

Courtesy of "The Empowerment Zone" - the Family Support Newsletter of the Spina Bifida Association of the Tri-State Region (SBATSR) – September / October 2008

TRYING SOMETHING NEW CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

The following is a letter from SBATSR member Brianna's mother, Gabbie:

Back in the fall of 2007, we received an email from SBATSR with information from Arts Unbound. They were looking for prospective students with a physical disability for the grant they had just received. Brianna expressed an interest and I called the number and spoke with Kathleen Heron. We answered each other's questions, but there was one little potential problem. At 15, Brianna was much younger than most of their students. When Kathleen called back a few days later, she requested Brianna come in for an interview. She and Kathleen hit it off immediately and she called us a couple of days later and said Brianna was accepted into the program. From that point on, our Saturday evenings were spent driving Brianna to an experience she will never forget. In her words:



"Arts Unbound is a great organization that helps people with special needs get involved with other people. It also helps them to express themselves in a special and creative way. When I started going to art classes there, I was so relaxed doing my work that whatever problems I had encountered were gone by the time I was finished with the class for the day. It made me feel better about myself both physically, as a kid in a wheelchair and socially, because in the class there were many different people who I had met. I grew close to them as a friend which made the experience a whole lot better. When I was doing my projects, it was almost like I was in a whole other world, anything and everything that I was thinking about had slipped my mind and I was able to express my different feelings through my artwork. I think that this organization would be a good thing for other people with special needs to get involved in because it is a good way to get rid of the problems they might have and they can also meet new people and make new friends."

The special friendships Brianna forged, the self-confidence built and the creative experience was something that cannot be duplicated! Some of the other students (in their mid 20's) even drove out to Brianna's high school to watch her holiday choir concert! We can't wait to see her works on display and reconnect with her friends. Arts Unbound truly gives new meaning to "unbound"!