

CIF FEATURE STORY:

iMAGine Arts Visual Arts Education Program



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Feature Story: *iMAGine Arts Visual Arts Education Program, Mann Art Gallery*

The [Mann Art Gallery](#) is the only professional public art gallery in Prince Albert and the surrounding area. Designing and delivering a professional quality, diverse, relevant, and robust Art Education Program is one of the three core ways the Gallery fulfills its mandate and serves its city and region. Its mandate is to bridge art and community through excellence in art. The iMAGine Arts Visual Art Education Program is one of the fundamental ways through which the gallery achieves its mission: **"to engage and facilitate the development, presentation, and preservation of the visual arts in a diverse and inclusive community."**

"Crucial project-based funding from granting organizations like the Community Initiatives Fund has enabled iMAGine Arts to engage over 3,500 participants per year in high-quality art education in our 10 program categories, designed to provide access to professional art, artists, and art-making opportunities regardless of age, ability, financial standing, family situation, or social status," shares Lana Wilson, Gallery Educator. **"CIF grant funding enables the Gallery Educator position to exist to provide both long-term, ongoing, and on-demand programs for the entire community. In 2016 we delivered a record-breaking 237 education activities to 3,853 participants. Our programs are in high demand and we regularly receive new requests from school and community groups."**

"Art is about life - it is a way we can communicate about the ideas, colours, shapes, people, places, events, times, emotions, and the world around us." iMAGine Arts programs help people engage with visual art and artists on many different levels. iMAGine Arts takes place continuously throughout the year. Each person is empowered to express their creativity, emotions, ideas, and identity through art, as the majority of programs include a hands-on art making activity using professional quality tools and materials.

The iMAGine Arts programs reach a wide range of participants of all ages and abilities. **"School classes of children from pre-K to post-secondary students visit with their teachers; we visit seniors in long-term care homes; youth who are justice-system involved and youth with disabilities visit us for classes, tours, and activities; amateur and professional artists in our community attend our Professional Development workshops; families make art together during Free Family Art Days. We are committed to reaching out to help as many people access visual arts education opportunities as possible, and delivering our programs at low cost to participants so financial situation is not a barrier for school students, community organization participants, or the general public,"** shares Lana.

"Every program we see children and adults grow in curiosity and excitement as they learn about art and experience art making, especially when they express themselves through art in a way they have never tried before," shares Lana. The personal growth of each individual participant is the key indicator of the ultimate success of the iMAGine Arts programs.

"The Children's Art Camp program offers half-day camps for children ages 7 – 12 in week-long blocks during school breaks. Children, youth, and their parents appreciate the art experiences we provide. Parents report that their children have increased confidence and pride in their art abilities, find the programs stimulating and enjoyable, and after each camp day or Art Abilities program, they excitedly report on what they learned, did, and made. Our participants are proud that they are learning technical as well as life skills during our fun projects. A new art camper Greyson, 7, exclaimed after learning to thread a needle and sew the running stitch for the very first time, **"now I know how to sew for the rest of my life!"** He went on to embroider and bead a fabric wall hanging with images of 7 star constellations, in a single morning. He now knows the story behind the Perseus constellation, too. Greyson told us several weeks later that he has regularly been sewing with his grandma as it is an activity they both now love to do."



The Mann Art Gallery Tent & Education Program Staff help children paint during a free activity in the park on National Aboriginal Day 2016.



A grade 7 class paints family portraits in the style of local artist Leah Dorion during a Gallery Tour Activity Program at the gallery.



Xavier shows off his sculptural ornaments at a Free Family Art Day.

Photo credit: Mann Art Gallery