

breaking ground

2022 ANNUAL
ARTS ISSUE



breaking ground



On The Cover: Kaylea Dunkin and Keonna Reed joined Shackled Feet DANCE! for a truly inclusive performance of locally composed opera *Steal Away*. Read more on pg. 10. Photos by Tiffany Bessire, courtesy of OZ Arts Nashville



2



4



14

TABLE OF CONTENTS

My Hands Are My Eyes	2
The Shadows of Castille de Magnus	3
Let's MOVE!	4
Fine Art	6-9
<i>Steal Away</i>	10
Fine Art	12-13
Bringing Theatre to All	14
Honest Directions for Wheelchair Users	15
Inspired by the Masters	16
Conquering the Beyond	17





Welcome to the 2022 Arts Issue of *Breaking Ground* magazine!

Dear readers,

It is an honor for me to write this first note in *Breaking Ground* as the Council's new Executive Director. With Wanda Willis' retirement, our team is starting a new chapter together. A few highlights from the year, thus far, have been a staff retreat that allowed our team to reset together, our February Council meeting when we welcomed three new Governor-appointed members, and bringing on an intern from the Vanderbilt Next Steps inclusive higher education program. We are excited about the future.

As you may know from reading this magazine, the Council created a new 5-year state plan that begins this year. That plan lays out our big-picture goals and how we will meet them between now and 2026. It is based on public input from across Tennessee – your input.

Your input will continue to influence our work as we put the new plan into practice. Please connect with us by replying to our newsletters, connecting with us on social media, or calling our office: 615-532-6615. We can connect you with our members in your communities, too. Together, it's our job to solve problems and celebrate what's going right in Tennessee's disability community.

The annual *Breaking Ground* arts issue is one way we celebrate our community. Every year, we are blown away by the submissions. To me, it's the truest window into our community – the way we can see each other exactly how we are inside. Too often in our community, differences in outside expression become barriers. Art shows that our differences are beautiful.

We hope you enjoy these works of art as much as we do. Let us know!

—Lauren Percy, Executive Director, Tennessee Council on Developmental Disabilities



TN Arts Commission

The year 2021 was filled with ongoing changes and surprises as we continued to live through a worldwide pandemic. Organizations that serve people with disabilities have risen above numerous challenges to reach people virtually so they can continue to experience and enjoy the arts. To accomplish this, many organizations had to rethink their use of technology to provide virtual programming. Though there were challenges, technology has proven itself as a helpful tool in reaching existing audiences, expanding audiences, and broadening the pool of artists that provide programming. For some organizations, technology helped reach across geographic and physical boundaries to allow more people to participate in arts activities.

We also saw how powerful the arts could be as a tool in helping people cope with physical and mental health-related issues with a pandemic. Many organizations found ways to address these issues by using arts programming to help people stay connected to their creativity, reduce isolation, and keep engaged in the world. To assist organizations in doing this, the Tennessee Arts Commission allowed flexibility in funding for groups to move to virtual programming. We opened grants to support creative responses to COVID-19 through the arts. And we distributed federal funding to arts organizations. We wanted to make sure that our work changed to meet the needs of people and nonprofits throughout Tennessee during the pandemic.

Again, we are grateful for this partnership with the Tennessee Council on Developmental Disabilities and Borderless Arts Tennessee as we work together to reach people with disabilities. We look forward to moving forward in service to people in Tennessee.

—Kim Johnson, Director of Arts Access, Tennessee Arts Commission



Borderless Arts Tennessee

Borderless Arts Tennessee is honored to be a part of the arts edition of *Breaking Ground*. The arts provide a way for us to communicate our dreams. Communicating our dreams provides a path to pursuing our dreams. Pursuing our dreams leads to places beyond barriers and boundaries. We become borderless.

Thank you, *Breaking Ground*, for this opportunity for creating a place where the communication of dreams may begin.

—Lori Kissinger, Borderless Arts Tennessee

My Hands Are My Eyes

By Tracy Bettencourt, Owner/Artist of Bettencourt Originals

My name is Tracy Bettencourt. I am a professional artist and owner of Bettencourt Originals. In my early 30s, I began to lose my eyesight from an eye disease called Retinitis Pigmentosa. I am now blind. Within the past five years, I began painting using my hands.

I use assistive technology on my iPhone and iPad to identify colors. The paints I use are textured acrylic and forms of puffy paint. My hands are my eyes, and the puffy paint I use allows me to convey my thoughts and feelings onto canvas using tactile lines. I feel that I bring new insight to how art is viewed.

Every day I wake up and live in darkness, yet with my newfound skill of painting, I am able to share my unique perception of the world around me. Painting allows me to convey the unseen beauty of life. My works reflect hope, adversity, love, positivity, strength, and determination. I put my heart, soul, and insight into every piece of artwork. In addition to teaching private workshops, I teach painting at Artlink Clarksville (with 30% of the proceeds from those classes going back to benefit this great non-profit arts organization).

There will always be a mountain to climb. Yet I strongly feel that no matter what the obstacle, there is light within darkness and therefore, there is hope. ■

Tracy Bettencourt, owner/artist of Bettencourt Originals, is an advocate for people with disabilities, former fitness competitor, motivational speaker, and APSU alumni. View her work on her Facebook page at www.facebook.com/nuinsight2014. You can contact her at tbettencourt2014@gmail.com.



Spring Snow by Tracy Bettencourt

Journey by Tracy Bettencourt

The Shadows of Castille de Magnus

Short Story by Josecarlos Fumero

CONTENT WARNING: *This story contains mild language and descriptions of violence.*

I woke up in my master's castle, drowsy and sleepy. So I walked through the dining room to the kitchen for a glass of water for my dry throat. But when I walked back to my room, there was a loud crash. I ran to check what crashed through the stained-glass window. It was like a wolf, but bigger. The arms were thin but strong, legs as large as a spear, and its face was covered in a blood-like drool. The thing saw me, and I ran as fast as I could to my room, while the shag furred beast was running behind me.

As soon as the door closed on it, the beast let out a booming howl as loud as a cannon shot in war. My heart slowed down. I was relieved for sure. Later, I walked throughout my room and noticed a letter on the table, picked it up and started to read it.

"Dear Jonathan, I know you will be asleep when I finish my letter, but I need you to get out as soon as you can because they are coming. I already sent my men and servants to a safe location here in Greece. There is a secret passageway in the castle. Use it as you wish and may the gods help you. Sincerely, Lord Magnus."

"What the hell?" I asked myself.

As soon as I finished the letter, I heard another howl, another and another out the window. I saw five or maybe more of those wolf-like freaks. They were entering the castle. I thought to myself, maybe they're entering here for a feeding ground or a place to rest. I waited for those things to enter to attempt my escape. Five minutes later, they were in. The beasts were feast-

ing on the leftovers of the dining room while I escaped the castle underground. I supposed this was the passage my lord was speaking about. "This is it, my salvation," I happily smiled to myself.

I climbed out of the cave and ran towards the village, but when I ran, I felt something bite at my leg. And there one of those things was, biting at my leg with powerful jaws and strong fangs, penetrating my fragile skin.

I screamed out loud as its teeth began to tear my leg apart. I tried to kick it in the face as hard as I could, but it didn't work. I noticed a small knife on the ground. I grabbed it and jammed it into the creature's left eye. It howled in pain as it let go of my bloody leg. It removed the sanguine knife from its eye and ran away. I sighed in relief. I limped rapidly while I gritted my teeth in pain, as the others were starting to smell the blood on my leg. I hid myself in a dark forest, hiding my pain from the "wolves" that were hunting me down. The beasts were smelling the air, their breaths visible in the cold air. In disappointment, the pack walked away.

In relief, I slowly crawled towards an opening in the woods and made my way out. A group of men were in a carriage traveling the mountainside. I jumped into view, and they stopped to check on me. "What were you doing, little man?" said the captain of the group.

"Are you ok?" said the other.

I explained to them as I went into the carriage everything that had happened. "Wow, so you were running away from hungry lycans.

What a brave little soul," cheerly said the medic, as he added ointments and medications to my injured leg.

"Yeah," I shyly expressed myself.

"Thank the lord you weren't on Zeus' hitlist!" the guard laughed. The carriage started up as the horses began to walk towards their destination.

A few months later, we were arriving to Athens. I looked happily towards the bustling town, filled with people doing their everyday activities. But when I looked at them, I felt my hunger growing on the inside, and my eyes slowly turning yellow.

"Hey, you ok?" asked one of the men.

"Yeah, I'll be fine," I said back to him.

"Oh, good, you need to rest, but we'll book you a visit to a nearby house, ok?"

"Yeah, thanks," I said. The people from the carriage moved towards the town.

Still, I felt my fingers slowly turning into claws, and my hunger growing.

I feel...hungry.

My name is Josecarlos Fumero. I am 19 years old. I have autism and was diagnosed at 5 years. I finished high school, and then I moved to Nashville from Puerto Rico last year with my mom and my grandma. They are my support. This is the first short story I wrote when I took a workshop with Mrs. Blair. I never thought I could have the talent to do this. Then I posted it on the Reddit app and received a lot of good comments and I felt so happy. I wrote three more stories until the workshop ended. It was the best workshop ever.

Let's MOVE!

By Lauren Beasley Morris,
Founder and Executive Director,
MOVE Inclusive Dance

MOVE Inclusive Dance is a dance program for people of all abilities in Nashville and Franklin, TN. Our mission is to empower people of all ability levels to learn life skills through movement. Our dance classes at MOVE Inclusive Dance use music and movement to transform students' lives while providing a warm, inviting environment for all.

MOVE Inclusive Dance offers a variety of classes for all ages. Some types of classes include "Groovy Moves," "Creative Movement," and "Ballet/Lyrical." These classes focus on different aspects of dance such as choreography, ballet, and/or technique. Each class is tailored to what each individual student needs.

Meet Hallan!

Hallan has been a part of the MOVE Inclusive Dance community since early 2021. Since starting, she has opened up and allowed her personality to show through more each week. She is an incredibly sweet and loving student who always has a positive attitude. Hallan is gentle and always wants to hug others in class around



Hallan has grown in confidence and met new goals through her time at MOVE Inclusive Dance.



Dance student Saniya Rose (front) and volunteers perform a ribbon dance at a 2021 Recital at the Zoo.

her. As time has passed, Hallan has become more comfortable with dancing and interacting with others more, and dancing bigger than ever. Hallan is in the "Creative Movement" class every Saturday. She began dancing with her mother, Payton, but has now transitioned to dancing with a volunteer called a "dance buddy."

We asked her mother, Payton, a few questions about how MOVE Inclusive Dance has impacted Hallan:

"Due to COVID-19, Hallan had been without social interaction outside our home for over a year. Her dad and I were starting to see her withdraw. We were very worried about how the lack of interactions would affect her. After a search for special needs activities and groups, I found MOVE Inclusive Dance. She was very shy and slow to warm up to at first, but now she really enjoys our Saturday mornings in dance class. She has peers to interact with and loves her class, the dance room,

and the instructors. Hallan now asks to give a big hug to her dance partner and instructor after every class (sometimes before and during class too)," Payton said.

We asked Payton if she has seen any specific changes in Hallan since attending MOVE Inclusive Dance. She responded: "Hallan has developed a joy for music and movement. She now wants to listen to



Sisters Christina and Qing Quing participate together at MOVE Inclusive Dance.

different types of music. When she hears a favorite song, she wants to hold hands, spin in a circle, and jump along. Her favorite dance partner is her little brother. Hallan has also started listening for rhythmic patterns. She will clap, tap, and nod her head along to the pattern."

We asked if Hallan has met any goals during her time at MOVE Inclusive Dance. "Hallan has been able to improve her attention span, level of focus, retention, and social interaction skills since attending MOVE. Hallan has progressed in her physical therapy goals, too. Her therapists have been impressed by her ability to follow the exercises and willingness to try."

Hallan has been a wonderful asset to the MOVE family. We have seen her grow and flourish into a young girl with added confidence and increased social interaction skills. We can't wait to see what Hallan accomplishes next!

Feeling ready to dance?

Check out our website at www.moveinclusivedance.com to find the location and class right for you! Email Lauren Morris at lauren@moveinclusivedance.com with any questions you may have. Don't forget to check out our Facebook and Instagram pages too: [@moveinclusivedance!](https://www.instagram.com/moveinclusivedance/) ■



Dancer Rachel and volunteer Morgan wait to perform at the 2021 Recital at the Zoo.

All-Access Inclusion Network

**By Blaire Donnelly-Mason, Program Manager,
Treatment and Research Institute for Autism Spectrum Disorders (TRIAD)**

The All-Access Inclusion Network (AAIN) is a network of arts, education, athletic, and entertainment organizations. The network promotes awareness, accessibility, and true inclusion of people with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) and other intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) and their families.

The AAIN supports members of the network through consulting, helping organizations develop goals and inclusive supports, and training staff. Our arts organization partners have created many social supports (i.e., social stories, story boards, tip sheets, and modified maps) to make environments more predictable. That can affect whether a person has a positive or successful visit to their organizations. By having these kinds of supports, they communicate to

their community that all people are valued and can be included.

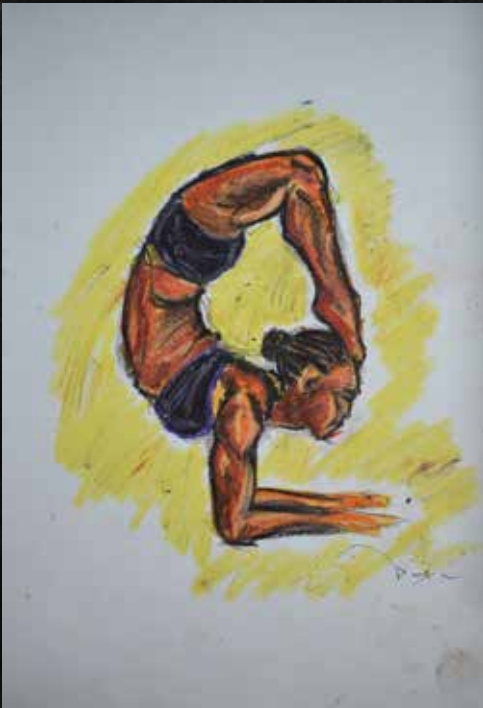
Families and caregivers can visit AAIN partners and know the staff have completed trainings on making their organization more understanding and welcoming to the entire community they serve, including people with disabilities. AAIN partners are creating a culture shift within their organization that values and respects neurodiversity. They work towards that culture shift in lots of ways, including:

- Creating social supports
- Inclusive hiring practices
- Training their staff
- Making changes to make physical spaces more accessible, sensory-friendly, and welcoming
- Asking for ongoing feedback from visitors with disabilities and families

Many community organizations want to be more inclusive, but they don't know where or how to start. An open conversation with community members is a great way to learn about the needs of the community. The AAIN has online trainings that are available to all community organizations and community members. These trainings can help interested organizations learn more about neurodiversity and first steps to shifting the culture at an organization to be more inclusive.

For those interested in learning more, the AAIN website (<https://vkc.vumc.org/vkc/triad/cei-AAIN/>) is a great place to start. We also encourage reaching out to the AAIN to learn more about how organizations partner with the AAIN and how to begin this collaborative journey.

Yoga Girl — Born and raised in Nashville, **Augie Collier** selects the medium that he feels best fits the personality of the person he portrays. He works confidently in acrylics, oil, charcoal and/or pastels to capture the individual's unique character.



Tennessee Suffragette — **Kara Lockmiller** is a native to Knoxville and an artist. She paints musicians and other topics with help from her chromesthesia and bipolar disorder.



Dreaming of the Beach — **LeAnn Wilson** has been painting for about 11 years and says that it is very relaxing and enjoyable.



Snapshot — **Clara Thorsen** is a freshman at Hillsboro High School in Nashville. She has epilepsy, dyslexia, celiac disease, and is gifted. She loves to draw because it can help people understand and realize the beauty in the world.



Wish Fish — **Hope McKee** shared, "As a disabled artist, my art has become my voice. I use a variety of colors and sweeping strokes to invoke feelings of joy and comfort; after all, my name is Hope."



Opening Night — **Morgan Vice** is 28 years old and a fan of ALL things "circus."



Grandma's Spirit — **Rainbow Mosho** was born in Athens, Greece in 2008. In 2020, she created the COVID-19 Art series to express with bright colors all about family love, the discovery of life and death, handling PTSD, the greater meaning of family, and deep wisdom for a then-12-year-old with autism. Her art has been exhibited in Tennessee and Japan. Her creation "Afro Power" won 3rd Prize in the Fly Your Flag contest.



Head Fakes — **Arianna Leggs** lives in Nashville, TN and recently graduated from Tennessee State University with a B.S. in Art. She enjoys expressing her struggles as an African American female with autism through art. She wants to pursue entrepreneurship and print her artwork on T-shirts and memorabilia, with hopes of helping children like her through art therapy.



Joy — **Deborah Hanson** lives in Tullahoma, TN. She explores weaving with yarn, pieces of plants, stones, and wire in dimensional artwork. She started her use of art for mental health recovery making Zentangle designs. This led to other artwork focusing attention on small areas to incorporate in one artwork. She has found that using paint and alcohol on tile has endless variations and beautiful results, as seen in *Joy*.

Stephanie - Anime — Havah Ruth Anovitz is a 22-year-old web design major at Pellissippi State Community College. Havah loves writing and drawing and all things Harry Potter.



Kind of Blue — Dave Rogers is a disabled veteran artist whose work reflects his collective studies of the cultures he has visited through the military and afterwards.



A Little Bit of Me — Rhett Stephens lives in Nolensville, TN. He is a photographer in the AbleVoices program.

Family - We Are All Different Colors - Edward Abou-Zeid is a 9-year-old boy with autism spectrum disorder. He likes to play piano, do math, and talk about video games and superheroes. His favorite painting medium is acrylic pouring.

STEAL AWAY

Soul Connection Through Dance and Music

By Shabaz Ujima Photos by Tiffany Bessire, courtesy of OZ Arts Nashville

I am a native Nashvillian as well as a dancer, teacher, choreographer, and activist. I founded Shackled Feet DANCE! as a means to share the stories of those who are voiceless and to give space for people to reconnect with the power of dance, movement, and creativity.

I was approached by Dave Ragland, a local composer, about providing the element of movement to his opera, *Steal Away*. I knew that I wanted to create a world on stage that reflected our whole community. While speaking with one of

the elder dancers in the cast, she mentioned that we didn't have the perspective of those with disabilities. I immediately reached out to Sarah Edwards of Friend's Life (note below) to see how we could collaborate! With great enthusiasm, Sarah and the Friend's Life team reached out to their brilliant artists and we assembled a dynamic cast.

Everyone from the entire cast was blown away and inspired by their passion and generosity. We were all one on stage, despite differences in our age, color, and

physical and mental abilities. Our synergy together created an experience that was heartfelt and that touched the deepest parts of the soul. It was what we ALL needed during these times of division.

In the words of the legendary choreographer Alvin Ailey, I learned that "Dance is for the people and should be given back to the people." Dance and art connect us all through spirit and that connection goes beyond what divides us.

To view the full production, visit: ozartsnashville.org/steal-away/





Note: Friend's Life Community is a Nashville center that offers opportunities for teenagers and adults with disabilities to develop socially, grow personally, and enjoy community as they experience life together. Programs include Service Learning, Life Skills, and Advocacy through the Arts. ■



Kaylea Dunkin and Keonna Reed, seen from backstage during their performance as part of Steal Away.

Barn Owl — **David C. Duncan** is originally from Columbia, TN and has been creating art his entire life. In 2006, through counseling for his mental health, David was introduced to HAPI (Healing Arts Project, Inc.) by his counselor. David has been creating art as an independent artist ever since. When asked how art makes him feel, David replied, "Art is a form of communication with a calming effect on the mind. When I am creating, I feel like I am on another planet. As I concentrate on my art, it is like it is just me and my ideas, and I watch them come to life."

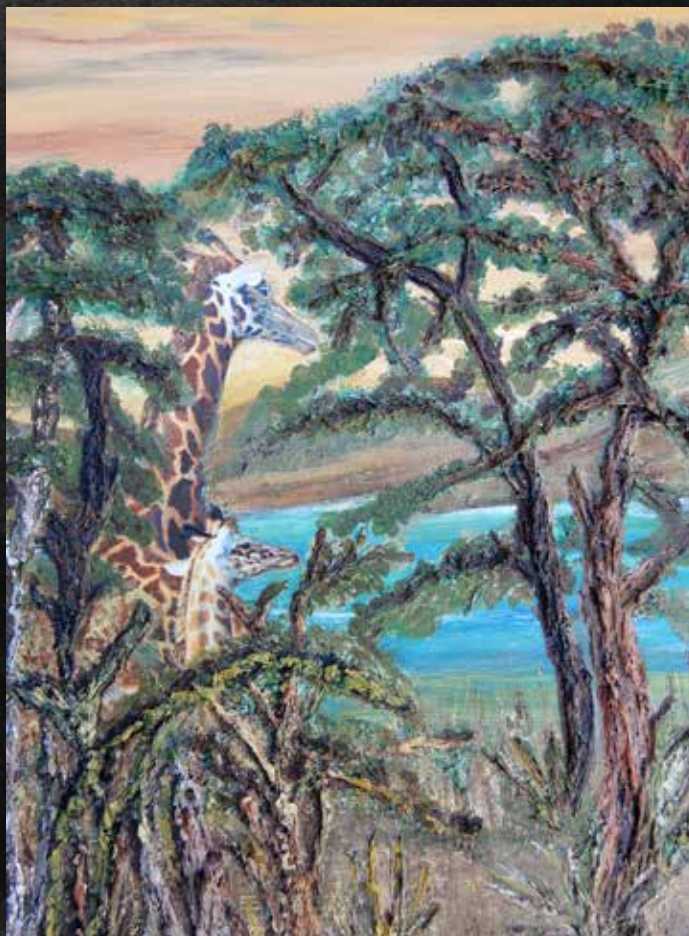


Deer at Bowie Nature Park — **Alyssa Ray** of Franklin, TN enjoys participating in many fine arts, including photography with AbleVoices and performing arts with Backlight Productions. She won two ribbons for her photography, a first and a third, at the 2021 Williamson County Fair.



Fall Waterfall — **Christy Wells-Reece** is a graduate of the Council's Partners in Policymaking® Leadership Institute class of 2001. She is a mother of 2 grown sons, and loves photography, crocheting, and being creative in other ways.

African Habitat — **Barbara Shirley** is continually trying new combinations of different materials for her unique approach to artistic expression. Developing her own style of artwork over many years results in a variety of dimensional work that continues to bring pleasure to the viewer. She says her creative work is satisfying and calming.



East Tennessee Sunset — **Houston Vandergriff** is a 23-year-old photographer with Down syndrome.

Master of Cinema — **Jalyn Weston** is an 18-year-old artist from the little town of Sweetwater, Tennessee, who is currently attending his second year at Cleveland State Community College to acquire a degree in Fine Arts. He plans to move on to a four-year school by the fall. He continues to make a broad spectrum of pieces, trying to move more and more out of his comfort zone. He recently made the transition from doing art on any paper to digital pieces made on his tablet or smartphone. Of course, he still tries to pick up a brush or lead pencil and pen every now and then.



Bringing Theatre to All

By Brooks Clark, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Office of Communications & Marketing

About five years ago, the University of Tennessee Knoxville's [Clarence Brown Theatre](#) (CBT) started an effort to increase its community activities with underserved communities and families. This included the Deaf and hard of hearing, and people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

"Theatre is about community," said Tom Cervone, managing director of the CBT. "Throughout our history, community has been our driving force, and we continue to expand thoughtful engagement with the greater Knoxville area every year."



Interpreters at Deaf Night at the Theatre

A recent performance of *A Christmas Carol* included Deaf Night at the Theatre, a barrier-free experience for members of the hard-of-hearing and Deaf community. The CBT provides this kind of experience for selected performances throughout the season. These performances included:

- American Sign Language interpreters at the box office, concession stand, and usher stations.
- Up to four interpreters signing during the show.

"We had 55 kids and families in attendance," said Cervone. "It was a tremendous success."

The CBT has also invested in sensory boxes with:

- noise reducing headphones,
- light-blocking glasses,
- and fidget items.

These boxes are for our community members on the autism spectrum and can be checked out at the box office.

To make the theatre space welcoming for all, staff have had training to better equip our volunteer ushers to be more accommodating. We include a note to patrons in the playbill, asking them to help us make the theatre a place where all can be themselves. That may include more movement, sounds, and conversation happening during the production. "It's important to us that theatre be a place where we can all gather together and celebrate life in all its complexities," said Hana Sherman, who serves as the theatre's Grants, Outreach and Education Manager.

Three years ago, the CBT became the first professional theatre in Tennessee to offer in-house open captioning. This has allowed patrons who experience hearing loss to still enjoy the theatre.

"A \$10,000 grant from the Alliance of Women Philanthropists enabled us to buy the equipment and pay for the training for us to use it," said Cervone, "so we can create the captioning in-house. Our goal is to break down the barriers and make theatre more accessible to everyone."

As one CBT patron shared, "I have attended CBT for years; but as a hard-of-hearing adult, I always 'missed' things. However, I enjoy live



David Kortemeier and Katy Wolfe, in Clarence Brown Theatre's production of A Christmas Carol. Captions are visible at the front of the stage

plays so much that I've continued to attend CBT anyway. Having the open captioning turned the CBT from a great to an exceptional experience for me!"

Hana Sherman says, "There are a lot of ways, even little adjustments, we can do to make the theatre a more accessible place. We are learning new things every day and hope to continue conversations with our community to learn ways we can improve their experience." ■

Brooks Clark writes for the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Office of Communications & Marketing. Born in Nashville, he grew up in Washington, D.C., and has lived in Knoxville since 1988.

For questions about accessibility at CBT, contact House Manager David Ratliff at housemanager@utk.edu or call the Box Office at (865) 974-5161. Learn more at <https://clarencbrowntheatre.com/accessibility/>.

Honest Directions for Wheelchair Users

By Stacy J. Estep

First of all, you should know that the shortest distance between two points is rarely a straight line. Here's the truth: for you, going out of the way will often be the only way.

Be prepared to discover that the sidewalk you're on has collapsed into a pothole. You can't step over or around it, so you'll have to go back the way you came until you find a ramp that's not blocked by a scooter that someone couldn't bother to park properly. Cross the street there, go past where you were trying to go, cross back to the side of the street where you started, and continue.

Your arms may be strong, but sometimes they're no match for the gravity that wants to roll you backwards. To reach a destination that's just one block west but up a steep hill, your only safe option is to stay on the more gradual slopes by going two blocks north, then one block west, and two blocks south.

Maybe you'll decide to take a bus. That's fine, but don't bother considering where you want to sit. There's only one spot designated for you, and if it happens to be occupied by another wheelchair already, you'll have to wait for the next bus, anyway.

Let's talk about subways. When you get off the train, you might find that you can't get out of the station because the elevator on your platform is broken. Here's your workaround: wait for another train to arrive, and when its doors open, quickly dash into and across the car before they close again. When you come out onto the opposite platform, use the elevator on that side. Hopefully that one's working, and you'll be able to get aboveground and actually leave the station.

Never, ever run late. All of this takes extra time, so plan ahead for that.

In an office building, if you think you'll need to use the

restroom at some point, don't wait until your bladder is full, because you might have to wait for the elevator. There's probably only one accessible stall on your floor, and it's probably occupied by someone who could have used any of the other stalls, which are all empty.

Any time you take a tour, assume at some point you'll get separated from the group and miss part of the presentation when the guide leads everyone else up a flight of stairs and you have to go search for an elevator. Be aware that you'll still have to pay full price, though.

In case of fire, sit at the top of the stairwell and wait for some burly strangers to find you and carry you to safety.

When strolling back from lunch with your co-workers, prepare to cut your conversation short. They'll be turning right to use the nearest door, which is across the grass and up a flight of stairs. You'll need to turn left and follow the sidewalk to the ground-level door at the far end of the building.

Even when the most direct way is accessible, it's not necessarily the fastest. If it's a route with a lot of pedestrians, be aware that some of them will stop you to ask if you need help, and even when you tell them that you don't, they might not believe you, and you'll have to say it again (but super nicely, so they won't cuss you out for refusing their kindness), and after this happens half a dozen times, it's really just quicker and less draining to go the longer, less trafficked way where fewer people will notice you.

If someone ever asks you how far away something is, tell them you're not sure, but that it's probably closer for them than for you.

Stacy J. Estep lives and writes in East Tennessee, where she has been known to spend a hot summer day doing the Cades Cove Loop in her manual wheelchair.

Inspired by the Masters

A Fresh View of Fashion History

**By Alexandra Sargent Capps, Senior Lecturer of Theatre,
Costume Designer & Costume Shop Manager, Vanderbilt University**

Dynamic, inclusive classrooms form when all students contribute their skills, ideas, and interpretation of the subject matter. In Spring 2021, I had two students from Next Steps at Vanderbilt University (an inclusive higher education program for students with intellectual disabilities), Rachel Sarubbi and Kristi VanWulven, in my History of Fashion course. Throughout the semester, I incorporated their visual and written interpretations of fashion history into the main class presentations. Their expressive work inspired the rest of the class to generate personalized, creative ideas and projects.

Rachel produced 26 drawings which serve as a broad visual overview of Western fashion history. Rachel clearly depicts her subject matter in an identifiable artistic drawing style, which is energetic, accurate, and distinctive. Rachel's drawings of iconic, historic masterworks demonstrated to the other students that applying one's personal, contemporary style in creating projects can bring classical works to life and give them renewed relevance.

Kristi researched and wrote informative, relevant text about the original works of art. Kristi's text provides essential background for and context to Rachel's drawings. Rachel and Kristi's project added a colorful, fun, and engaging educational dimension to our classroom.

I love that this project represents the collaborative work of two Next Steps students. Their individual efforts elevate the other's work. Together, they accomplished a large-scale class project that educates us about fashion history and is artistically inspiring.

Interviewing Rachel Sarubbi

Rachel Sarubbi, a native of Nashville, TN, is a second-year student in Vanderbilt's Next Steps inclusive higher education program.

What did you enjoy about the class?

I enjoyed that I copied pictures for my History of Fashion class by tracing, coloring them, and then sharing them with the teacher and the class.

What did you learn in the class?

I learned how clothes are made and how and why they change over the years.

What was your process in choosing which historic paintings to draw?

Some of my drawings were assigned to me and some I picked for myself. My process of choosing them was not hard and there were some I love. I usually picked the pictures to draw that had a lot of color.

Interviewing Kristi VanWulven

Kristi VanWulven, a native of Nashville, TN, is a 2021 graduate from the Next Steps program.

What did you enjoy about the class?

I enjoyed learning about the different topics of the history of fashion and about the different fabrics.

What did you enjoy about writing the descriptions of the original artwork?

I enjoyed searching online to find the text information about different people based on the drawings Rachel sketched.

What did you learn from writing these descriptions?

I learned about the history and the different types of clothing and fabrics of the people in the original artwork. My VU tutor ambassador, Alexa, helped me find the best sources for the information.

Why do you take pride in this accomplishment with another Next Steps student?

I took pride in the accomplishment of this project with another Next Steps student because it shows other Vanderbilt students what amazing talents and skills we have to share. ■

Conquering the Beyond

By Erica McMurray

I blinked my eyes in the white
Taking in such a sight
The restraint rubbed into my skin
It was then the fight began within

I bounced from hospital to hospital
My moods are so brittle
The voices in my head
Even follow me to bed

The whispers have corrupted my life
Piercing like a knife
Things I see don't exist
While my mind is in a mist

Then I had shock treatment
Everyone thought it was an achievement
It knocked my memories away
And left me with nothing to say

The voices are always whispering
Such anger and bickering
I have found ways to cope
And I cling to hope

The doctors all agree that I'm improving
With that they are approving
I fight many battles
As the war unravels

I continue a war that is beyond
And with help of others I bond
With hallucinations I fight
Attempting to find the light

These choices have introduced me to opportunities
that open doors
Allowing a broken mind that soars
Those things heard and those unseen
Will NOT be controlling me

And with all being so
I will conquer my foes
I am a Veteran disabled by voices
I have been given a life of many choices

Erica McMurray is a Teapot Diplomat who participates with Borderless Arts TN. This poem reflects on her struggles in life.



Jan van Eyck
The Arnolfini Portrait
1434
Oil on oak panel
The National Gallery, London



The woman's gown, including the sleeves, was trimmed with ermine fur. A personal maid was needed to hold the garment off the ground.

The Man wears a beaver hat and a velvet huke, open at the sides, lined with fur. The clothes and absence of ostentatious gold jewelry place the couple among the wealthy citizens of Bruges, though not in the top rank.



Sandro Botticelli
La Primavera (Spring)
c. 1482
Tempera on canvas
Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence
Rachel's picture is of Venus



Botticelli depicts the progress of spring from right to left. Above the central Roman goddess Venus is her son, a blind-folded cupid. All the way on the left is Mercury, the god of the month of May. To the right of Mercury are "The Three Graces", representing the feminine virtues Chastity, Beauty, and Love. On the right side, Zephyrus, the west wind, is about to take a nymph named Chloris. They then transform into Flora, the Spring goddess.



Colley Cibber as
Lord Foppington, a
1770s fop, in
The Relapse by John Vanbrugh
c. 1700-1725
Engraving



During the 1770s, the word fop described a man who had more feminine qualities, including a love for finery and fashion, expressed through his clothing and demeanor.



Elisabeth Louise Vigée Le Brun
Marie Antoinette in a Chemise Dress
1783
Oil on canvas
Metropolitan Museum of Art



Marie Antoinette, portrayed arranging flowers, wears a style of dress called the robe en chemise which represents two sins. First, it was made of cotton muslin and not French Lyonnaise silk, which was considered unpatriotic. Second, it was considered too relaxed and informal a garment for a French queen.



François Boucher
Portrait of the
Marquise de Pompadour
1757
Oil on canvas
Wallace Collection, London



This portrait portrays Madame de Pompadour, mistress and confidante of Louis XV, as she wants to be seen: a symbol of music, literature, the fine arts, and politics. It is a part of the femme d'esprit, which means women of culture and learning. Her elegant blue silk dress adorned with roses, ruffles, and ribbons shows her femininity and good taste.



Gustaf Lundberg
Portrait of
François Boucher
1741
Oil on canvas
Musée du Louvre, Paris



This portrait is of François Boucher, the most celebrated French painter of the 18th century. He specialized in the Rococo style, as shown in this painting. He sports pastel colors, a powdered wig, velvet coat, lace cuffs at his wrists, and lace jabot at his neck.

Tennessee Council on Developmental Disabilities

Davy Crockett Tower, 1st Floor
500 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, TN 37243
Return service requested

PRSR STD
US POSTAGE
PAID
NASHVILLE, TN
PERMIT NO. 983

Fanciful Fish — **Laura Hudson** uses her imagination creating detailed, colorful pictures featuring plants, flowers, and birds in lush natural setting. She portrays people expressing themselves and having a good time. Laura says making art is calming. She wants others to enjoy her art, which she says is a gift from God.



Council on
Developmental Disabilities



A PUBLICATION OF THE TENNESSEE
COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL
DISABILITIES IN PARTNERSHIP WITH
THE TENNESSEE ARTS COMMISSION
AND BORDERLESS ARTS TENNESSEE