

2010/11 Worldstudio AIGA Scholarships Coyne Family Foundation Award



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Entertaining children is easy enough at first glance, but keeping them enthused can be very difficult. Last summer as an intern for the Chicago Children's Museum (CCM) I learned that the real challenge is entertaining them by encouraging them to use their imaginations and express themselves. I believe that it is so important for children to hold onto these lessons and continue to think creatively.

Working at the CCM was an inspirational experience for me. I learned a lot about the creative development of children by watching them play. I also helped them learn important lessons about being comfortable expressing themselves to other people. I had the opportunity to completely transform a room into an interactive exhibit of my choice. I chose a fairy tale theme, and focused on the idea of storytelling and performance. I set up a stage, laid out costumes and toys and had a reading corner set aside just for the children and their parents. I even created a giant



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storybook for the kids to document their stories and ideas. The whole experience taught me how learning, imagination and play are intertwined, and really solidified my desire to go into children's book illustration after graduating. I believe that creative people have a tremendous power to change their communities and the lives of others. I want to have an impact on children's lives by teaching them, through my art, the importance of imagination and expression.

My initial interest in helping children and the community began at the Marwen Arts Foundation, a non-profit arts organization that is dedicated to providing free art classes for students as young as twelve. I've been involved with Marwen since 8th grade, taking classes, participating in the student advisory board and volunteering frequently. I continue to keep a close relationship with them and plan on becoming a teacher assistant this summer. My intention is to continue working with Marwen well after I am out of college, perhaps as a teaching artist, or even by using them as an example in creating my own non-profit arts organization elsewhere in the world.



The work I create now at RISD reflects my keen interest in things that are child-related. I created plush hats that are more like characters in a storybook. I created my own foam "creature" that was a costume. We went on parades and interacted with a variety of people. This included traveling to an elementary school and getting to be a first grader's very own creature for a day. At the end of the day, the teacher told me that my first grade "owner" never smiles. In the short time I was with her, she was confident and happy. She led me around the school smiling and laughing and introduced me to different classrooms. I was able to experience firsthand the impact that creative people can have on the lives of others. I feel deeply honored to have been able to make this little girl open up to the others around her. My greatest hope is that she can do the same for others one day using her own creativity and imagination.