive educational environment. Funding from the grant supports programming for the 2014-2015 school year in four districts: Charleroi School District (Washington County), Chartiers Valley School District (Allegheny County), Frazier School District (Fayette County), and Trinity School District (Washington County). The latter three districts will benefit from Art Expression programming for the first time.



*Art Expression student in Chartiers Valley models her flower headband, Fall 2014*



*Tree made from recycled materials*

According to Angela Lowden, Art Expression’s founder and president, “This grant is so important to children in these four school districts. We owe a huge thanks to the Benedum Foundation. We’re hopeful that this is the beginning of long-term relationships with all four districts.”

Art Expression was founded by James and Angela Lowden in 2001 as an expression of their passion for alleviating the social inequalities that exist among children of different abilities. “Art Expression strives to strengthen children’s socialization and self-esteem and grow their self confidence,” said Angela Lowden. “We are already seeing results in the districts funded by this grant. Our facilitator working in the Trinity School District told me recently about a girl who mentioned that she didn’t have any homework that

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night. The facilitator asked her what she was planning to do with her homework-free night. The girl said with a big grin, 'I'm going to keep working on art!' and she took extra supplies home with her to do just that."

"In Chartiers Valley," Lowden continued, "another girl hit a snag because she needed to borrow pink duct tape that was being used by one of her peers in the class, and she was reluctant to ask for it. The girl admitted to a faculty co-facilitator that she gets flustered asking for things from other students. The co-facilitator took the opportunity to coach her through the process and offered support and modeling. Soon the girl was able not only to approach her classmate to borrow the item she needed, but at the end of the session she asked everyone in the class to sign her artwork. The co-facilitator said it was a huge step for her."

Says Lowden, "Perry Elementary School in the Frazier School District does not currently have any arts instruction during the school day, so the Art Expression program will be a wonderful opportunity for children there to work together on creative projects and learn from their peers, express themselves through art and enjoy the benefits of teamwork."

Thanks go to the Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation for their generosity and belief in Art Expression Inc. The Foundation's mission is to encourage human development in West Virginia and Southwestern Pennsylvania through strategically placed charitable resources.



*Monster drawing*

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*An EcoSmART brainstorming activity at Trinity West Elementary School, Fall 2014*