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Expressive Arts Residency Proposal  
Paper Pioneers Project

## Abstract

The Paper Pioneers Project is a community-based creative project that aims to work with older adults living in a long-term care facility, providing and facilitating a creative arts program for the individuals. The program emphasizes how art therapy, specifically the new art therapy approach of papermaking, can help improve the quality of life for people as they get older. The Paper Pioneers Project will also illustrate how art therapy can help the elderly cope with the psychological effects of aging, illness, and disability. The project's secondary goal is to deconstruct and adapt studio art papermaking to make it a sustainable on-site process. The Paper Pioneers Project will be conducted in weekly hour-long sessions over the duration of eight weeks and will conclude with an exhibit of resident's work in a gallery setting.

## Project Narrative

Art therapy is a mental health profession in which individuals use art media, the creative process, and the resulting artwork as a remedial activity or an aid to diagnosis (American Art Therapy Association). The goal in art therapy is to improve or restore a client's functioning and their sense of personal well-being. Art therapy is a form of expressive therapy that uses the creative process of making art to improve a person's physical, mental, and emotional well-being. Today art therapy is widely practiced in a variety of settings including hospitals, psychiatric and rehabilitation facilities, wellness centers, forensic institutions, schools, crisis centers, private practice, and older adult communities, the setting in which the Paper Pioneers Project takes place.

In 2012, approximately 50 million Americans were 62 years of age or older according to the US Census Bureau (Annals of Long Term Care). This statistic illustrates how large the older adult population is, which is directly correlated to the need for programs for older adults. An art therapy program in a long-term care facility benefits the older adult population in multiple ways. In general, exercising creativity has been proven to enhance quality of life and nurture overall well-being. This is crucial for this population particularly because making the move to a long-term care facility can often result in a sense of independency loss; by giving up one's home, they feel as if they have also given up the sense of control they have over their life (Brownie and Horstmanhof). Art and creation allows for these individuals to regain that feeling of control because there are infinite choices in art.

Several studies have shown that art can reduce the depression and anxiety that are often symptomatic of diseases commonly found in older adults (Bagan). Other research demonstrates that the imagination and creativity of older adults can flourish in later life, helping them to realize undiscovered potential, which results in newfound inspiration and increased self-esteem (Stephenson). It is especially important to focus on the strengths that the individual possesses when working with this population, instead of trying to fix negative attributes, and art therapy is an excellent opportunity for self-expression and introspection.

The process of papermaking is a new approach to art therapy. Papermaking is considered a therapeutic medium because it is a sensory based activity that results in something that is wholly handmade. Papermaking is a process with concrete steps that produce a meaningful outcome, "as the hands and body are involved in the formation of paper, the individual is grounded in the here and now through soothing repetition" (Peace Paper Project). Papermaking

provides direction, motivation, and inspiration; those who engage in making paper are no longer just surviving, they are thriving and creating.

The Paper Pioneers Project's secondary goal would be to deconstruct and adapt the traditional studio art papermaking process, as well as papermaking equipment, and format it for a long-term care facility. The Paper Pioneers Project has identified sources for fibers and readily available equipment such as an electric drill with a stucco mixing blade compared to a two-pound, \$9,100 in-studio Hollander beater (David Reina Designs). The newly adapted format will be more accommodating for the older adult population, while simultaneously improving the program's longevity at any facility.

The materials involved in the Paper Pioneers Project have been carefully selected so that they are available onsite at all times. Working with the facility's professional Art Therapist throughout the project's development will ensure proper training, as well as the program's sustainability. Creating a specialized, adapted process will not only make papermaking more accessible, but it will also maintain the integrity of the handmade papermaking process and the particular qualities and benefits of handmade paper.

The Paper Pioneers Project will build on individual's strengths, while focusing on the creative process itself rather than the end product. The papermaking processes designed for the Paper Pioneers Project is also an innovative intervention to improve communication with others, another need for older adults. Certain papermaking processes have been carefully selected for the Paper Pioneers Project specifically to promote communication and creation in more ways than one. Furthermore, creating art can prove to be beneficial for older adults by "providing a visual link by which the individual may explore past and present experiences" (Stephenson, 2006).

Expressive art programs form a sense of community which provides a basis for a healthy support network, consequently improving quality of life.

The art therapy program will revolve around the healing and life enhancing qualities of making paper and making art. The art therapy groups will range from four to ten residents, having the focus always be on the residents. The goal is to engage individuals in artmaking and to be present for the residents. The art therapy groups will run one to two hours, once a week.

Through art therapy, the Paper Pioneers Project will build community while promoting social opportunities and networks, as well as simultaneously encourage personal growth.

Alongside these benefits, this project will promote choice which nurtures independence, while engaging the mind and reviving memories of the past. Most importantly, this project will engage the residents by sparking interests while creating paper and art, which subsequently improves overall quality of life. Observation notes will be recorded after each of the sessions, logging what processes engage the residents the most and what adaptations need to be made. In conjunction with the observation notes, the entire development of the program will be documented digitally and compiled into an informative, engaging presentation. Success will be measured by consistent attendance, as well as overall involvement of the residents and participants. Discussions will also be held after each papermaking project is complete to debrief, share, converse, and hear first-hand their reviews and opinions of the process itself.

### Program Structure & Plan

Paper Pioneers Project consists of hour-long weekly sessions for eight weeks, serving up to ten older adults with intent of facilitating a creative and comfortable environment. The intended population the Paper Pioneers Project seeks to serve is older adults in either assisted care or

independent living. Through different papermaking processes, participants will have the opportunity to wholly create and interact with others. Each process begins with a thoughtful prompt, explanations of critical methods and techniques, examples, and ample time to create. Upon completion of projects, participants are encouraged to share their work, highlight what they enjoyed, as well as share any other information.

After eight weeks' time, a reception will be held and each participant will have the opportunity to exhibit their artwork in a gallery setting. On top of the exhibition, a public presentation will be given about the project to Edgewood Engaged to further inform Edgewood's community about art therapy and the papermaking process. Lastly, the program will be presented in collaboration with Janice Havlena, Edgewood's Art Therapy faculty mentor, and others at the Wisconsin Art Therapy Association's (WATA) annual Art Therapy symposium. This self-directed exploration will enhance the knowledge of both Art Therapy and papermaking alike at a local, state-wide, and regional level.

Session	Title/Theme	Brief Description	Materials
1	Papermaking 101	Introduce papermaking, the equipment involved, the process, and what to expect. Demonstrate how to hydrate pulp and have them participate. Engage in pulling first couple of pieces of handmade paper.	Mould, deckle, pellow, felt, towels, wooden board, vat, bucket, stucco-mixing blade, electric drill, pulp, and water
2	Papermaking Techniques	Continue introduction into papermaking process. Demonstrate how to pull sheets of paper again, as well as how to double couch, handprint, and paint with pulp. Pull 5-10 more pieces of handmade paper.	Mould, deckle, pellow, felt, towels, wooden board, vat, bucket, stucco-mixing blade, electric drill, pulp, water

3	Wholly Handmade Journal	Take pieces of paper pulled from weeks before and bind together using hole punch and ribbon/binder rings to create a journal. Create “cover” for the journal.	Binding materials, hole punch, scissors, 2-D materials (markers, pastels, crayons, colored pencils, etc.)
4	Wholly Handmade Journal – Part 2	Add new pieces of paper to journal – do not have to include all pieces. Adjust order of pages in journal if desired. Create a mandala on any chosen page in journal focusing on the good starting in the middle, extending it to the outer edges of the mandala.	Hole punch, 2- D materials
5	Feeling Spicy	Create handmade paper bowls using a bowl as the mold to press paper pulp into. Dye bowls with berries, spices, and plants.	Buckets, less diluted paper pulp, bowl molds, towels, dyes (berries, currant, turmeric, etc.)
6	Healthy Dose of Nostalgia	Illustrate a favorite memory or two in journal. Bring in photographs to copy and use other art supplies to create a beautiful, positive depiction of a great memory.	Photographs, journal, 2-D materials, glue sticks, decorative paper, scissors
7	Seed Bombs/Cards	Enclose seeds of native and resilient plants in paper being pulled this session. Prompt is to create the seed bomb or seed card with the intention of mailing it to a loved one to enjoy, appreciate, and eventually plant.	Mould, deckle, pellow, felt, towels, wooden board, vat, bucket, stucco-mixing blade, electric drill, pulp, water, seeds
8	Seed Bombs/Cards	Decorate and finish seed bomb or seed card, individualizing it and creating it with love. Lastly, mail it to aforementioned loved one!	Markers, pens, pencils, pastels, crayons, envelopes, stamps

Budget

Consumable Items			
Product	Quantity	Price Each	Extended Price
Cotton Linters	3 – 8 oz.	\$14.15	\$42.45
Natural Fiber Paper Pulp Sampler	2 - 3” thick blocks (3 per package)	\$28.25	\$56.50
100% Cotton Rag Pulp	1 – 8 oz.	\$9.45	\$9.45
Markers	6 sets of 12	\$3.73	\$22.38
Glue Sticks	1 set of 30	\$8.94	\$8.95
Ink pens	12	\$1.330	\$13.00
Decorative Paper	1 pack of 192 sheets	\$11.00	\$11.00
Found objects	Amount available	0	0
Spices	4 spices/herbs	\$7.00	\$28.00
Water	Amount needed	0	0
Envelopes	1 case of 100	\$10.00	\$10.00
Stamps	1 – 20 stamps	\$9.80	\$9.80
Binder Rings	6 – 5 pack (varying sizes)	\$0.50	\$3.00
Ribbon	2 spools	\$2.50	\$5.00
Non-Consumable Items			
Mould, Deckle, and Screen (Dip Handmold) – Arnold Grummer, School Specialty	3 – 8.5 x 11 in	\$24.14	\$72.42
Pellon – Fabric Magic, Jo-Ann’s	20 – 1 yd.	\$0.59	\$11.80

Felt – Fabric, Jo-Ann’s	10 – 1 yd.	\$2.99	\$29.90
Towels	1 – 10 pack	\$3.15	\$3.15
Plywood Board (20” x 20”)	3 sheets	\$2.20	\$4.40
Vat – Rubbermaid (20” x 15” x 5”)	4	\$4.39	\$17.56
5 gallon Bucket	2	\$3.98	\$7.96
Stucco Mixing Blade	1	\$5.99	\$5.99
Electric Drill	1	\$17.00	\$17.00
Bowl Mold	6	\$0.89	\$5.34
		Supplies Total	\$395.08

In-kind donations: paper towels and sponges for clean-up, scissors, hole punch, and cookies, coffee, etc. for reception.

### Facilitator’s Qualifications

Brianna Jacobson is a senior at Edgewood College, majoring in Art Therapy and minoring in Ethnic Studies, Art, and Psychology. She expects to graduate this spring with a Bachelor’s of Art degree. Her course highlights include art therapy, psychology, ethnic studies, art, and gender studies. Last year, Brianna facilitated a community art practicum at a wellness center in Madison, working with and for adults with mental and emotional challenges. This year, Brianna is interning at Oakwood Village and hopes to improve individual’s overall life quality through weekly art processes.

### References

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