





art camp *in* Fashion

at Mount Mary College

MOUNT MARY COLLEGE has built a reputation as a leader in art education. Each year, the College offers that leadership to our area's next generation of artists. From mid-June to mid-July, Mount Mary's Art and Design Division hosts multiple, unique art classes for youth in grades K-12. This summer, the College will again be offering two unique co-ed camps for youth on its campus: Creative Connections and Fashion Boot Camp.

■ by Mary Murphy

Celebrating its 30th year, Creative Connections (formerly Art for Youth) provides opportunities for students in grades K-12 to learn how the many pieces of art connect to all aspects of our lives. Every year the wide variety of workshops engage youth in a range of art experiences making connections to literature,

history, math and science and the world at large. Morning and afternoon sessions are available and include drawing, painting, print making, ceramics, mixed media, sculpture and wearable art. New this year is an art-intensive workshop series for high school students called Studio Studies. On-site visits to some of Milwaukee's treasured landmarks, such as the Mitchell Park Domes and the Pabst Mansion, will serve as inspiration for studio experiences. Immersed in art making at a higher level, professional artists/instructors from the Mount Mary art department will guide participants through a variety of media as they discover their own creative process. The participants will take a trip to the artists' studios and show their work at a culminating exhibit at a

ART CAMP

Milwaukee landmark, such as the Domes.

Creative Connections was implemented in the summer of 1981 under the leadership of Sister Rosemarita Huebner, SSND. With a background in education, she saw the value not only to the young students, but for Mount Mary College as well. The majority of the instructors are professional art educators who work or are enrolled in the art education department at Mount Mary College.

In 2004, the leadership of the program was passed on to Deb Heermans—an alumna of the College and current chair of the art education department. She received her master's degree in art education from the University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee.

Although the integrity and vision of the program has remained the same, some new changes were put into place. First, a general theme was created to unify all of the classes and a culminating exhibition was held at the conclusion of the entire program. The goal was to share what the children learned with parents and friends, while opening the doors to new guests of the College. The annual tradition has grown to such a scope that parents plan their vacations around the exhibition reception and total guests to this one event has exceeded 400 people in the past few years.

In 2005, a kindergarten class was introduced into the program after seeing an opportunity to reach out to this untapped grade level. Most of the other art camps in the area start at first grade.

“What also sets us apart is the interdisciplinary component,” said Heermans. “With the cutbacks of the arts from many school programs today, Mount Mary can play an important role as a leader in providing art education for future generations through our art outreach programs.”

While music and theater have been program influences in the past, a dance component may be introduced this summer.

According to Heermans, the main focus is on the visual arts. “Our culminating experience is a gallery show,” she said.

With parents, siblings, grandparents and

neighbors in attendance, the gallery show is an occasion for the kids to celebrate what they've learned.

“The prestige of having your work exhibited in a gallery is an honor and it showcases the educational component we're achieving through this program,” said Heermans. “The children develop a sense of confidence and pride in what they've created, as well as who they are.”

Through this program, Heermans hopes to further strengthen Mount Mary's presence and connections to the community. One year, the program included a music theme and the gallery show was held at a local music store, Beihoff Music. Another year, they collaborated with a book illustrator and author and the gallery night was held at Barnes & Noble at Mayfair.

In 2011, the program will focus on the theme: Pieces of Art. “Here students will explore the world, engage in the creative process and express themselves through art,” added Heermans.

Under her supervision of the art education program, Heermans includes Mount Mary students in the camp experience.

“Each year, our students work hands-on with the camp participants before doing their student-teaching,” she said, adding that it has been a great learning tool for her students as they bring fresh ideas to the program. Integrating the art education students into the program also helps to keep camp costs reasonable.

According to Heermans, the one selling point to Mount Mary's program: children need to be exposed to art earlier.

“Art is so important to the development of a child. It's not about making pretty pictures. It's learning how to be effective problem-solvers and engaged creative thinkers: two important components to being a leader,” she said.

A portion of the money generated from program enrollment goes toward scholarship funding for students in the art department.

This summer will be the fourth year Brookfield resident Greg Wucherer has enrolled his daughters, Miranda, Abby, and McKenna, in the Creative Connections program. Miranda, age 11, looks forward to

the camp experience every year: It's inspiring, it's fun, and you get to use your imagination and be creative,” she said.

Her father, Greg, echoed her feelings about the program. “What a great way to start the summer for my daughters.”

The Fashion Boot Camp, in its third year, brings together high school students who share an interest in fashion and design. Participants spend two weeks working directly with fashion industry experts learning fashion illustration and how to design and sew their own garment. This year, the camp's reach may include design and construction elements, but also merchandising.

“I am really excited about the classes we are offering for Fashion Boot Camp. Creative Draping and Fashion Styling have been added to our line up so there are many choices. In conversation about the upcoming camp, one graduating fashion student said she wished she could have attended Boot Camp. She felt she would have had a more confident start as a new freshman with that experience,” said Sandra Tonz, Director of the Fashion Boot Camp.

The first Fashion Boot Camp was held in 2009. That year, Megan Baker was accepted in the Fashion program at Mount Mary. A graduate of Martin Luther High School in Milwaukee, Baker wanted a campus experience before the beginning of the fall semester.

“Martin Luther offers home economic class for sewing, but it's not fashion driven,” said Baker. “I got that drive on my own. My parents bought me a sewing machine at 13. A lot of the stuff I made was experimental,” she explained.

Baker read a biography on Vera Wang in high school. According to Baker, Wang is her favorite designer. “Vera Wang knew she liked fashion, but wasn't sure how to find her place in the fashion industry. I felt the same way. I liked her clothes and I drew inspiration from her and her similar experience,” said Baker.

With more than two dozen students in the program that first year, Baker enjoyed the small sessions with an emphasis on sewing and design elements.

“We went over the basics of the sewing machine, learned how to construct seams,” she

ART CAMP

said. With a design idea in mind, they took a trip to JoAnn's and picked out their fabric right away. Morning sessions were spent constructing a garment and afternoons were spent learning basic figure drawing.

Each student made a skirt that they wore in a fashion show on last day of camp. The informal fashion show took place in the hall as the students showed off their work in front of family and friends.

In addition, workshops in jewelry making and painting were offered to the participants throughout the camp.

Baker chose jewelry making, since she was more interested in fashion than the art or painting aspect.

The theme of the jewelry construction included objects found in everyday life. "I made a key bracelet and a button necklace," said Baker, adding that the idea was to create using random things around the house.

"The instructor was just trying to show you how to make jewelry inexpensively," she added.

Currently, Baker is a sophomore majoring in Apparel Product Development (APD), which focuses on apparel construction, pattern making, drawing and design, as well as the necessary principles of business in the fashion industry.

As for her experience in the Fashion Boot Camp: "I think it was a good trial run. It was the first time someone showed me pattern manipulation."

She encourages others with an interest in the fashion industry to enroll in the camp to determine whether or not they will pursue a degree.

When asked if she will head for the fashion scene in New York City after graduation, Baker said she'd prefer to stay in the Midwest.

"I still working on my goals, but I'd like to stay a little closer to home, maybe Chicago," she said. "I really love all fashion, but ultimately my goal would be to design woman's clothing."

Her family has been a tremendous

support. "They're behind me 100%. I'm lucky in that way," said Baker. She credits her grandmother and several great aunts for this inspiration to design clothing.

"I really like Mount Mary. It's a really good family community. Everyone supports each other." Megan Baker is a good example of a successful start in Mount Mary's Fashion Program.

For more information on the 2011 summer youth camps: Creative Connections and the Fashion Boot Camp, please call 414-258-4810 or visit the Mount Mary College web site at www.mtmary.edu