



January 15, 2016

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



## Start With The Arts to add Family Engagement to our Award-winning Program

We're so proud of Start With The Arts childcare providers, Erica Brooks, Erin McKechnie, Nancy Munn, and Linda Sweeney, and Start With The Arts teaching-artists, Cheryl Wells (pictured at left) and Lisa Condino (pictured below right), who used skills learned in Facilitative Leadership training and from their participation in Start With The Arts to help us design a new professional development opportunity for childcare providers.

Along with VSA Vermont's Director of Children's Programming, Peggy Rainville, and VSA Vermont's Executive Director, the team has created a professional development model intended for childcare providers who have graduated from Start With The Arts in engaging families in arts-based literacy activities. As some of the participating childcare providers said, *"I'm closer to my families. The trust is on a different level. I moved out of my comfort zone and I'm problem solving with parents...I think I can tackle almost anything. Hand me something. With a little support I can do it."*



Many thanks to the A.D. Henderson Foundation for supporting the development of this new project to increase family-child engagement in arts-based literacy.



## Training Model for Teaching-artists interested in working with Students with Severe Emotional Challenges

VSA Vermont is pleased to announce the receipt of a \$50,000 grant from Jane's Trust to develop a training model for teaching-artists who are interested in successfully engaging students with severe behavioral and emotional challenges.

Based on three years' success by VSA Vermont teaching-artist Lisa Condino in supporting student engagement through the arts at the Howard Center's Baird School, VSA Vermont's staff will partner with faculty and administrators at Baird to develop and pilot a training model for use by teaching-artists in classroom collaborations at both public and independent schools.



The long term goal for this project is to increase opportunities statewide for more students with behavioral and emotional challenges across Vermont to grow confidence in learning, social interactions and creative joy.

For more information, please write Heidi Swevens: [heidi@vsavt.org](mailto:heidi@vsavt.org)

*At VSA Vermont, Art Beats For All!*

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