

Much to do for children

Artspace for Children is ready to go. The pilot project for the arts classes offered in music, pottery, dance, art and drama is set to register children on September 17. Classes will begin on September 19 for the first of the five six-week sessions.

The instructors for the twenty-five classes offered in the first session are trained and experienced in the arts and in teaching. Anne Russo, coordinator of the Artspace for Children, stated in a recent interview that, "we have twelve instructors with planned programs for this first session and other instructors will join us in the following sessions."

Anne has taught elementary school in Fort St John and has had a wide range of experience in dance, drama and the fine arts. Six additional assistants have helped to create the Artspace Children program.

Artspace for Children is based on the idea that arts are an integral part of a child's learning experience and that every child deserves the opportunity to express and develop their natural creative abilities. Anne stated, "the registration fees of \$10 for each six-week session has been kept to a minimum to allow as many children as possible to attend."

The emphasis of Artspace for Children is on the personal experience and development within each child. Anne stated, "the Artspace for Children program is designed to expand the base of interest in arts instruction in the North Peace." She went on to say that, "once a wide

range of children have been introduced to arts activities, many may further their experience with more formal training."

The Artspace for Children program grew from the community requests for arts opportunities for children. "The ever-increasing pressure on teachers within the schools to cover additional curriculum leaves less and less time for as much arts experience as children should have in the educational process," Anne claimed when asked why the program was initiated. Also, the success of Happy Feet last year indicated community support for creative opportunities for children.

Happy Feet, a preschool creative movement program, expanded from 16 children in 2 classes to 60 children in 4 classes.

The preschool classes offered in Session 1 are

Piano Play (Tuesday 2 pm), Sing a Song (Tuesday 1:15 pm), Happy Feet (Wednesday 1:15 pm, 2 pm or Friday 9:15 am, 10 am), Music Makers (Friday 11:30 am 11:45 am), Arts Discovery which is an integrated program of Music, Art and Drama (Wednesday 10 am or Thursday 1 pm) and Just 2's which is a class of art and music designed especially for 2-year-olds.

Classes for older children include: four Dance Discovery Classes for 5-6 years olds (Tuesday 4:45 pm), 7-8 year-olds (Thursday 4:45 pm), 9-10 year-olds (Tuesday 5:30 pm) and 12-13 year-olds (Thursday 5:30 pm); Irish Dancing for beginners ages 8 and up (Monday and Wednesday 3:30 pm) and for intermediates who have taken at least one year of Irish Dancing (Monday and Wednesday 4:30 pm).

Drawing and Painting is offered for 5-7 year-olds (Tuesday 3:30 pm) and for

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11-13 year-olds (Wednesday 3:30 pm). Animal and cartoon character line drawing is offered to 5-8 year-olds (Wednesday 4:30 pm).

An Introductory Pottery course will be offered to 11-13 year-olds (Thursday 4-6 pm) in Session I and repeated for 9-10 year-olds in Session II. Students who complete the Introductory classes will be able to do further pottery courses in the following sessions.

The word "drama" originally comes from the Greek word meaning "doing." Therefore, the drama classes are called "Drama is Doing." They are offered to 5-7 year-olds

(Saturday 12 noon), 8 year-olds (Saturday 11 a and 11-13 year-old (Thursday 7 pm).

Future sessions of Artspace for Children include music, printmaking, fabric art, a beginner bagpipes, painting art for Christmas and more.

The Artspace for Children has been made possible through cooperation of the Fort St John Community Arts Council, School District 60 and Tucker Enterprises and the financial assistance of Exploratory Canada Council, The Atkins and Stage North.

Artspace for Children brochures including Session I timetable will be available this Saturday at the Northern Lights College registration booth in the Totem Mall. Registration for Artspace for Children will take place on Saturday, September 17 at the Artspace from 10 to 4 pm. Instructors will be available at the Artspace on registration day to discuss course content. For further information phone 785-1983.



ARTSPACE FOR CHILDREN was prompted, in part by the success of Happy Feet and community requests for more arts-related opportunities for children. Happy Feet preschoolers in this photo are enjoying movement and music in one of

the classes conducted by Cheryl Ferguson and Barb Tontsch last year. Happy Feet will have registration along with twenty other arts classes for children on September 17 in the Artspace.