

# Student Art Exchange

## *From this Desert to that Desert*

By Linda Hiatt-Neely

The special education class at Grand Junction High School has been participating in a cultural art exchange with students from Morocco. The high school students have studied local geography and then created oil pastel drawings of the Colorado National Monument and Mount Garfield. Because Morocco has similar landforms to Grand Junction, the landforms, mountains and valleys were one of the connections between the students.

I planned the unit while studying for my master's degree through Lesley University. The exchange was facilitated with the aide of Flying Art. Flying Art is a non-profit organization that facilitates international exchange of art among youth. In addition to the art exchange, the students exchanged letters that were translated by Flying Art into Arabic and English. Marilyn Meyers, the special education teacher, myself, a stained glass artist, and the instructional assistants assisted the GJHS students while they created a mosaic glass globe featuring the United States and Morocco. The students hope to auction the globe and art to raise funds for their school programs in the community.

As a music integration, the students have been practicing Moroccan drum beats with rhythm sticks. They will perform a small sample at an art show reception at The Blue Pig Gallery at 119 East 3rd Street in Palisade on May 25 from 5-7pm. The gallery has generously donated space for the exhibit of both the Moroccan and local art. We would like the community to show their support by attending the reception. The students have made invitations and planned snacks for the reception in the cooking portion of their curriculum.

The students would appreciate the support of the community by attending the reception. For further information, contact: Linda Hiatt-Neely, rneely@bresnan.net, 970-243-0362



## **Autism Information Resources**

On behalf of the Autism Subcommittee of the Council on Children with Disabilities, please note the current American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) autism resources for health care professionals and parents. Find more information about these items as well as additional resources at: <http://medicalhomeinfo.org/about/cocwd/autism.aspx>. Be sure to check out the sneak preview of the autism toolkit contents - only for AAP members (see below)

**Sound Advice on Autism** - The AAP has developed a series of audio interviews with medical experts and parents of children with autism who answer parents' frequently asked questions. Conversations include: screening, diagnosis, treatment, alternative therapies, prevalence and causes of autism.

**AUTISM: Caring for Children with Autism Spectrum**

**Disorders: A Resource Toolkit for Clinicians** - A clinical resource (on CD-ROM) to assist in the recognition, evaluation, and ongoing management of ASDs.

**Understanding Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASDs)** - This booklet provides critical information about ASDs and answers parents' most common questions. This booklet will help to identify ASD symptoms so that an intervention program can be started as soon as possible.

**Is Your One-Year Old Communicating with You?** - This brochure encourages parents to share any concerns about their baby's language development with their pediatrician as early as possible. It also provides early language and social milestones checklists.

## Interesting Art Exhibit at Mesa County Public Library



For more than five years, The Western Colorado Center for the Arts and MDS have partnered for twice a month art classes for people with disabilities taught by Rachel Eggleston and underwritten by Mark Saro and Unishape. Beginning May 6th, an assortment of art work created during

these classes will be on display at the Mesa County Public Library, 530 Grand Avenue, on the second level. The exhibit will continue through June 3rd.

The work is representative of the variety of styles participants have learned in the classes, including the publicized Pollack Project. Named after abstract artist Jackson Pollack, the project took place in the parking lot of the Art Center. It was covered in canvas and several people contributed to the design, including people using wheelchairs, who "rolled" their designs on to the canvas with adaptive stencils and textures attached to their wheelchairs.



The exhibit is free and open to the public.

## Attention Parents, Guardians and Host-Home Providers:

### *Feeling Out of the Loop?*

### **Therap is your answer!**



You can get information about your loved one receiving services from any provider in Mesa County and for people on the wait list, and you can do it when it is convenient for you by using Therap, a secure online documentation and software system for providers supporting people with developmental disabilities and their parents/guardians. You may gain access to Therap by clicking on the Therap Access Privileges display bar on the home page of [www.mesadev.org](http://www.mesadev.org).

If you need assistance, please contact your case manager or Nikki Benning in Human Resources at Mesa Developmental Services, 256-8625. Nikki can assist you or you may want to sit in on one of her existing training sessions on Therap that Nikki teaches for all new employees.

## Partnership with Housing Resources of Western Colorado Offers Integrated Classes

MDS offers a variety of transitional services either through the Supported Living Program, Family Support Services, or by private pay. Services are called In College for Living and include classes independent living skills, educational and recreational opportunities, and vocational opportunities.

Housing Resources of Western Colorado recently opened a Community Building/Learning Lab behind Garden Village

Apartments on Teller Avenue by Teller Arms Shopping Center. Sherry Price, VP of Individualized Community Supports at MDS, attended their Grand Opening to check on the potential of using this space for MDS classes. Not only did the site offer great classroom space but Sherry learned that plans included adding a full kitchen that was put on hold due to lack of available funding. Through a collaboration between the two nonprofits, the Learning Lab now has a

fully equipped kitchen. MDS is currently offering computer and cooking classes from this site. Both organizations have opened their class offerings and social/recreational activities up to residents of Garden Village Apartments, a low income housing complex, and other interested community members.

For further information on transitional classes and other related programs, contact Sharon Chamberlain at 256-8687.