

OSDA 2006 ESDY Award Winner

Chris Brode

Nominated by Kyla Eversman, John Pekar

Chris Brode, 26, resides with his family in Millersport, Ohio and is an active artist in the Blue Shoe Arts studio. His interest began with building birdhouses and has grown through the art program to now include Found Object Sculptures as well as “funky birdhouses.” His work has been sold at several Ohio art shows as well as in LA. One of his computer-guy creations was selected to be on the 2005 tour of Ohio sponsored by VSA arts of Ohio.



Cheryl Fey, Art Director, decided to offer Chris the opportunity to try his hand at drawing (which he had never done before!). His first drawing was a “self-portrait”. Chris decided that he really liked drawing and continues to draw self-portraits upon washed acrylic backgrounds which he also enjoys painting.

This has opened up a whole new medium for Chris and he has expanded his drawings to include turtles and little people in cars. In fact, he has completed his very first large painting entitled “Are We There Yet?” A lime green rounded-style car with big black tires travels across a canvas covered in large blue and green circles. Two little people ride in the car, one in front (the driver) and one in back (the little boy jumping up asking, “Are we there yet?” It’s quite wonderful!

Blue Shoe Arts has successfully exhibited and sold Chris’ art at the Lancaster Festival Art Walks, LilyFest, Nelsonville Final Fridays (Outback Gallery), TBWA Chiat/Day Gallery in Los Angeles, The Art Works in Newark, Ohio and at the Blue Shoe Arts Gallery in Lancaster. He has also been selected in the juried exhibits sponsored by VSA Arts of Ohio 2005 and 2006.

Ladies and gentlemen...OSDA’s 2006 ESDY Award Winner.... Chris Brode.

OSDA 2006 ESDY Award Winner

Adam Hamilton

Nominated by: Glenda Miles

When you first walk into A Fresh Start Laundry in historic downtown Hamilton, Ohio in Butler County, it's hard to miss Adam's big warm smile and hearty "hello." As one of the first Laundry Butlers © to start at Innovative Support Service's Day Habilitation program, Adam has quickly rose up the corporate laundry line.

Not desiring the traditional large workshop or Supported Employment setting, Adam learned all matters of running a full service laundry for the community in no time. In giving tours, we we're often quietly interrupted by Adam's soft but assertive voice taking over while giving tours

on daily operations of the laundry. Once we figured out he knew more about daily operations then the tour director, he was then promoted to Tour Director. While dealing with customers, he constantly promoted sales of all our services – Adam was the first to hand out the coupons or make sure there were plenty stacked up for customers each day. Marketing Coordinator quickly came next to as an additional title.

With all these skills building and self-advocacy blooming, Adam also explored his artistic side and discovered his creative spirit next door at A Fresh Start Arts. After several weeks, he was collaging, gluing, building, and designing his way to increased self-sufficiency as his art work would sell almost as fast as the paint dried on it! He learned that art was a verb – and he was having a blast finding treasures for "arting" up.

His next big step was as a speaker for a local college while developing A Fresh Start Laundry's college pick up and drops off business for the laundry. After working with the college we knew we had great possibilities for services for the dormitories and soritories. After each session of development, somehow, he always seemed to enjoy talking to those pretty freshman young women the most!

Adam has accomplished so much since October of 2005 when he first walked through the doors of A Fresh Start Laundry and Arts – increased financial independence, friendships, community connections, assertiveness and untapped creativity but most importantly – we have gained just as much. All the people who spend time with Adam truly enjoy his presence, humor, and gifts. Thank you Adam for all that you bring to our little laundry pile in Hamilton, Ohio.

Ladies and gentlemen...OSDA's 2006 ESDY Award Winner.... Adam Hamilton.



OSDA 2006 ESDY Award Winner

Cheryl Fey

Nominated by: John Pekar

Comments from Cheryl Fey, Art Director

Art was not my intended career. I have a BS in Chemistry Education from The Ohio State University and taught high school sciences for five years. As a stay-at-home mom with two young sons, I began a cottage industry folk art business, creating folk art during the days and selling it evenings at home parties. Later, I became an interior decorative painter and muralist, traveling far and wide for nearly 20 years.

Tired of working on scaffolding and ladders every day and becoming restless with all that type of job entailed, I felt called to using my art talent in a way that could help others - to make a difference somehow in my little part of the world.

This change in careers was a huge step of faith since I had never previously had any connection with the MRDD community. Just like so many who lump "them" into a single clump - those with mental retardation, developmental disabilities, mental illness - I had to discover that they are each individuals, with personalities, gifts and talents, hopes and dreams, stories to tell. It gives me immense pleasure to see them express their innermost thoughts - indeed, bear their souls - through their wonderful art.

Their art provides a valuable way to communicate to the world and we, who view their creative works, marvel at the insight, the sensitivity, the passion conveyed. One man almost always has something broken in his paintings and drawings...it might be a little boy with a broken arm, an old professor with a bandaged foot, or an overstuffed sofa with a patch sewn on. When I finally asked him why he does this, he replied that "nothing is perfect in this world. Everything needs fixed." I was just taken back by how very insightful this was of our earthly existence.

I have learned so much from the Blue Shoe artists about life, about feelings, about passion to create. It's one of those things where I thought I was going in to help them, but instead, they seem to help me more. They have taught me to break out of the box, to trust my instincts, to laugh when things don't go as planned. I only wish there was a way for you to know our Blue Shoe artists like I do. They are warm, loving, fun to work with, passionate about their art and focused on their projects. The joy I see on their faces as they meet people who appreciate their art is simply priceless.



Ladies and gentlemen...OSDA's 2006 ESDY Award Winner.... Cheryl Fey.

OSDA 2006 ESDY Award Winner

Cindy Holland

**Nominated by: Courtney Jordan and Nina Zeigler,
Medina County MRDD**

Cindy is a bundle of energy and a wealth of knowledge in the field of MRDD. She has worked as a professional in the field for over 20 years. In the 1990's, as an instructor in the Adult Day program at the Medina County Board of MRDD, Cindy was given the challenge of finding meaningful activities for individuals in her classroom who had multiple disabilities. Cindy did her research and brought the concept of Snoezelen, a type of multi-sensory environment, to her supervisor. Now, Snoezelen has been a major focus of ADP programming for over 20 years. Cindy and co-presenter Annette Davis-Kramp have presented on Snoezelen extensively in the US and Canada. Cindy and Annette were invited to present at the World Snoezelen Conference in Germany but were unable to attend. She is currently a consultant to Medina County Board and is responsible for many of the innovations within Center Employment.



Her energy and enthusiasm are contagious and she is always full of great ideas. In 2001, Cindy's friend Laura Lee mentioned to her that she wished there was a way to get together with her friends after work and on the weekends. This seemed almost impossible to Laura Lee since she could not drive. Transit was available for work but not in the evening. Cindy helped pull together Laura Lee, her friends and other staff at the Medina County Achievement Center to create the little Women of Wadsworth. The Little Women began as a social group. The friends involved began going bowling, camping, and of course, eating lots of good food together.

These days, the Little Women have become regulars at community craft shows. Cindy volunteers many hours after work and on the weekends to pull together activities for the group. Over time, all of the ladies involved in the Little Women of Wadsworth have bonded and Cindy was instrumental in that process.

Cindy has a special knack for hearing ideas and then figuring out how to make them work. People First of Medina County has sponsored several successful activities with her help, including the Spa Day fundraisers and Dress for Achievement clothing drives. In addition to contributing great ideas to the People First chapter, Cindy has also always recognized that organizations like People First can teach people with disabilities how to be part of a group and encourage individuals to participate to the best of their abilities. When she can, Cindy attends the meetings with Michelle, a Little Women of Wadsworth member with whom Cindy has worked very closely.

Cindy is personal advocate for two individuals in the workshop at Medina. She takes this responsibility very seriously. She not only takes these individuals on outings, she goes to meetings and works closely with their families. Cindy has made an incredible difference in the lives of individuals with multiple disabilities!

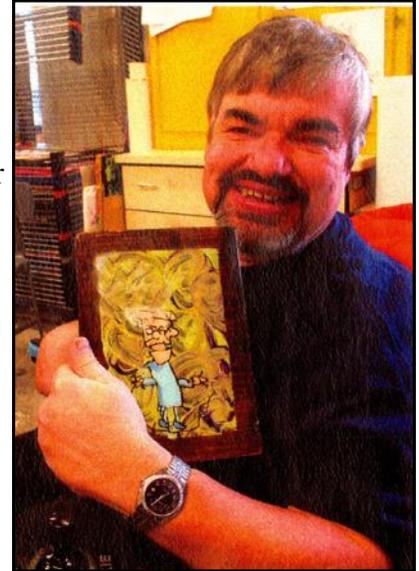
Ladies and gentlemen...OSDA's 2006 ESDY Award Winner.... Cindy Holland.

OSDA 2006 ESDY Award Winner

Harry Grimm

Nominated by: Patty Mitchell

Harry is an amazing individual! In 1996, Harry was assembling ink pens at the Athens County Sheltered workshop...a job he had done for close to 30 years! Harry was determined to find alternative employment opportunities. His interest in pen assembly had come and gone. Harry would come to the art studio and insist on painting objects in solid colors only. He associated painting as a possible career change but saw it more on the level of a house painter. We encouraged Harry to try drawing and he made a fantastic piece of a girl jumping rope. The art staff was thrilled, but Harry needed convincing that this could be a job. Today, Harry is one of our major artists at Passion Works and is featured in the PBS special Passion Works: A story of Flying, he helped design the Athens Fountain, writes poetry (featured in "Get Up & Fly" music CD), participated in an artistic exchange with a studio in Chile and continues to make fine art. Harry has retired himself from the pen department! Harry is a man with a vision and thorough self-determination, has demonstrated for many, the power of personal conviction.



Ladies and gentlemen...OSDA's 2006 ESDY Award Winner...Harry Grimm.

Karen Lee

Nominated by: Gerald Plassenthal and Staff

Karen Lee is a vibrant woman in her sixties who enjoys being active and on the go. Some of her favorite activities include dining out, attending the ARC ladies group, and participating in other social events. She is a self appointed historian and is often photographing all of her friends at the local events that she frequents. Karen and her mother are often seen around town shopping and enjoying each other's company. Karen shares an apartment with her mother and is a great support to her. Karen has worked for years as a server at Parkview Nursing Home where she loves the interaction with the residents and they enjoy her lively personality. To round out Karen's full schedule she currently sits on the Erie County ARC Board where she provides input from her perspective. Karen possesses the ability to put anyone she meets at ease and new acquaintances are soon to become old friends.



Ladies and gentlemen...OSDA's 2006 ESDY Award Winner... Karen Lee

OSDA 2006 ESDY Award Winner

Cynthia Morrison

Nominated by: Lew Hurst

Cynthia has been an advocate for individual with developmental disabilities for over 20 years. As regional coordinator of the North West region of OSDA she has coordinated training, meetings and educational opportunities for individuals from multiple counties in North West Ohio. Her organizational skills have aided in the development of a strong advocacy network in north western Ohio.



Cynthia has recently assumed the role director of Director of Consumer Advocacy and Support for the Seneca County Board. In her role, she works with individuals and families to assist and develop advocacy initiatives. One such initiative is the Seneca county leadership academy. The Leadership academy is a local program designed to provide individuals with disabilities the training and support to develop leadership skills. Presently, Cynthia is working with this group to learn the basics of individual advocacy techniques, public speaking and individual planning. In addition, Cynthia leads the Seneca county consumer advocacy council. This council focuses on rights and emphasizes the ability of individuals to dictate their own services.

In addition to all of these things, Cynthia is the founder of Unity. Unity is an individual-focused conference for individuals with disabilities held on an annual basis. The unique feature of this event is that over the years, Cynthia had worked to empower individuals with disabilities to plan the entire conference. She works with the leadership of our local Unity Council to raise funds, plan themes, select speakers and even select the food for the conference. Since the inception of the conference in 1995, approximately 120 individuals with disabilities now attend the conference on an annual basis. Individuals are able to learn and discuss topics of self-interest. Some of these include caring for pets, cooking, self-advocacy, IP planning, relationship building and gardening.

Cynthia's leadership and ability to empower individuals have touched hundreds of lives in Seneca County.

Ladies and gentlemen...OSDA's 2006 ESDY Award Winner...Cynthia Morrison

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Ohio Self Determination Association

2006

Steven R. Cooley Award

Presented to:

Christine A. Brown

In recognition of your excellent leadership and commitment in supporting self determination