

Leadership: Terri Engel
<http://www.hozhoniartists.org>

It is our honor to nominate Terri Engel for the Viola Leadership Award.

In 1995, Ms. Engel founded the “Artistic Expressions Therapeutic Art Program” for adults with developmental disabilities at the Hozhoni Foundation. The program was begun on a trial basis for those who expressed an interest in art, but who could not fit into existing community programs or art classes due to physical or emotional disabilities and those individuals who demonstrated socially unacceptable behavior, including aggression towards self or others. Under Terri’s guidance, the visual arts program proved successful in enhancing communication and reducing socially unacceptable behaviors as individuals learned to use their art as a form of acceptable expression. It became evident to Terri that each individual had ability for artistic accomplishments. The program quickly became a permanent addition to Hozhoni’s programmatic offerings. Over time, Terri’s leadership helped the program and the artists to blossom. Individuals showing little or no self-esteem or self-respect now truly exhibit these outcomes, exemplified by a *dramatic decrease* in socially unacceptable behaviors and a *significant increase* in communication skills. Participants benefit from:

- Increased self-esteem,
- Increased communication skills,
- Increased independence,
- Community integration,
- Increased fine motor skills,
- Increased independent choice making,
- Reduction in violent behaviors toward self and others, and
- Reduction of socially unacceptable behaviors

The program utilizes many mediums: ceramics, leatherwork, painting, textile, print making, sculpture, and computer animation. Now with Terri’s leadership, Hozhoni’s visual arts program has expanded to include a film program. Clients work individually or together with staff supervision to write scripts, create scenery, rehearse with NAU Speech, work the camera, edit, and produce background music for their projects. The philosophy is to produce films by and about people with disabilities. This unique concept is one reason Terri’s insight and direction inspires the art instructors staffing the studio and the artists alike.

Terri constantly seeks collaborations and appropriate venues to best suite the artists’ needs and to provide for personal and professional growth. The recognition of the Hozhoni artists has extended beyond Flagstaff, AZ to Phoenix, AZ to Barnaul, Siberia, Russia for “My World”, as well to Glasgow, Scotland for “Project Ability.” With Terri’s vision and resolve, Hozhoni’s Expressive Arts Program has grown from an introductory class of six participants to

approximately 35 students divided between beginning art and advanced art programs, including an art studio and a gallery representing the works of adults with disabilities – the first of its kind in the Southwest.

The community of Flagstaff has come to accept and be involved with Hozhoni's artists and the Artistic Expressions Art Program. Terri has been instrumental in arranging collaborations with the Flagstaff Artists Coalition, the Beasley Gallery at NAU, Flagstaff Cultural Partners, PAWS, FUSD, and others. Because of her leadership, Hozhoni's artists have participated in First Friday Art Walk, Open Studios Tours, and various collaborative exhibits. The artists are recognized first as artists – for their skill and unique perspective. Their disabilities have taken a back seat to their talent.

In addition to the many artists with disabilities that Terri has mentored, she has also provided an environment for staff where they have been able to explore their own skills and refine their techniques. It has been through mutual desire for Terri and her staff instructors to develop a safe and nurturing environment whereby great works by all have been achieved.

Awards and Recognitions:

- 2007 "Advocate of the Year," Terri Engel, Assistant Director Day Program Services, City of Flagstaff Commission on Disability Awareness
- 2007 The Hozhoni Art Gallery opened with the studio being dedicated to and named after Terri Engel for her vision and leadership in perusing and growing Hozhoni's art program.
- 2000 "Best Practice Recognition," Hozhoni's Artistic Expressions Art Program – Arizona Department of Economic Security, Department of Developmental Disabilities

The Hozhoni Foundation received the following awards and recognition which resulted in part due to the development of the Artistic Expressions Art Therapy program:

- 2011 "Service Agency of the Year," City of Flagstaff Commission on Disability Awareness
- 2007 "Service Agency of the Year," City of Flagstaff Commission on Disability Awareness
- 2007 "Special Dedication," City of Flagstaff Commission on Disability Awareness