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May/June 2013

New Mexico Kids!

Vol. 22 No. 3

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Nalini, age 6

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Warehouse 21

Teen Center Nourishes Minds and Bodies of Santa Fe Youth

By **CRISTINA OLDS**

On a recent visit to Warehouse 21, the Santa Fe teen arts center, there was an art show opening upstairs, a sound and video exhibit looping in one of the theaters, a radio show being produced in the studio and kids were playing chess and preparing green chile stew for a group dinner in the common space downstairs.

"In Santa Fe, often there's not much to do," said 15-year-old Carlos. "There's bad crowds people get into. Warehouse 21 is a good place to be social, meet new people in a comfortable place." He also mentioned that kids are free to draw and write on the walls of the center, encouraging a creative outlet unique to the facility.

Warehouse 21's goal for the past 16 years has been to provide a safe space for artistic endeavors where young people are trained and can exhibit a variety of arts. On-going and often free classes such as break dancing and hula hooping can all be found on the schedule, as well as open mic poetry, DJ training and movie nights.

Twenty-five-year-old Ana Wooldridge, creative house manager, said she first came to Warehouse 21 as a young musician. From punk to metal, teens and adults bring all-ages shows to the venue, and many



Tamara Colaques, Frost Fowler and Justus Benally (left to right) take a break from painting the front porch floor area at Warehouse 21. Photo by Ana Gallegos y Reinhardt.

young people subsequently learn arts promotion, photography and sound skills. "We're the catalyst here," Wooldridge said of the center. "We're the blank canvas where kids can bring ideas."

Executive director Ana Gallegos y Reinhardt recounted when she and her 10-year-old son moved back to Santa Fe in the 1980s. She wanted to cultivate a theatrical program for kids, something she felt was lacking. "I decided to do my first play based on the diversity of subcultures of the punkers and rockers hanging out on the plaza," Gallegos said, and she wrote "Romero and Juliet in a Southwest Story." Kids turned out in droves to audition, she said.

Gallegos started Santa Fe Performing Arts in 1988 and that eventually transitioned into Warehouse 21. Her son, Sunny Reinhardt, went on to become a guitarist for Beck, among others. "He does that whole rock star thing, travels the world," Gallegos said. "We have a lot of proteges (from Warehouse 21) in bands like Beirut and Minus the Bear, from recording artists to professional photographers who say, 'Wow, that little spark of Warehouse 21 got me started.'"

The center's operating expenses are supported by grants and individual donations, which have been compromised as the lean economy pinches the arts. Gallegos said she's working to make the center more sustainable, calling Warehouse 21 an intervention program. "I get emails all the time saying, 'If it wasn't for you, I'd probably be on drugs, or end up in prison.'"

Part of the center's mission is job skills training, and kids with minor convictions can work off part of their sentences doing community service at Warehouse 21. Many of these teens return to the center, sometimes being employed, after their sentences are served. "They clean, assist with events, pick up trash," Wooldridge said. "All of them end up having a great respect for this place and becoming empowered with the responsibility. You see them become adults."

Ian Sinadinos, 18, just finished some sweeping and mopping as part of his community service for the petty misdemeanor of tagging. "I'd like to think I'm more of an artist than a vandal," he explained with a smile, and said he'd been coming to Warehouse 21 since he was 13. "This isn't just a place to hang out — if you have an interest in something, you can go to Warehouse and talk about it, and they'll have some way that you can apply yourself."

Long-time volunteer Chris Pacheco, 26, said he manages concessions and promotes shows. "Warehouse allowed me to get out of my comfort zone," he said. "It helped me realize my dream is in Japan and in two years I'll be moving there to teach English."

Another volunteer, 21-year-old Sean Martinez, said he remembered being nervous as a boy about going to the Warehouse, but he easily made friends and now mentors other youth. "This place has always been a universal ventilation system," he said. "I've been through a lot of things myself, so I can relate to issues kids have, like suicide or depression. But this place will always be the sanctuary that Santa Fe youth need."

Albuquerque/Santa Fe



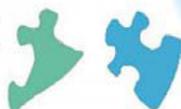
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Roust the House

Talented Teen Musicians Perform at The Outpost

By **CRISTINA OLDS**

A hush falls as two vocalists, two cellists, one violinist and a pianist pause before launching into a compilation from the musical, "Les Miserables." "Honestly, it's one of my favorite things to do in the world," said the pianist, Sage Sarason about her fifth appearance on stage at The Outpost Performance Space's Roust the House Teen Performance Night.

Sarason's band, Carpe Diem, normally consists of Sarason on piano or guitar, Hannah Romig singing soprano and Siobhan O'Neill singing alto. For this latest performance in November, they were billed as Carpe Diem and the Dowdy Sue, including the two cellists along with violin and vocals by Hannah Dowdy-Sue. Sarason was effusive about her admiration for the orchestral arrangement in the hit Broadway show, Les Miserables. "I'm personally obsessed with Les Mis," she said, and explained that Dowdy-Sue instructed the two hand-picked cellists the day before their performance to give the Broadway musical selections "a more powerful sound."

"We really did work hard to put the songs together, and to see it come alive on stage," Sarason said of the performance before a full house. "It was really special with the lighting and the sound, the microphone, the grand piano — it's cool."

Teens have hit the stage at Roust the House for about 10 years, said



Carpe Diem vocalists Hannah Romig and Siobhan O'Neill with guitarist Sage Sarason and violinist Hannah Dowdy-Sue perform on stage at The Outpost. Photo by Jim Gale.

Outpost founder and executive director Tom Guralnick. The first youth performances were variety shows for little kids, and as they matured, Guralnick wanted an opportunity for teens to play, too. With funding from the Albuquerque Community Foundation, the Hancock Family Foundation and a grant from the Urban Enhancement Trust Fund of the City of Albuquerque, The Outpost produces teen shows about eight times a year.

"The parents feel comfortable coming, the kids get a slightly upscale experience, and it's got a decent sound system," Guralnick said. The Outpost, a non-profit arts organization serving Albuquerque since 1988, is a family-friendly alternative to more mature-oriented venues for the underage performers. And the young artists make a little cash to boot. "Everybody gets paid at the end of the night," Guralnick tells the kids when introducing the show. "I always say, 'It may be your first paid gig, I hope it's not your last and I hope it's not your best paying gig.'"

The lineup at the November show included the Sandia Prep Jazz Band, stand up comedy by Remy Feldman, and ska band Viking Nightclub. Classical pianists, hip-hop groups, acoustic soloists and rock bands are other common participants in this mixed show. Some acts even go on to become locally popular bands, like the YaYaBoom Project and Lost Lingo. "No, the Shins never played here," Guralnick laughed. "But they could have." New and experienced performers alike are welcome to solicit a spot on the roster.

Octavian Mars Theoret, a 15-year-old who attends Amy Biehl Charter High School, played drums with his band, Society Unknown, for the first time in April, then again in November. He praised The Outpost's sound system and the venue in general. "My band is a mix of melodic punk, metal influence, and political lyrics," he explained. "We are a lot less serious as people than our music would show, but we're all serious musicians," Theoret said of his bandmates, Kyler Christie and Brendan Lee Knutson.

The girls of Carpe Diem have years of making music together under their collective belts. Friends since grade school, they all have musical family members and support from schoolmates who attend the events. "I hum and sing everywhere I go and people get kind of annoyed," O'Neill said. "But I think (fans at the shows) are enamored of us when they see us on stage."

They were impressed with the other bands, too, despite playing vastly different genres. The Sandia Prep Band brought a huge ensemble and a load of fans. The girls said they were surprised to run into friends from other schools in the show who they hadn't realized played instruments. "It's a really supportive atmosphere and people who you don't even know tell you, 'you were really good,'" Romig said.

Since the girls attend Albuquerque High School and spend their free time together, they don't practice as a band unless they know they have an upcoming gig. "We hang out and play music together," Sarason said. "We sing a little, sleep a little." Sarason picked up the guitar because they needed a portable instrument for accompaniment in the park. And, added O'Neill, "How many Adele songs can we do on the piano?"

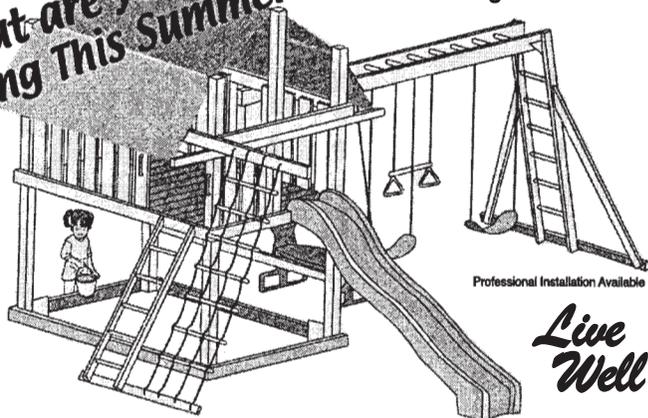
The 17-year-olds will all be off to college by next year, but Roust the House performances will go on. "It's fun singing in front of people with your best friends," Sarason said. "There's something special about that."

Albuquerque

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