



February 2016

VSA Vermont uses the magic of the arts to engage the capabilities and enhance the confidence of children and adults with disabilities.

Expanding Our Work With Students With Emotional & Behavioral Challenges

For years, VSA Vermont has partnered with Howard Center's Baird School to integrate the arts into the learning process for students with severe emotional and behavioral challenges.

In Arts to Smarts, students have positive outcomes in confidence, social skills, and the ability to remain engaged in the classroom. This spring, thanks to generous grants from Jane's Trust and the Bay & Paul Foundation, VSA Vermont will expand Arts to Smarts to a statewide program. Having completed our five-week training and practicum, community artists will collaborate with teachers in engaging students with severe emotional and behavioral challenges in both independent and public schools.



To learn more about Arts to Smarts, visit [our website](#).

Why the funky coffee sleeve?

Last fall, VSA Vermont program participants, staff, volunteers, and partners contributed to a fun and funky project: unique, one-of-a-kind coffee sleeves. During the holiday season, customers of Shelburne Village Wine and Coffee of Shelburne, Scout Coffee of Winooski, Phoenix Books of Essex, and August First of Burlington had an extra kick in their morning joe with one of the pieces of handmade art!

About 1,000 creations were completed over the course of the project, and we have no plans of stopping any time soon. "We have received a great response so far from participants of the project, and plan to keep collecting and distributing these works of art over the course of 2017," said Heidi Swevens, VSA Vermont's Volunteer Coordinator.



"This project blends creative expression with community connection. Joy, laughter, and imagination were poured into the designs, but that is only part of the magic. We're thrilled that the art will connect with someone in the

community as well.”

As VSA Vermont, our mission is to use *the magic of the arts*, and what better way to celebrate VSA VT's 30th birthday than by spreading a little magic? “I'm so proud and grateful. So many people have made original art to help us celebrate our 30th anniversary. Now we get to give it away and thank our community for supporting the creative talents of Vermonters with disabilities,” said Judy Chalmer, VSA VT Executive Director.

If you'd like to learn about coffee sleeve decorating opportunities, [contact us](#).



Artwork on view at August First Bakery

Head to August First Bakery in Burlington for an extra treat! Artwork will be on display from VSA Vermont's latest photography class. The exhibit, "How We See Things: An Photography Show," has traveled from Burlington Public Library, to Penny Cluse, and will now remain at August First through February 28. For information on hours and their menu, visit [the August First Facebook Page](#).



See VSA VT's Mentoring Program First-Hand

Beginning in the 2015-16 school year, with the help of many wonderful community arts partners, we began matching high school students with community mentors who also have disabilities to participate in the arts together. Now in its second year, this unique program supports youth and adults in exploring and pursuing their creative interests, while providing valuable role modeling for the young person, and introducing them to local arts and cultural venues. Pairs have pursued interests as varied as pottery, costume design, plaster casting, poetry, and music – there are no limits to arts activity types, and no arts experience is required, just an interest in trying!

No experience in the arts is needed to be a mentor. We're currently looking for adults that have an hour per week available and would like to make a difference in the life of a young person. If this sounds like you, [visit our website](#) and check out the videos!



Help [VSA VT](#) keep great opportunities coming. Donate online at [PayPal](#)!

VSA Vermont is a member of the VSA Affiliate Network,
a program of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

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VSA Vermont
21 Carmichael Street, Suite 206
Essex Junction, Vermont 05452
US

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