



Greetings-

It has been an exciting year working with over 200 youth in schools, community venues, at wingspan Studio and The Myrtle Street Avant Garden. **Spread Your wings!** was established to increase access to valuable vacation learning camps, in order to decrease the opportunity gap of those youth living in poverty. **Enriching “out of school” experiences profoundly impact the future success of disadvantaged youth**, studies show, and also improve learning during the academic year.



French & Art: FRART! Spring , 2013



ALL YOUTH DESERVE THE TOOLS & SUPPORT TO SPREAD THEIR WINGS!

**Myrtle Street Avant Garden-Celebrating sign installation, designed with proud students!
Thanks to Sammell Signs and a Community Development Grant from CDBG, Spring 2013**

This holiday season, I had a very touching encounter with the mom of a new student I wanted to share:
(Story shared with names changed/ permission)

Sarah had attended programming for the first time over Thanksgiving Break in an African Art & Geography camp, and loved it. This was made possible through a generous donation that helped bring 4 youth via COTS, Chittenden County's amazing homeless support organization. (Since then Liz and Sarah have moved from COTS to Women Helping Battered Women). I asked if Sarah would like to return for Winter Break Camp - Mathmagic! Liz said she couldn't believe I called as her daughter had just asked her the day before if she was going to go to Christmas camp! Liz said, she had been sad to tell her she couldn't afford it. I told her I could provide Sarah a spot, and she started to cry and said, "this is a Christmas blessing."

Won't you please help support valuable programming for kids like this and many more?! Consider a donation of \$10 to cover healthy snacks for one youth for a week, or \$20 for art supplies, or \$50 for a full day of programming or \$250 for a week of programming or \$500 for 2 full weeks of programming. Whatever amount you can contribute helps and is deeply appreciated!

Please Donate [HERE!](#) to make a tax-deductible, secure contribution via PayPal.

More about [Spread Your wings!](#)

Our valuable educational program occurs **during school vacation breaks and provides opportunities to stem learning loss and boost academic achievement and self-worth.**

To date, SYW! has:

- *served 32 youth with an interdisciplinary curriculum grounded in the arts and nature
- *established partnerships with SA & IAA elementary schools (2 schools w/ highest % of childhood poverty)
- *developed fiscal sponsorship with VSA VT
- *met with educational leaders in the community and beyond to garner insight, advice and best practices
- *worked with youth from *COTS* family shelters and *Women Helping Battered Women*.
- *employed an intern from UVM and two part time seasonal staff
- *had multiple requests from students to return
- *created an on-going fund raising partnership w/ Rebecca Kauffman, wonderful professional harpist/educator <http://www.rebeccakauffman.com/audio/>

Next year we plan to:

- *serve many repeat youth in longitudinal programming that connects with their school curriculum
- *design & begin implementation of assessments and launch follow-up component of the program
- *hire a part time, permanent staff member for outreach and fund raising
- *create a website, reach out via social media, conferences, kids fairs
- *raise more funds to serve more youth, and further develop partnerships with schools and community partners

Why is [Spread Your wings!](#) so important?

This program boosts the academic success and self-worth of kids starting behind the starting line of life. As the richest country in the world, it's troubling that many of our most vulnerable youth have unequal access to opportunities that will help them overcome obstacles. It's up to us, at a grassroots level, to make the doors of opportunity open for all. I look forward to the day when a much higher percentage of the federal budget is allocated to education and a greater value is placed on the education of all.

In the words of the great Nelson Mandela,

"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."

Breaking the vicious cycle of poverty starts with children. It starts with their belief in a future, in self potential they couldn't even, wouldn't even imagine. They need programs like this during the many hours of school vacation breaks to continue the important work of their school teachers and more.

To me, it's quite powerful that this January 8, 2014 marked the 50th anniversary of President Johnson's speech on **The War on Poverty**. Stemming childhood poverty depends on our work with the children in our midst now. Planting with them the seeds of their self-worth, the seeds to believe and the courage to try, and try again. It is only with concerted efforts and community members stepping up outside of the school day, that they will experience a sense of safety and acquire the tools necessary to blossom and thrive.

On Nov 3, 2013, The Times Argus published an article entitled, **"Child poverty efforts fall short of goal."** Vermont Secretary of Human Services, Doug Racine, a founding member of the Childhood Poverty Council, communicated he was pessimistic regarding their goal set in 2007 to cut childhood poverty by half in 10 years.

Let **us** step it up so all children receive the resources they deserve. This program uses the arts and nature to hone crucial skills. Art plays a crucial role in sowing the synapses of imagination cultivation among other things, which, according to Albert Einstein, is indeed more important than knowledge. Additionally, nature is perhaps our greatest teacher of all. Please support the important work of [Spread Your wings!](#)

According to AC Huston, in *Children in Poverty: Child Development and Public Policy*, "there is a **high risk of educational underachievement** for children who are from low-income housing circumstances." Huston continues, "this is often a process that begins in primary school for some less fortunate children. Instruction in the US educational system, as well as in most other countries, tends to be geared towards those students who come from more advantaged backgrounds."



Mathmagic! Math through the lens of art and nature, Dec 2013

Spread Your wings! delivers quality programs that:

- deliver an arts and nature infused curriculum supporting the **Common Core** when school is out
- provide reciprocal, enriching interactions in beautiful, healing settings
- offer guidance, support and **small working groups**
- **incorporate ample periods of time for projects and make room for messy, self-directed projects**
- provide **safety to make mistakes and learn from them**
- cultivate opportunities to build leadership skills and work on positive behavioral strategies
- supply all **materials** and a **healthy snack** each day
- offer follow-up with the youth's school during the academic year for **longitudinal impact**
- implement instruction designed and overseen/provided by Maggie Standley , **long-time educator, youth advocate and professional artist** trained in **inclusive classroom methodologies (UDL)**
- emphasize **student-centered practices and community-based learning experiences.**
- **use multiple learning modalities** informed by work of **Dr. Carla Hannaford- biologist/educator**
- **employ a multicultural approach** infused by Ms. Standley's international experience.

Many thanks for your interest and support,

Maggie Standley

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**African Art & Geography, Thanksgiving Break Camp 2013
Making the world come alive!**