



# WATERSHED

Center for the Ceramic Arts

Fall 2004 Newsletter

## A Bittersweet Ending . . .

In 2004, Watershed's Board decided to close its 15 year workshop program for people with AIDS. Following is a letter to us all from Watershed Founder and workshop artist/facilitator Lynn Duryea who nurtured the program faithfully all these years. We are most grateful to Lynn for what she's given us all through this work.

It isn't often that one gets to participate in life-changing experiences, but that's what the 1992 session of The Watershed Workshop for People with AIDS was for me. It was a privilege to be part of that incredibly dynamic group of people, nearly all of whom are

now deceased, as together we saw the ways that creativity and community can heal. The willingness to be open and to share, to laugh and to cry, to make and to be that pervaded that group has been part of all 16 sessions of the workshop. We've heard over and over again from participants and family the powerful and lasting effects that the workshop has had.

It's bittersweet to end this workshop with the 2004 session. We who have been fortunate enough to be part of the experience know very well how profound it has been. But things have changed, some for the better. Over the



past few years we've seen applications to the workshop level off and then dwindle, which we hope means some of the urgency of the early years has

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shifted. Many People Living with HIV/AIDS are able to live longer healthier lives, so that for some the disease has become chronic

rather than acute. For a combination of reasons it's become increasingly difficult to raise the money necessary to support the workshop. What to do about the situation has been an on-going conversation for the past few years. We've made adjustments and changes in the format and content of the workshop to better serve People Living with HIV / AIDS while pursuing different funding sources, but it's become clear that it's time to close.

There are many people to thank, beginning with art therapist **Gustavo Gonzalez** and Watershed board member **Alix Trub** who brought the first workshop to Watershed in 1991. **Bill Daley's** plea for help at that year's NCECA conference in Tempe helped



fund the session. Since then donations ranging from \$10 to thousands have allowed us to continue. Watershed Directors **Holly Walker** and **Lynn Thompson**, along with the Board of Trustees, supported this endeavor in a long list of ways. **Mackenzie Harris** and **Ellen Hirschberg** have been invaluable and energetic co-facilitators who were instrumental in forming the concept, structure and content of the workshop. Thanks as well to all of the healing professionals who've been part of the 16 sessions. A very special thanks goes to all of the staff who fed us and supported us, lived and worked with us. You all know well what a transformative experience this has been. Personally, I've been thanked over and over again by the privilege of being part of this extraordinary endeavor. I've gotten much more than I gave.

As we end this chapter of Watershed's history, I know that the workshop doesn't really end. It lives in the present and in our memories, in the connections and friendships that were made, in the pots and drawings and masks, and in the continuing creativity of so many people who've participated.

— Lynn Duryea

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