



## The Joyous Adventure of Working with Teens near the ABLA/Brooks Homes

When working with teens, we have to remember that there are reasons that teens act the way they do. How can we maximize the positive aspect of these major adolescent characteristics? Teens have a unique world view, they are creative and able to think outside the box, teens are extremely resilient and energetic, and they are our future.

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, for every year a person works in their teens, their income raises 14-16 percent in their 20s. When teens choose to have a job, employment teaches responsibility and good work habits, improves time management and organizational skills, and helps them save money.

Working also gives teens an opportunity to establish contacts with adult employers that can serve as a future reference. As teens work a part-time job, they learn how capable they are, which in turn builds confidence and self-reliance. This can help teens feel more independent and have the confidence to further their development with a sense of responsibility.

Four summers ago, I had the opportunity to meet an amazing woman and artist. Anne Farley Gaines came to the Jane Addams Family Resource Center to work with teens and produce art that is now displayed throughout the Center, on page 3 of this newsletter and many other places. Ms. Gaines is truly amazing, incredible, kind, magnificent -- an inspiration to whomever she comes in contact with.

Anne Farley Gaines came to the Jane Addams Family Resource Center to work with local teens in July of 2018. Ms. Gaines has directed collaborative projects in this neighborhood ever since! Ms. Gaines stated her results have been magical and very transformative for all participants including herself. She was recommended to the Center as an artist who had worked with numerous populations from schools to entire communities to design and produce murals and other types of artworks collaboratively. Among the schools were Principia College in Elmhurst, IL where she was a visiting professor teaching Public Art and Jay Stream Middle School in Carol Stream,

IL. Among the communities she has worked with were Chicago's Little Village neighborhood in Chicago with participants at a women's shelter and numerous neighborhood volunteers and residents of all ages and backgrounds for a 30' x 15' mural in the city of Wichita Falls, TX.

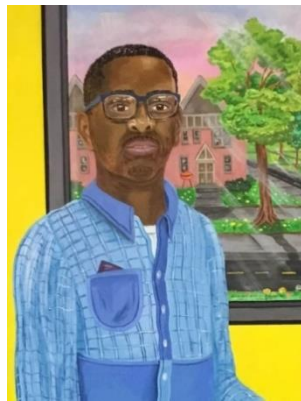
Ms. Gaines stated that her first assignment at the Center was to produce a Role Models series of ten 2' x 6' acrylic paintings on MDF board with 14 eager teenagers, a now-permanent display in the hallways. Bob Smith and Bob Klunk, previous employees, and she chose the role models to be painted with the teens – law enforcement personnel, a computer expert, medical personnel, school sports coaches, a veterinarian, a bus driver, construction workers, musicians, a firefighter, and a soul food chef. In Ms. Gaines' words "We started with ten copies of 4" x 12" drawings I had done with 1" grids so that the students could then follow and draw the grids on the panels. That helped them draw close approximations of the figures."

Once those drawings were complete came a 5-week odyssey of helping students paint the figures on the panels they chose. She also stated that it was beautiful to see them 'take ownership' of their panels and bring the figures to life! "I spent weeks 'tweaking' the panels into perfection following the program. Fast-forwarding, the Role Models series was dedicated on October 17, 2019, in a well-attended ceremony by James Bebley, Acting C.E.O. of the Chicago Housing Authority. After he and Mary Baggett, Local Advisory Council President, cut the ribbon, Bebley gave a very thoughtful speech on the importance of role models for our youth today. It was thrilling to see that two of the students showed up – Michael Gregory, or 'Big Mike,' who was also the main figure in the school sports coach panel, and Kenzel Turner, who had collaborated to paint the computer expert panel."





**ROLE MODELS** - Murals Completed with 14 teen participants with Lead Artist, **Anne Farley Gaines**, at the **Jane Addams Family Resource Center** with the generous assistance of **Employability Plus** SUMMER 2018 - WINTER 2019



c) Anne Farley Gaines 2019

**DEDICATED OCTOBER 17, 2019**