

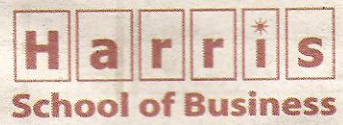
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CHERRY HILL TOWNSHIP

Sunday, December 27, 2009

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Camden theater finds new life as outlet for youth

By Mischa Aaron Arnosky
Staff Writer

When Cynthia Primas was in graduate school at Temple University, studying organizational and small group development, her mentor pushed her in the direction of creating an arts education center for adolescents.

The initial concept — a creative and performing arts high school in Camden — didn't pan out. But Primas started her organization, and it recently found a permanent home.

Primas is the president and CEO of the Institute for the Development of Education in the Arts, an organization she founded in 1995 after working as a substitute teacher in the Camden School District.

With the cheeky acronym of IDEA, the organization was meant to act as a catalyst in creating the performing arts high school. Primas got the OK from the then-superintendent of the district to form an ad hoc committee to investigate what it would take to create the school, but it wasn't to be.

"I actually went to the superintendent at the time and asked if I could put together a group of parents and concerned citizens to bring about a performing high school in the city of Camden," Primas said.

"The purpose of IDEA initially was to create a performing arts high school. We modeled IDEA after the Duke Ellington School for the Arts [in Washington, D.C.]. I really lobbied for the school," she said with a laugh, adding that there was so much history in a project that didn't happen.

However, IDEA made its mark in the community by offering a slew of artistically minded workshops to area junior high and high school students. The organization started holding workshops in multimedia, video production and Web site design, and it even started a jazz camp — all taught by several area artists.

Early on, IDEA was holding its workshops in remote locations, such as school district buildings, as the organization had a contract with the district. Some of the workshops were also held at the South Jersey Performing Arts Center's (SJPAC) theater.

See IDEA on page 6

Boys and Girls Club get crafty in Voorhees



Ten children from the Boys and Girls Club of Camden County recently enjoyed an afternoon of crafting and snacking at the Voorhees A.C. Moore Arts and Crafts store. The children also received a check for \$500 and a shopping cart full of arts and crafts supplies for the club. Pictured at left, A.C. Moore Arts and Crafts store associate Amy Pultrone worked on a craft with Boys and Girls Club member Maximus Cruz.

Photo and information courtesy of Making Headlines



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For more information...

Theater provides outlet for Camden youth

IDEA from the cover

When that organization lost state funding in 2005, Primas said her organization got a chance to flourish, as IDEA eventually moved to the SJPAC's 130-seat theater in late 2008, following talks with the New Jersey Economic Development Authority and help with funding from the city, the United Way and private donors.

"We eventually met up with the NJEDA, and because they realized we were doing so much good work with the kids, who were mainly adolescents, we were given the opportunity to move into the old South Jersey Performing Arts Center," Primas said.

The theater sports two classrooms, more office space, and of course, the theater, dubbed "The Black Box," with space in the back for TV production and a sound engineering studio.

Primas said, after some paint, the venue was good to go, and when the youth of

Camden benefit from the programming, so does the city.

"Because we now have the space, it gives us an opportunity to open the door to the community for the youth to come in and take these classes, and build the kind of creative skills that are important for the workforce now," Primas said. "You're talking about a community where many of these kids really don't have exposure to the kinds of activities that we offer — whether it's economics, or just not having services of this nature in this area. This center allows those kids who aren't exposed to the arts to partake in arts education."

She added that arts education has been taken out of the schools, so there are very few organizations in South Jersey that offer arts education for kids who aren't economically able to seek it elsewhere.

For more information about the Institute for the Development of Education in the Arts, visit www.idea-arts.org or call 856-577-8337.

Lions Club of Haddonfield is searching for Haddonfield's Citizen of the Year; nomi

The Lions Club of Haddonfield invites individuals and organizations to submit nominations for the 38th annual Haddonfield Citizen of the Year award.

The submission deadline is Jan. 5, 2010. All nominations must include the nomi-

inee's name, address, occupation, background information, achievements, organization affiliation, if applicable, and a statement in support of the nomination.

Nominations should be mailed to Robert C. Miller, Citizen of the Year Committee,

Children at pediatric f



The Voorhees Business Association (VBA) recently donated gifts to the children at the Voorhees Pediatric Facility, located across from E and year the VBA donated gifts to the children. Lauren Waite, director of therapeutic Re met with Ashawn, center, one of th

403 Spruce Street, Haddonfield, NJ, 08033.

The 2010 Citizen of the Year will be recognized at the annual Mayor's Breakfast, which will be held on Saturday, Jan. 23, 2010, at the First Presbyterian Church on

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