

Transcript of the CDHD artAbility Project Video: Information and Background

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(Music)

(Fades into indistinct chatter)

>> Instructor: Also today, if you guys haven't heard what the special ingredient for our art workshop is today, it's clay.

>> Olivia Lebens (CDHD Interdisciplinary Training Coordinator): artAbility started a little bit over three years ago from an idea of a trainee, or a college student, Ashley Kuznia, who is a Psychology major / Art minor.

And she wanted to really work with adults with disabilities in the arts.

>> Instructor: We met two weeks ago, and we are working on some Gelli prints!

>> Olivia: I was able to identify a grant through the University of Idaho Student Arts Fee Program and Ashley took it and ran with it. So how it works is it's a trainee led program.

The trainee works with professional artists by retaining them through a contract.

The student then recruits other students from across campus to go through what's called Disability etiquette – how to talk to people with disabilities. These are normal people. They have wants and dislikes and they have friends and they have favorite colors and foods just like you and I.

It kind of breaks down the social awkwardness that some people might have around other people with disabilities.

We've used several different mediums for our workshops. Those mediums have included oil paint, watercolor, Gelli prints, alcohol paints, black-out poetry, three dimensional wood work pieces, and clay sculptures.

The adults with developmental disabilities benefit from this project because there's not necessarily a lot of structure for recreational activities once a person transitions out of high school. These workshops afford those opportunities for the adults with developmental disabilities.

>> David Herbold (Ceramic Instructor): At least for the pyramid, one thing you're going to need is a lot of space.

>> Participant: Yeah.

>> David: So maybe if you wanted to work on...

I got involved in artAbility because of the opportunity to teach and do some outreach. Share what I love to do with a community of people that I don't often get to interact with, with my art. When I heard about it I was very excited and proposed some possibilities and projects.

>> David: It's called a loop tool, but it's really good at carving. So how you use it...

I think artAbility is a great, enriching experience for any artist in any kind of medium.

It really kind of lets you key in on the things that you're interested in and share it with a group of people, a community of people that are very excited and are very thankful and, you know, it's a supportive environment for everyone, for the participants as well as the artist.

>> Olivia: The whole thing comes together at the very end in the spring for an art showcase where we rent out the 1912 Center which is a community hall, and we set that up as an art gallery, and we invite the community to it. We had, for the last two years, 150 people each year come through our doors to enjoy art, and food, and community. And it's truly an inclusive event to celebrate our professional artists, and to celebrate our up and coming artists, and our students.

The adults with disabilities who participate in the workshops after the showcase, and at the showcase, are able to sell their crafts, if they want to, for their own income. Which is kind of nice, it's a time of pride for them.

>> Kalli Sorber (Student Project Director, artAbility): I definitely say, with the artists as participants, they get growth out of being with each other and they get growth out of learning new skills that they never thought they would be able to do. At the showcase they show off all of the work that they've done and they decide if they want to sell, they decide if they want to give it away or if they want to keep it as a memento of what they've accomplished. And I think it's a place for them to talk about what's going on in their lives and show people what they do on a daily basis versus other peoples' expectations of what they do. And they really get to show and express themselves.

For artAbility in the future I would definitely expect growth, or I would hope to expect growth and see more community members be able to be involved as far as being participants or new artists being involved as instructors and with the participants I really hope that more people are able to join us and maybe even having more than six workshops.

As funding as it is now, we can't. But I hope in the future it can be eight, ten, twelve workshops a year with as many students as possible.