

Art for Auction

VSA Alabama uses art to change lives.

By Dana Jaffe

Since VSA Alabama's development in 1984, the nonprofit organization has served thousands of children and adults with disabilities and chronic illnesses through its arts programming.

The Ninth Annual ArtPartners Live Auction and Showcase, which will take place on Aug. 21 at B & A Warehouse, is VSA Alabama's largest fundraising effort and has become a vital part in helping its 65-plus programs continue to flourish year after year. As a recipient of the 2011 VSA National Award of Excellence in Innovative Programming, VSA Alabama wants to keep the momentum going more than ever and aims to raise \$90,000 in proceeds at this event to benefit arts programming.

The work being auctioned has been created by participants of VSA's largest program, ArtPartners, an arts-mentoring program that pairs emerging artists with disabilities and chronic illnesses with volunteer community artists. The program brings two creative minds together in a studio environment to create collaborative masterpieces.

"VSA Alabama believes that we each have something to offer and that by working collaboratively, we can find our common voice and create a vision that reflects two individuals in one artwork. At ArtPartners, artistic skills are explored, meaningful relationships are developed and memories are created with every partnership," says VSA Alabama Program Coordinator Sarah Margaret Wade.

The auction celebrates the culmination of another year of ArtPartners studio sessions and showcases the work created by this year's participants. The event is comprised of a live auction and silent auction featuring more than 150 collaborative pieces, approximately 25 to 30 of which have been selected for the live auction.

The showcase includes wire sculptures,



Emerging Artist Ryan Steeley and Community Artist Michael Dudley at the 2010 ArtPartners event; Junior Patron Amanda Weil; ArtPartners 2010; Community Artist Beverly Carroway with Emerging Artist Kelsi Moore in studio; Community Artist Megan Kimber with Emerging Artist Marissa Oliver.

photography, collages, mosaics and a large selection of canvas paintings with themes ranging from landscapes and portraits to fantasy and abstract.

"The variety of artwork exists because each emerging and community artist brings their own unique ideas, artistic style, personality and creativity to each session," Wade says. "Each piece has its own story, so it's neat to look at all of the work together at the auction and think about all of the individual stories and partnerships that are behind it, and to watch the sense of pride and accomplishment participants get from seeing their work on display."

Event begins with silent auction and hors d'oeuvres at 5:30 p.m., and the live auction starts at 6:30 p.m. Call (205) 307-6300 or visit vsaalabama.org for more information and to buy tickets. ●