

Happy Faces, Greenspaces: The Expressive Arts Nurture the Heart



Alabama A&M and
Auburn Universities

www.aces.edu



Saving Towns Through Asset Revitalization (STAR):

Taking Action!

The vision of STAR is to leave **no Alabama community behind!** STAR's goal is to create avenues of opportunity for enterprising civic and municipal leaders in order to enhance their capacity to engage in community and individual change and growth.

The expressive arts have been used since ancient times to encourage physical, cognitive, spiritual, emotional, and social well-being for people of all ages. Researchers Samuel T. Gladding and John Caddy offer invaluable insights on the benefits of the creative arts and nature.

As early as 500 B.C., the Egyptians utilized concerts and dance in the treatment of mental illness. Likewise, the Greeks used drama to assist to "the disturbed" in releasing repressed emotions. The Hebrews also relied on music, and other arts to calm the soul. A young King David would play his harp to soothe a volatile King Saul.

Expressive arts such as singing, dancing, art, poetry, storytelling, music and drumming, positively impact diverse cultures through their capacity to serve as instruments of self expression. As a result, they have the ability to transform people inwardly.

The arts have three motivating qualities that make them ideal for teaching and learning about earth:

- A commitment to beauty, both in its reflection and creation, and to the joy beauty brings
- An intrinsic capacity to communicate to the whole person
- A splendid ability to heal the human heart

Caddy states, "Making art by nature is celebratory... It is worth celebrating. Showing kids how to say 'yes' to that smile—in a drawing, a poem, a dance, a song—reinforces positive affirmation with nature, and making it personally expressive is likely to make the art itself powerful."

***Everybody needs beauty as well as bread,
places to play in and pray in, where nature
may heal and cheer and give strength to
body and soul alike.***

~ John Muir, Naturalist

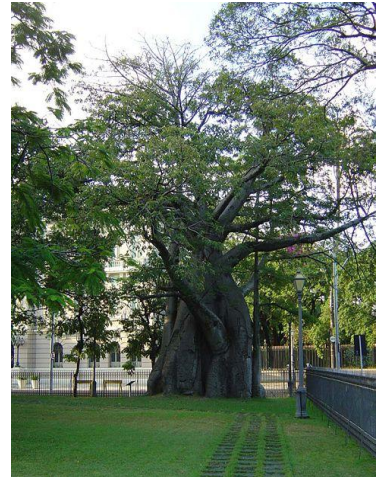


Therapeutic Power of Tree Education and
Cultural Heritage

Street Games Enhance Fellowship, Memories & Dreams

Tag
Hopscotch
Simon Says
Horseshoes
Marbles
Musical Chairs

Hide 'N Seek
Dodge & Kick Ball
Brainteasers & Riddles
Board Games & Puzzles
Kite Flying
Jump Rope (Double Dutch)



Story telling events often take place in the shadows of Baobab trees.

Outdoor Play Promotes Family Bonds & Healthy Living

Bicycling
Skating
Running

Walking
Foot Races
Hokey Pokey



Marilyn Simpson-Johnson, LGSW, Co-Coordinator, *Saving Towns Through Asset Revitalization, Forestry, Natural Resources & Wildlife Management, Urban Affairs & New Nontraditional Programs*, Alabama A&M University

Published by the Alabama Cooperative Extension System (Alabama A&M and Auburn Universities) in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. An Equal Opportunity Educator and Employer.

© 2008 by the Alabama Cooperative Extension System. All rights reserved.