

OASIS

Operation Artists, Scholars, and Innovators

In the Park Neighborhoods (Lincoln Village and Baran Park)

March/April, 2011

Project OASIS is a long-term effort by Urban Anthropology Inc. to draw artists (of all genres) and humanities scholars to the Park Neighborhoods in order to enhance the cultural richness of the Old South Side. Urban Anthropology Inc., located in the Park Neighborhoods, is the only nonprofit in the US specializing in cultural anthropology.

Folk Art: What's new?

Meet three of the newest folk artists in the Park Neighborhoods

In the last several months, two artists have leased studio space at Studio De Arte at 2400 S. 5th Place, and a third artist has moved to Lincoln Village from another neighborhood. Typical of the Park Neighborhoods, these three artists come from culturally diverse backgrounds.

Meet Mickie LaRoque

"My love is children and art," Mickie proudly states. "So I put them together." Mickie is an Ojibwe from the White Earth Reservation in MN. She lived in Bay View for a number of years before moving west to Lincoln Village. She describes her work as "cultural heritage art" and works mainly with charcoal, art prints and ceramics.

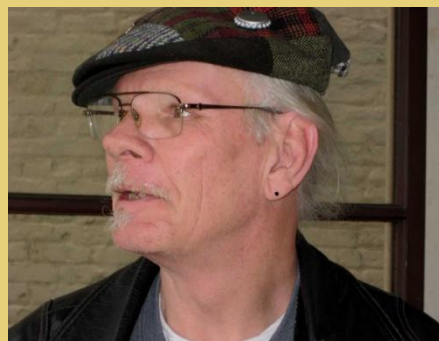
In addition, she taught art at the Indian Community School in Milwaukee for four years. There she discovered her passion for helping children gain self esteem through art and exposing their work to the public.



A recipient of multiple awards, Mickie has had showings at the Charles Allis Museum, UW-M, and Indian Summer.

Right now Mickie is purchasing a home in the Park Neighborhoods. "I love the Park [Kosciuszko] and the Basilica, and all the activities at the Park Center."

Meet Ken Spears



Ken is the newest transplant to the Park Neighborhoods. He moved to his new place on Lincoln Avenue just a month ago.

A fishing fanatic, Ken makes and sells leadhead jigs, but with a twist. He drills out the sides and puts glass beads inside so the beads rattle, imitating the sound a crayfish makes when escaping a predator. "They catch fish when nothing else will."

What does Ken think of the Park Neighborhoods in his short tenure here? "I love the neighborhood, especially Fiesta Garibaldi's. I love the sense of history that the whole of the neighborhood exudes. I love the people because I do not do well in strictly white places." Ken is European American and Blackfoot.

Meet Maria Hernandez

Maria has joined Mickie LaRoque at Studio de Arte. She has a unique talent for creating art out of material she recycles from refuse people toss on the street. She also is a resident of the Park Neighborhoods.



Like Mickie RaRoque, Maria enjoys teaching children. She helped transform a barn in a small poor village in Mexico to a school house and soon learned how much she enjoyed introducing them to art. In Mexico and here, she uses the inspiration of Mexican artist Pedro Linares to expand the kids' imaginations.

"I see art I like and I mimic it," Maria says, through a translator. "But I'm all about bringing about awareness and recycling. I like to keep children off electronics and television by showing them how you can take the garbage off the ground and use it for something."

In the example below, Maria and her students picked up fast food wrappers from the streets, and through a special folding and tucking process she mastered, she crafts handbags from the wrappers. The canoe-shape at the bottom of the photo is the bottom of a handbag in the making.



Maria also makes handbags from natural materials and the flip tops on soda and beer cans. Below is a completed handbag and a close-up (below that) of the way that Maria intertwines the can tops with the yarn.



Maria says she likes the Park Neighborhoods because "things here are up and coming and everything is in distance."

Folk artist of long standing

Jose Chavez of the Park Neighborhoods



Born in Michoacan, Mexico, Jose has lived in Milwaukee since 1983. He lives in the Baran Park neighborhood at 3rd and Lincoln, where he also has his studio.

A self-taught interdisciplinary artist and curator, Jose uses techniques developed by pre-Columbian indigenous people of his home state in the creation of his work.

His work has been exhibited in museums and galleries in the United States and Mexico. His last public work, a tile mural, was commissioned by the Milwaukee Housing Authority to be installed in the new state of the art Olga Village Building.

Jose Chavez was recently awarded the Folk and Traditional Arts Apprenticeship grant to teach his paper mache sculpting techniques to an apprentice in the Latino community.

Jose was also co-founder of the Milwaukee Artist Market and has served in a variety of boards and committees around the city of Milwaukee.



What does Jose think of his long-time neighborhood? "I love to live in the Park Neighborhoods because it is affordable, friendly and readily accessible from and to any point within the city. By the same token, I love the fact that in the area we have good restaurants and businesses within walking distance. Also important is the fact that I wanted to contribute to the betterment of the neighborhood by rehabilitating an old building and giving it a new and better life."

Join our living tour of the Park Neighborhoods

The Park Neighborhoods' resident association, Urban Anthropology Inc. is actively drawing OASIS people to our area to live, work, and create new organizations or businesses in this beautiful area (see a booklet on neighborhood assets at <http://www.urban-anthropology.org/OCCbook%20v2a.pdf>). If you are an artist of any kind, a humanities scholar, or an innovator such as a community activist or creative entrepreneur, you are eligible to join a series of tours we will be scheduling for this neighborhood. Our bus excursions include homes and apartments for sale and rent, snacks at our local ethnic restaurants, and a tour of our neighborhood assets. The next tour is scheduled for May 14 (Saturday). Everything, including the food, is free. We also offer home buying workshops to help community-contributing people with modest incomes own homes. Contact Rick Petrie (below) to sign up.

Urban Anthropology Inc. (UrbAn)

Contact Rick Petrie at UrbAn: 414 271-9417 or RickPetrie@Gmail.com