**MWAC Summer Program Report**

**August 28, 2014**

Art Camp 2014 was a huge success. From July to August, the communities of Hamiota, Kenton, Miniota and Oak River were provided with alternating weeks of free, exciting art sessions for kids aged 5 to 13. White t-shirts were dipped in rainbow dye, leafy clay sculptures were molded, cave paintings were stenciled, collograph prints were produced, colour theory was introduced, Aboriginal art was explored, questions were discussed. Ranging from classic crafts to educational art direction, kids were presented with a diverse range of activities and projects. In Oak River, Kenton and Miniota, the local rinks proved great facilities to house art camp. In Hamiota, the MWAC building was used.

Dividing the day into three age groups (5-8, 9-12, 13+) worked very well. Having sessions of one to three hours maximum allowed kids to stay engaged and focussed on the activity. Occasionally, the session time extended the project length, resulting in kids finishing early and getting antsy. Having additional, varying projects prepared for each day dissolved this problem.

Reaching small communities was the program's mandate. Often, this meant very small class sizes. This situation was remedied by lumping sessions together, which had the advantage of siblings spanning age groups to work together, making it easier for parents to arrange drop offs and pick ups. Pre-registration aided in estimating class sizes, preparing supplies and communicating schedule changes. The calendar remained flexible for each community's needs. In Hamiota, the local day care Kid's Club also participated in the sessions and added to the class dynamics. Hamiota attendance was highest of the four towns averaging 20 kids a day. Having extra adult help available if needed proved extremely helpful on particularly busy days. Kenton was smallest, averaging 5 kids a day. Next year, community population should be accounted for when scheduling the length of the program and number of sessions.

Directing Art Camp with the MWAC was an challenging and fulfilling opportunity. I learned the responsibility of creating a program, advertising, gathering supplies and managing classroom. Working with existing frameworks of similar programs of past times, we conjured a program which would meet the unique, current needs of each community. It required creativity, energy and organization. Working with the MWAC let me share my personal passions and interests to kids, and gave a taste of what a career in teaching might be like. The best part of this job was being able to utilize my formal visual art education and to the small rural communities which have supported me, give back to them in an immediate, beneficial way.

The Canadian government loan allowed us to offer a quality, low-cost summer art program which gave kids of rural communities something to do over the summer, exposed them to formal art education, new techniques, and culture, encouraged participation in the arts, and fostered a sense of connectivity in the communities.

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