



the business of hope for youth

How Long Have You Been Doing This?

by Paul Ramsour, Executive Director

Who would have thought that selling a few birdfeeders made by kids at a Minneapolis park would turn into a nonprofit organization that is still going strong 13 years later? Every time we do a community workshop, people always ask, "how long have you been doing this?" I always have to answer that question in two ways. We started doing this as a component of an after-school program started by the Minneapolis Jaycees Charitable Foundation back in 1993. In September 2002, we incorporated as a separate nonprofit organization. Over the years, we have sold over 12,000 bird feeders and thousands of screen printed t-shirts.

What makes us keep doing it? Honestly, it is the youth we work with. Currently we offer two programs. Our Leadership Program works with youth that have had trouble staying engaged in school. Their commitment to the program is limited to several training programs at the Elpis shop and facilitating 10 - 12 experiential work-

shops in the community. These are youth that other people have labeled a "problem" that needs to be fixed. In the leadership program, they are seen as resources that facilitate a learning process. They in fact become the teachers. This is a unique role for them.

The Community Internship program works with youth that are homeless or precariously housed. The program allows them to gain work experience in the Elpis shop

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once a week for up to a year. Most of these youth are living in transitional housing, and the Elpis stipend covers their minimum monthly rent and gives them a year's worth of work history.

It has been my experience over the years that given the chance to perform, youth can accomplish great things. Whether as participant or facilitator, youth take great pride in creating something with their own hands or helping others do so. I can still remember the circumstances in which I made my first birdhouse. I was 5 years old. It still has an impact on me.

Volunteer Profile "Time to Step Up"

Elpis is fortunate to have a regular volunteer in the screen-printing area. We met Chris Loch at a holiday craft fair at Corcoran Park. He was selling T-shirts and Elpis was selling bird feeders. Several weeks later, Chris called the Elpis shop and said he wanted to "step up" and help teach youth how to screen print.

Over the past year, Chris has helped a dozen youth learn how to set up screen-printing jobs, mix ink, drag ink, count, sort, and box finished shirts. There are many variables to screen-printing. Chris has been meticulous in his approach to screen-printing. This attention to detail has helped many youth look at how they do things in life. We thank you for making a difference.

Youth Artist

I ride down Lake Street in Minneapolis and look at the graffiti on the sides of buildings and ask two questions:

Why do people feel the need to do that, and how can we redirect that talent to something more positive?

Ryan Bethke is a young artist that

focused his talent to help Elpis design a small line of “tag art” shirts. Elpis has license agreements with young artists to produce designs for Elpis T-shirts. The “tag art” shirts on the flyer enclosed in this newsletter are a result of that agreement. You can help support the Elpis organization and youth artists by purchasing one of these T-shirts.

Elpis Enterprises

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Elpis Enterprises (Elpis is Greek for hope) is a youth development organization focusing on youth employment training and small business education. Participants “work” all areas of the business and learn, earn, and profit as they go. Operating business enterprises include a four-color screen-printing operation and a woodworking shop that utilizes only reclaimed and recycled wood products.

Board of Directors:

Sarah Johansen, President
 Lisa Griebel, Secretary
 Jim Horn, Treasurer
 Mike Patrick
 Bob Torgerson
 Kurt Johansen
 Tom Troolin

Executive Director: Paul Ramsour

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Workshop Highlight

Mike Patrick is an Elpis board member. One of Mike’s favorite phrases is, “what are you going to do with that?” Mike is the person that convinced Elpis to use only recycled or reclaimed wood in all of its products. Now we ask that question all the time. We asked that question to Built Right Fence. They identified an old fence in a limited quantity. It was such nice wood that we couldn’t pass it up. It

didn’t fit our normal specifications so we didn’t really know what we were going to do with it, but we



I love my new home.



Elpis and the Raptor Center teamed up to make kestrel nesting boxes out of recycled wood.

saved it anyway. Last spring, we got a call from the Raptor Center at

the University of Minnesota. An old friend of ours asked us if we could help some students from the

Minnesota Business Academy build some kestrel boxes as part of a weeklong project at the Raptor Center. We had the perfect wood. Planed, glued and cut to size, we made 10 kestrel boxes for the Raptor Center. It was a great project and gave life to some old fence wood that can now help house some growing kestrels.

The Elpis Interview:

Jessyca Macklin

Jessyca was born in Fargo, North Dakota, and has lived in Minnesota since 1995. She came to Elpis as a Youthlink referral, and has worked as an intern at Elpis since March of this year. As an intern, she is learning the shirt printing business and also gets involved in the youth wood-working projects. Like other Elpis interns, Jessyca has seen her share of difficulties in life. She lived in youth and homeless shelters after being on her own since age 18. She currently lives in the St. Barnabas Apartments, a Central Community Housing Trust property that provides housing for youth and working adults. Living in St. Barnabas has given her an opportunity to be self-sufficient, and also to help others. She teaches cooking classes to other tenants two times per week.

Jessyca has found her time with Elpis to be very rewarding. She loves the fact that she is learning job skills, but also learning to adapt her style to work with children, teens, and adults. In fact, although Jessyca is attending the Minneapolis Community and



Technical College as a Culinary Arts student, she is strongly considering pursuing a career in some form of child development profession. She loves working with children.

Jessyca is starting to become very involved in the community, and she's starting to get noticed! She has been asked to speak in front of 150 people at a Youthlink fundraising dinner on October 11. She also was asked by the Central Community Housing Trust to help with a movie they're producing to show to funders. And she was recently highlighted in the *Minneapolis Southwest Journal* for the work she's doing with the Groveland food shelter.

Community Partners

Elpis Enterprises is proud to have several community partners that schedule repeated workshops in the community, allowing our youth to get hands-on experience. One partner is Minneapolis Parks and Recreation. We work with the Environmental Operations department to schedule over 60 bird-feeder-building workshops in recreation centers throughout Minneapolis. This partnership has continually challenged us to come up with new designs and new assembly methods. Two programs in our fall calendar are open to the public. Please stop by and see how our workshops are set up. See **page four** for a workshop calendar.

Earth Day



For the past 2 years, Elpis has participated in an Earth Day Celebration at Kenny Park. This year, youth and adults built small planter boxes out of recycled cedar fencing.

Newsletter New Look

The Elpis Enterprises Newsletter has a new look thanks to Jennifer Larson. Thank you Jennifer for helping Elpis communicate our good work in a professional manner.

September

15	5:30 PM	Windom South
27	4:00 PM	Central Gym
28	2:30 PM	Hidden Oaks Middle School, Prior Lake

October

1	1:00 PM	Kenwood
4	4:00 PM	Loring Park
16	3:30 PM	North Commons
19	7:00 PM	Morris Park
24	4:00 PM	Whittier Park
26	5:00 PM	Corcoran Park

November

1	4:00 PM	Windom South
2	4:00 PM	Stewart Park
3	5:30 PM	Peavey Park
5	1:00 PM	Wood Lake Nature Center
7	7:00 PM	Wood Lake Nature Center, City of Richfield
8	4:00 PM	Farview Park
14	4:00 PM	Phelps Park
15	4:00 PM	Elliot Park
22	6:00 PM	Harrison Park

December

6	4:00 PM	Phillips Park
8	7:00 PM	Windom South
12	3:30 PM	Folwell Park
19	4:00 PM	Bethune Park

Workshops listed in bold are open to the public. Please join us!



Capacity Building

For the past year, Elpis has been building capacity thanks to a grant from the Minneapolis Council of Churches. Due in part to the grant, Elpis was able to purchase a new screen-printing press. This press is a 6-color press and will allow us to print more creative and detailed T-shirts. We have already printed several thousand shirts on the new press.

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