Colorado Film School faculty partner with young artists at DAVA

Give them the right tools, and young people are eager to show their creative side. But, let on that they’re learning teamwork and leadership skills as they create? Not so fast; they might resist! Yet, youth leaders and instructors say that students right here in Aurora are acquiring important new abilities, thanks to a partnership between the Colorado Film School and Downtown Aurora Visual Arts (DAVA).

For the past three summers, Colorado Film School faculty members Geoffrey Chadwick and Galina Boulgakova have volunteered to work with youth participating in DAVA programs. This past summer, working with Chadwick, young filmmakers pitched ideas, wrote, acted, directed, and edited their own films.

Susan Jenson, DAVA executive director, is enthusiastic: “This has been the single most powerful project we have ever had at DAVA, the one the kids talk about as their favorite,” she says. “It represents the most fertile learning curve, the dream dimension amplified.”

DAVA provides after-school programming and has become an anchor of free arts education for urban children in Aurora. “DAVA programs and projects encourage youth to develop their imaginations and character, and to step up as future leaders,” Jenson says. “Geoffrey’s film project is a perfect example of how ongoing, long-term programming helps kids deepen their learning and form solid relationships with instructors and mentors.”

Students completed four short films with Chadwick’s guidance: “A Day in the Life of DAVA,” “Be Yourself,” “Dog Boy,” and “ConTRAPtion.”

“The project was about creative problem-solving for the students, and the process for making the films was designed to encourage creativity,” Chadwick explains. “All of the actors and directors were DAVA youth. From start to finish, they needed to find a way to make their films work.” He added that the films had no narration, so soundtracks appropriate to each were carefully selected by the young artists. Most productions were filmed in the DAVA neighborhood, and some utilized the “green screen” at the film school. Faculty member Galina Boulgakova served as acting coach, and CFS students Jhene Chase and Yamada Garner also provided assistance.

David, a third-year DAVA student, said he benefits from the after-school program. “I get to try out different kinds of projects, like sculpture, and graphics, but film interests me the most, because of the technology I get to use,” he said. Liam, student producer on the DAVA documentary, says that he doesn’t know of any other organization with this kind of program. “I always wanted to do cool art like this, and I knew I wanted to make movies, so it was great that this summer I actually got to do that,” he says.

“The kids work really well together,” Chadwick explains. “They work in teams, so they learn collaboration. They are learning to be leaders by engaging in these kinds of projects. They are young, but they are managers, already!”

DAVA staffer Luzia Ornelas agrees, and reports that the students are very responsible. “They really wanted these to be good films, so they worked extra hard,” she says. “This is a great opportunity for them to learn to be leaders and receive help and support when they need it. And with projects like this one, led by Geoff and others from the film school, it’s easy to see the impact we can have on a child.”

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New Lowry entrance celebrated at ribbon cutting

A special Sept. 16 ribbon cutting was held in celebration of the conclusion of the first phase of the CCA: Transforming Lowry, Transforming Lives capital campaign. CCA Foundation board members, college students, faculty and staff, donors, and other invited guests attended the event, which showcased the dynamic new environment that has been created at the Lowry Campus.

Speakers included Dr. Lauren Johnson, CCA alumna; Ret. Major Gen. Dale Tabor, manager of major gifts at Mile High United Way; Ed Tauer, mayor, City of Aurora; Dr. Nancy McCallin, president, Colorado Community College System; Brad Pierce, president, CCA Foundation board of directors; Dr. Linda Bowman, CCA president; and Tom Markham, executive director, Lowry Redevelopment Authority.

“Education is Lowry’s legacy,” Markham told the crowd. “This is not just what CCA can do for this campus, but what CCA can do for the community. Your efforts are very important to the Lowry community overall.”

President Bowman spoke of her vision for a prosperous and educated community. “We want people to look back someday and be proud of what we’ve done here,” she said. “We must continue to rise up and do what we need to do. The renovations you see here are just the beginning.”

The project, the first of its kind at the Lowry Campus, has formed a more inviting atmosphere. The renovation allows for the provision of essential services for students previously available only at the CentreTech Campus, including admissions, assessment testing, financial aid, and academic advising. A new entryway and plaza have been created, biology and chemistry laboratories renovated and newly equipped, and gathering and study spaces developed. The result is a remarkable transformation, part of the college’s goal to continue to improve educational access and training to power the economic development of the eastern metro area.

Operation Mountain Guardian a chance to showcase, reflect

One of the largest emergency drills ever held in the state of Colorado took place Sept. 23, and CCA played an essential role in its implementation from start to finish.

The media coverage of Operation Mountain Guardian was hard to miss, thanks to the sheer scope and scale of the exercise. OMG involved more than 100 agencies and nearly 2,000 volunteers and professional emergency responders. The drill took place at multiple locations across the Denver/Aurora metro, at four main sites: Park Meadows Mall, Smedley Elementary School, Denver Union Station, and the Lowry Campus.

The exercise was supported with grant funding from the Department of Homeland Security through FEMA Region VIII and the State of Colorado Governor’s Office of Homeland Security. Nearly two years in the planning, it was designed to test the capabilities of regional first responders in interagency collaboration and communications in a scenario involving a terrorist-driven catastrophic situation.

In its first major “test drive” since last year’s grand opening, CCA’s Disaster Management Institute served as the “Master Exercise Control Center” for the drill—FEMA language meaning that the site was the location from which operations for the entire, day-long event were based. In addition to serving in this essential role, the DMI’s adjacent control room operated as the “Venue Exercise Control Center”—where operations for the Lowry portion of the exercise were based.

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Novelists, slam poets inspire: National Day on Writing

How do you pursue a passion for writing? CCA students learned more about the topic from numerous writers, poets, and spoken word artists on Oct. 20 as part of the college’s celebration of the National Day on Writing.

Acclaimed author Carleen Brice shared how she came to terms with her place as a writer: “I realized that I could be a black writer, even if I wasn’t Alice Walker or Toni Morrison,” she explained. Brice, author of the novels “Orange Mint and Honey,” a number-one Denver Post bestseller, and “Children of the Waters,” described how she parlayed a career in public relations into a career as an author. She said that a successful technique she employs to strengthen her writing is to swap manuscripts with other writers to obtain feedback.

Students also enjoyed performances by Suzi Q. Smith and Isis. “Slam poets are sometimes pushed into the margins, but this is writing,” said Isis, 2006 Denver City Slam Champion. “And it saved my life.” Smith noted that she likes to work history references into her poetry. “A lot of artists’ work comes from a deep and broken place, but I am pleased to create my work from where I am now,” she said.

Author Dan Guenther presented “Writing: An Anchor to Lifelong Learning and Discovery.” Guenther was a captain in the U.S. Marine Corps, serving in Vietnam, where he was awarded the Bronze Star with "V" for valor. His novel “Glossy Black Cockatoos” was the 2010 Colorado Authors’ League Award selection for Genre Fiction. He told students to embrace lifelong learning as a core value. “Some of us do it unconsciously, and some plan it out,” he said. He read some of his poetry aloud, including “A Walk in the Wetlands,” a work about discovery and Colorado. Guenther counseled future writers to find common ground with other people, and he credited his lifetime successes with being a problem-solver, rather than being someone who just wore their authority on their sleeve.

Students also heard from CCA’s Wayne Gilbert, who presented the interactive workshop “The Spirit of Spoken Word,” and CCA’s Rachel Ankney, who held the workshop “Ekphrasis: Deriving Poetry from Art.”

Gibe Gelan named a Leader of Promise Scholar

Student and Phi Theta Kappa member Gibe Gelan has been selected as a 2011 Coca-Cola Leaders of Promise Scholar. His selection was based on the high score he earned in the Coca-Cola Leaders of Promise Scholarship competition, for which 1,154 applications were received. This scholarship provides new Phi Theta Kappa members with financial resources to help defray educational expenses while enrolled in a two-year college and encourages participation in Society programs.

As a Coca-Cola Leaders of Promise Scholar, he will receive a $1,000 scholarship disbursed in two equal payments of $500 per semester, for this fall and for next spring. Leaders of Promise Scholars must have a 3.25 cumulative GPA or above and must participate in their Phi Theta Kappa chapter as outlined in the Participation Requirement Form.
Students tell SBCCOE of CCA opportunity

Ian Jones and Jaime Corchado met with the State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education on Sept. 14 and spoke from the heart about their summer experience at NASA’s Johnson Space Center. Jones and Corchado were two of five CCA students to fly on NASA’s KC-135 aircraft as part of a science experiment. The students thanked the board for the life-changing opportunities they have had, and President Linda Bowman and Victor Andersen, Team Pioneer mentor and CCA science professor, shared their pride in the students. CCA has participated in space science projects as an affiliate institution of the Colorado Space Grant Consortium since 2009.

CFS Films with Gov. Hickenlooper

The Colorado Film School was recently selected by Gov. John Hickenlooper to produce a public service announcement (PSA) encouraging eligible Coloradans to save time by renewing their driver's license online. License renewal also gives people the opportunity to designate themselves as organ, eye and tissue donors. Donor Alliance, Colorado’s organ and tissue procurement organization, teamed up with the Division of Motor Vehicles and Coloradogov to launch this public education campaign. The PSAs feature Hickenlooper, and about 30 volunteers from Donor Alliance and the film school donated their time to the project.
Audiences wowed!
The Huitzilopochtli Aztec Dance Group wowed its CCA audience on Sept. 28 with a performance in recognition of National Hispanic Heritage Month.

Sherlin Lecture draws full house
From left: CCA faculty member Victor Andersen, Dr. Philip Armitage, and CCA adjunct faculty member Jerry Sherlin. An associate professor at the University of Colorado Boulder, Armitage delivered the Sherlin Lecture, “The Search for Another Earth,” on Nov. 4. The lecture is named for Jerry Sherlin.

CCC Kick-Off invites support
CCA held Colorado Combined Campaign Kick-Offs at CentreTech and at Lowry. Agencies represented were the Alzheimer’s Association; Colorado Homeless Families; Working Together Foundation; HawkQuest; International Hearing Dog, Inc.; Rocky Mountain Raptor; Mile High Youth Corps; Qualistar; the CCA Foundation; ALS/Lou Gehrig’s Disease; and Aurora Community Connection. For information on donating to these and other charities that benefit Coloradans, visit http://www.colorado.gov/ccc/. Donations are voluntary, confidential, and tax-deductible. Co-coordinators for this year’s campaign at CCA are Debbie Irvine, Traci Fielden, and Tracy Mendoza.

Note: Dec. 6, Colorado Gives Day, is the best day to give as funds are increased by FirstBank match.
Constitution Day

A lively group participated in the Sept. 14 Constitution Day Bowl, an annual event engineered by Chair of Social Sciences Geoff Hunt and Bobby Pace, adjunct political science faculty member. Questions were as simple as "who is the governor of your state?" and "name three of the original states" to more challenging queries such as "who is Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court?" and "why did the colonists fight the British?" Other questions: "Name one of the writers of the Federalist Papers" and "what is the official name of the Civil War?" One stumper for students: "Which Colorado city is named for a vice president?" (Answer: Breckenridge.)

A fond farewell to Patrick Goggin

The college held an Oct. 7 going-away party for Patrick Goggin, who has moved to Texas. "Patrick has been a wonderful member of the CCA family since the early nineties," said Valerie Sanguiliano, assistant college registrar. "He is a loved friend and co-worker and we will miss him greatly. He is such an incredible human being, and his positive attitude and loving spirit puts a smile on anyone's face."

B-I-N-G-O!

As part of an event recognizing Disability Awareness Month, the college offered an American Sign Language presentation, where attendees played bingo to test their new skills.
Kudos to...  
Colorado Film School students and faculty whose work was accepted at the 34th annual Starz Denver Film Fest. Among the films accepted were “Ms. G’s Class,” by adjunct instructor Dick Alweis, director/producer/editor, and CFS Technology Manager/adjunct Scott Van Ordstrand, cinematographer.

...and to Cheryl Waite, academic advisor and adjunct Instructor, whose publication “Denver’s Disorderly Women,” based on her master’s thesis, was selected for inclusion in Denver Inside and Out, Number 16, 2011, in the Journal of Colorado History. The publication is a peer-reviewed historical journal. “She cuts through the folklore and uses evidence to create an accurate profile of the prostitution industry, something no one before had bothered to do,” said Chair of Social Sciences Geoffrey Hunt. “She has changed the interpretation of the topic.”

Dr. Todd Bergren Room named at Lowry  
President Linda Bowman has announced the formal naming of CCA’s Dr. Todd Bergren Room in the West Quad building on the Lowry Campus. “Located near our new campus entrance, the Dr. Todd Bergren Room will be a prominent reminder of Todd’s wonderful work and his impact on students, colleagues, and the community,” Bowman said. “Todd served not only as a faculty member but as a faculty leader for our state. He was an inspiration as a teacher, a friend, as a colleague, and his work and life have brought hope and success to so many students and their families.” Dr. Bergren passed away in May following a lengthy illness.

Adjunct faculty member Maxey publishes book on civility  
The book “Civil Business: Civil Practice in Corporations and Society,” described as a “light academic” mixed with practical business advice, was recently self-published by economics adjunct faculty member Ken Maxey. The book “dissects the background and essence of American civility,” the jacket reads, and delves into “the roots of our incivility towards one another and (offers) practical advice for societal members, particularly those in the business world, to cultivate civil practice in their organizations.”

Maxey is the owner of Colorado Writing Services and serves as Special Assistant, Policy and Administration, for the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation.

Ronald S. Miller appointed to Foundation Board  
Ronald S. Miller has been appointed to CCA Foundation (CCAF) board of directors. Miller is president of Miller Municipal Consultants, Inc. As president of Miller Municipal Consultants, Inc., he leads a consulting company that specializes in management consulting and executive recruitment for public organizations.

Miller was city manager for the City of Aurora from 1997 to 2010, and during his tenure received numerous awards and commendations. He previously served as the chief administrative staff person for several other U.S. cities including Naperville, Ill., Topeka, Kan., and Cherry Hill Township, N.J.

“The Board and I are pleased to welcome Mr. Miller to our organization,” said Diana Whye, CCAF executive director. “We will benefit greatly from his expertise, particularly in the areas of public/private partnership creation and business development.”

Colorado Film School Fall Student Show.  7 p.m., Dec. 8. Harkins Theatres at Northfield, 8300 E. Northfield Blvd., Denver, CO 80238. Free.

For more information, visit www.ColoradoFilmSchool.net.

Performing Arts Showcase.  7:30 p.m., Dec. 9. Larry D. Carter Theatre. Free.

Jazz Band Performance.  7:30 p.m., Dec. 10. Larry D. Carter Theatre. Free.

See http://ccaurora.edu/news-events/event-calendar for more events.

Tales from Tribal Nations.  2 p.m., Nov. 20. Traditional American Indian stories accompanied by Native American flute music, with Cherokee tribal member Bailey Phelps. Cost: $4; $3 for residents. To reserve a ticket, call 303-326-8650 and ask for class #153197. Aurora History Museum, 15051 E. Alameda Pkwy., Aurora, CO 80012.

Savvy Solar Consumer Workshop.  6-7:30 p.m., Dec. 6., Aurora Municipal Center, 15151 E. Alameda Pkwy., Aurora, CO 80012. For more information, 303-739-7250 or planning@auroragov.org.

See http://www.auroragov.org for more events.