

Collaborative Community Art Project

In partnership with Black Hills Special Services Cooperative, Local Artists Cary Thrall and Jay Pond, 21st Century Programs in Rapid City and Belle Fourche, and the SD Statewide Family Engagement Center



COMMUNITY-BASED ART OFFERS MANY BENEFITS TO PEOPLE AND THEIR COMMUNITIES INCLUDING:

- Increased personal growth (i.e. creative skills, self-awareness);
- Expanded understanding and appreciation of diversity;
- Improved community identity and pride; and
- Enhanced beautification and economic boost.

Despite these benefits, funding for art initiatives is often cut from budgets across settings.

The Collaborative Community Art Project sought to tap into the power of art and relationships to support three South Dakota communities to foster stronger networks and improved reciprocal understanding amongst participants.

Artists, Cary Thrall and Jay Pond, together with Education Leader Dr. Pam Lange, led the project in the communities of Lower Brule, Rapid City (General Beadle Elementary), and Belle Fourche.



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THE IMPACT

The **Collaborative Community Art Project** succeeded at helping participants see the possibilities inherent in each community, its members, and art, as a vehicle for change. At the end of each project, participant's self-efficacy increased as they recognized their contributions to the amazing art they helped create. The hope is for participants and their communities to thrive from the opportunity they experienced through creating and connecting throughout the Collaborative Community Art Projects. As artist Jay Pond reflects, "The seeds have been planted."



BELLE FOURCHE, SD 21ST CENTURY PROGRAMS (ELEMENTARY/MIDDLE SCHOOL)

- **Collaborative Artists:** Cary Thrall and Jay Pond
- **Participants:** 40 (stakeholders, community members, artist assistants, etc.)
- **Art Mediums:** Fabric, Fence, Repurposed Material
- **Additional Learning:** Interdisciplinary Lessons on Culture, Art, and Self-Awareness

Participants learned how to bring their vision to life in just one week using a creative process. The art at the fence offered opportunities to have meaningful conversations that deepened connections and reciprocal understanding. The final artifact is a visual representation of the power of effective communication, relationships, and art.

RAPID CITY, SD 21ST CENTURY PROGRAM: GENERAL BEADLE ELEMENTARY (RAPID CITY, SD)

- **Main Artist:** Jay Pond
- **Participants:** 41 (students, staff, families, stakeholders, artist assistants, etc.)
- **Art Mediums:** Rock, Wood
- **Additional Learning:** Yoga and Art Classes

Participants experienced how art, yoga, and community engagement are intertwined and how they can be a part of that experience. Youth involved will have continued points of connection to the art anytime they walk by it, giving them a sense of agency, recognition, and ownership.



LESSONS LEARNED

- Flexibility and creativity are assets for best and greater impact.
- Simplicity is a critical element in ensuring quality of the final art product.
- Language is essential when collaboration is a key component of the project.

Project funded through a grant with the South Dakota Community Foundation, 21st Century Programs, and the South Dakota Statewide Family Engagement Center.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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