

Presenters

Arts Engagement for Adults with Intellectual Disabilities: Overcoming Obstacles

Link to Register: <https://3common.com/event/66d3558141d0fcb9e291440a>

Darci Adam is the Founder and Director of the Winnipeg Holistic Expressive Arts Therapy Institute. She is passionate about nature and land-based learning and healing, as well as inter-modal expressive arts work for personal growth and community transformation. She feels deeply that art is medicine.

Lois Brothers teaching approach is centered around making learning FUN, meeting students where they are at and nurturing their individual strengths. With over two decades of experience in the Winnipeg Film Industry and over 30 years as a certified school teacher, Lois has taught a wide range of subjects from physical education to theatre, and has supported students with diverse challenges. A dedicated mother of two, including a young adult with Down Syndrome, Lois' passion for teaching and acting inspired her to open a studio for all in 2004. Her blend of expertise, compassion, and patience ensures that even the shyest of students leave her studio feeling uplifted and confident. Lois's curriculum includes scene study, audition technique, improv, mini-movies, and audition workshops, providing a comprehensive acting education that prepares students for *all* aspects of life.

Lois is currently a school trustee for the Winnipeg School Division and is the Family Engagement Coordinator at Inclusion Winnipeg.

Nova Courchene is an Anishinaabekwe playwright, writer, and Drama Educator dedicated to making theatre accessible to Indigenous youth and communities. As Assistant Director of Native Youth Theatre and Indigenous Theatre for Youth, she integrates traditional knowledge into contemporary arts practices, fostering inclusive and culturally sensitive creative spaces.

About the workshop - *Traditional Storytelling & Theatre*

This interactive workshop explores how traditional knowledge shapes Indigenous storytelling through engaging games and trauma-informed practices. Participants will learn about the three types of traditional stories and discuss approaches to creating culturally appropriate and inclusive arts-based spaces for community members.

Toby Gillies is a multidisciplinary artist, the third generation in his family of art makers, enjoyers, facilitators and educators living in Winnipeg. Toby's practice is rooted in a playful exploration of materials and ideas, and experiments in collaboration. Recent projects have taken an interest in filmmaking and animation, drawing, installation, mural, ceramic, cardboard, parties and art for social change. For over a decade, he has facilitated art experiences within his community, where he served as Studio Programs Manager at Art City (2013-2022) and as an Artist in Residence at Misericordia Health Centre (2012-present).

About the workshop – *oops, I made this!*

Using process and gentle guidance to facilitate self-expressive art making, we will use all sorts of drawing and painting supplies, a mixing of mediums.

Dammecia Hall, who is Winnipeg-born, grew up in a city that was lacking an urban Hip Hop dance scene. Exploring movements as a child and by watching music videos over the years inspired Dammecia to bring exposure to this style of under-appreciated dance. Her most rewarding accomplishment to date is as Founder/Artistic Director of an energetic Hip Hop Dance Company called Define Movement. Dammecia also produced Winnipeg's first annual Hip Hop Dance Showcase "One Love". This showcase helped grow and stimulate Winnipeg's hip hop dance scene over the years.

Dammecia graduated from The School of Contemporary Dancers Senior Professional Program. She has worked with established Choreographers from across Canada, the United States, the Caribbean, Europe and the Continent of Africa including Artistic Director of NAfro Dance, Casmiro Nhussi, Toronto's Patrick Parson, Artistic Director of Ballet Creole as well as Michelle Moss, Co-Founder of Calgary's Decidedly Jazz and with COBA (Collective Of Black Artists).

About the workshop – *Keepin' It Real*

The Symposium will come alive with dance and joy at this vibrant workshop. Participants will learn new moves and be encouraged to express themselves through the joy of dance. DJ GeNie will keep the beats going strong and take a moment to share the magic behind the turntables. Be prepared for rhythm and fun.

Kathleen Hodgson has built a 22-year career in communications, working at two crown corporations and a major financial institution in Winnipeg. For the past two years, she has focused on community investment, managing sponsorships, donations, and employee engagement programs. She served as director and as chairperson of the board for the Canadian Mental Health Association—Winnipeg, as director of the board for Inclusion Winnipeg, and as a member of United Way Winnipeg Speakers' Bureau. In 2019, she delivered the keynote address at Inclusion Winnipeg's Fall for Fashion gala, sharing the organization's long history of support to her son Luke and their family. Kathleen believes deeply that the arts enrich both challenging and joyful moments, making the mundane minutes of everyday life sweeter and easier to bear. She advocates for the arts to be accessible to everyone.

"Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm." ~ Ralph Waldo Emerson

Laura Kolisnyk is a Winnipeg-based performer, choreographer, director and educator who puts the song and dance into Arts Inclusion when teaching musical theatre. Ms. Kolisnyk has over twenty-five years experience teaching dance, musical theatre, drama and children's yoga at many studios and schools throughout Winnipeg.

An honours graduate of the University of Winnipeg theatre department, Ms. Kolisnyk has performed locally and internationally. Recent credits include: *Beauty and the Beast* and *Shrek* at Rainbow Stage, *The Little Prince* and *Lies of A Promiscuous Woman* at the Winnipeg Fringe Festival, choreography for Celebrations Dinner Theatre, and directing and choreographing Junior Musicals at Manitoba Theatre for Young People. Specializing in theatre for young audiences, she spent ten years touring the world with Koba Entertainment. She has written, produced and performed shows for the Winnipeg Kids Fringe and has voiced many cartoon characters.

Cheryl Marrone is the Director of Day Services for the Salvation Army Community Venture Charleswood and Booth Day Programs. Cheryl holds a diploma in Developmental Services from Red River College, along with certificates in Foundational Leadership and Advanced Leadership from Harvard Business School.

Cheryl has over 24 years working with individuals living with an intellectual disability, with 20 of those years at Community Venture. Cheryl is a strong advocate in the belief that each individual can reach their highest potential with the right supports in place. This philosophy is how she leads her team to inspire the individuals Community Venture Charleswood provides services to. The result of supporting others to follow their passions and talents can be seen in unique mixed medium art pieces for the annual art show each year that are sure to take your breath away.

Leigh Ann McLennan has over 40 years working with individuals with intellectual and physical challenges. She introduced a variety of experiences to actively involve participants in multi-sensory rooms, pottery, drama, storytelling, active music, pet therapy, and other adapted activities. She is former founding board member and chairperson of Lake Manitoba Camp Legacy Inc. which is a registered charity providing a premier vacation experience for Manitobans with disabilities and a former board member on Canadian Therapeutic Recreation Association. Leigh Ann has a Bachelor degree in Recreation Studies from University of Manitoba. She is a founding organizer/coordinator/instructor of Metis Prairie Steppers, a youth dance group that learns and shares Metis culture and dance across Canada and United States. “It’s all about active participation “

Gerry Oliver has been an artist most of her life and an art teacher for almost 20 years. Twelve years ago, she was asked to teach a class from Touchwood Park at the art gallery. Since then, the students have worked hard developing their skills. More recently, their work has been exhibited at several galleries and libraries in the Westman region as well as participating annually in the Arts West Juried Art Show. Their weekly creations can be viewed on the Arts Forward FB page.

Bola Oriyomi is a storyteller and cultural performer focused on singing, dancing and drumming that has been performing for over 25 years. Hailing from Ondo State in Nigeria, Bola was immersed and trained in traditional Yoruba culture and dance that has inspired her work. Bola has performed across Canada and around the world. She leads Ariya Afrika Cultural Group, a contemporary African dance group.

About the Workshop – *Music for Everyone*

Enjoy learning the basics about making music with a variety of rhythm instruments. Get ready for an adventure in sounds and vibrations.

Sue Proctor, is Artistic Director for Arts Inclusion and a doctoral candidate at Concordia University in Montreal. She teaches creative drama for adults with intellectual disabilities at Arts Inclusion, creative drama at Manitoba Theatre for Young People (MTYP), and independent mime and clowning workshops for adults. Sue has facilitated Art Hives at Concordia University, puppet-making workshops at Art City and taught with Manitoba Artist in the Schools residencies. Sue did several Norway House Residencies in Northern Manitoba, which included teaching drama, performing as a clown and storytelling. Sue is currently part of a dramaturg and

playwrighting group for seniors and performs at festivals, university presentations and cabarets. Her Master's thesis is available online - "The Archetypal Role of the Clown as a Catalyst for Individual and Societal Transformation" <https://spectrum.library.concordia.ca/977096/>

Heather Russell (she/her) is a theatre artist living and creating in Treaty 1 Territory. She has over 20 years of experience as an arts educator, and has acted with many of the theatre companies in Winnipeg, including RMTCC, PTE, MTYP, TPM, SIR, TCM and GK. These days her favourite role is being a mom to her 4 year old son, Wade.

About the Workshop - *Just Say Yes!*

Improvisation creates connection and confidence. Jump in and discover how much fun using your imagination can be! Just say yes!

Megan Scott has dedicated over 20 years to the Social Services field, wearing many hats as a Youth Coordinator, Direct Service Worker, respite worker and Facilitator. She currently works at Inclusion Winnipeg, as the Youth Inclusion Facilitator. She holds a diploma in Disability and Community Support from Red River College, along with university-level credentials such as "Integrating the Arts into Rehabilitation" from the University of Calgary. Megan is a firm believer in the transformative power of creativity, recognizing that opportunities for self-expression and learning through a creative lens are invaluable for personal growth. Over the years, Inclusion Winnipeg maintained and fostered many wonderful creative arts classes and programs, with many and new ones now carrying on at Crescent Arts Centre. Her diverse roles & life experience have only strengthened her belief that everyone deserves the chance to explore, fail, and grow through creative expression.

Yvonne Sisley, Administrator of Neepawa's ArtsForward, is recognized as a leader in fostering collaboration, inclusivity, and impactful community programming. Her contributions have significantly enriched the arts and culture landscape in Neepawa and beyond. With over 20 years of experience working with individuals with special needs in the Beautiful Plains School Division, and as a former Director of Services for Touchwood Park Association, Yvonne has been dedicated to creating inclusive programs that promote growth, positivity, and success for all. Yvonne serves as a Councillor for the Town of Neepawa, where she chairs the Recreation and Economic Development Committee, and is a member of both the Public Works Committee and the Neepawa & District Disabled Persons Association Board. Passionate about community service, she also serves on the Spruce Plains Justice Committee.

Kent Suss teaches Integrating the Expressive Arts and Senior Years Drama in the Faculty of Education at The University of Winnipeg. He uses puppets to share personal stories and open conversations about difficult topics. He has taught acting, film-making, animation, puppetry, and mask theatre through Artists in the Schools and at Manitoba Theatre for Young People, where he also served as School Director for 18 years. Kent has created puppet shows for children at the Winnipeg Public Library and the Teddy Bears' Picnic, and one for adults at the Aceartinc gallery.

About the Workshop - *Puppet-Making*

In this session, participants will create their own puppets from a variety of craft materials, and will be encouraged to dramatize short scenes based on personal experiences remembered or

imagined. Gentle encouragement and enthusiastic support are the methods we will use to promote participation and fun.

This workshop is an enjoyable diversion from the everyday, and an opportunity to try new things. Suitable for adults of all levels of ability and experience, teachers, support workers, and artists.