

# Art Empowers:

Client-generated, creative hallway spaces at the Restigouche Hospital Center

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## Art Empowers:

### Client-generated, creative hallway spaces at the Restigouche Hospital Centre

On February 11th, 2013, the clients and staff of the Restigouche Hospital Center spent a day creatively expressing themselves in acrylic paintings. This amazingly creative art will remain at the Center to be displayed in their hallways. The photograph below was taken during an open house to display the art at the end of the day. I can't even begin to express how happy this photo makes me!



The idea for this day was hatched during my 21inc ([www.21inc.ca](http://www.21inc.ca)) bus tour of New Brunswick. In October 2012, the NB 21Leaders boarded a bus for a week of breaking down barriers, and we were fortunate to tour many places across New Brunswick and meet with remarkable people. After visiting the Restigouche Hospital Center in Campbellton, I started thinking about some work I had done with youth to make art and display it. I found that those I worked with were empowered, especially by displaying of their creations. I wanted to bring this to the Restigouche Hospital Center (RHC) and to liven up their hallways with client-generated art.

After getting off of the bus later that week, I started doing some research and discovered that the practice of making art with patients can be known as art therapy. The staff at the RHC were positive, upbeat people and I was hoping that they would be interested in collaborating on this project with me. I gave them a call, submitted a proposal which they accepted, and the project was officially underway!

I had recently heard of people using crowdfunding platforms to raise money for projects. After trying to register for Kickstarter and finding it difficult to use as a Canadian, I found Indiegogo through a session I attended on crowdfunding offered by the New Brunswick Securities Commission. Early in January, I launched my first crowdfunding campaign to raise \$800 to buy a kit of supplies for this project: [www.indiegogo.com/artempowers](http://www.indiegogo.com/artempowers).



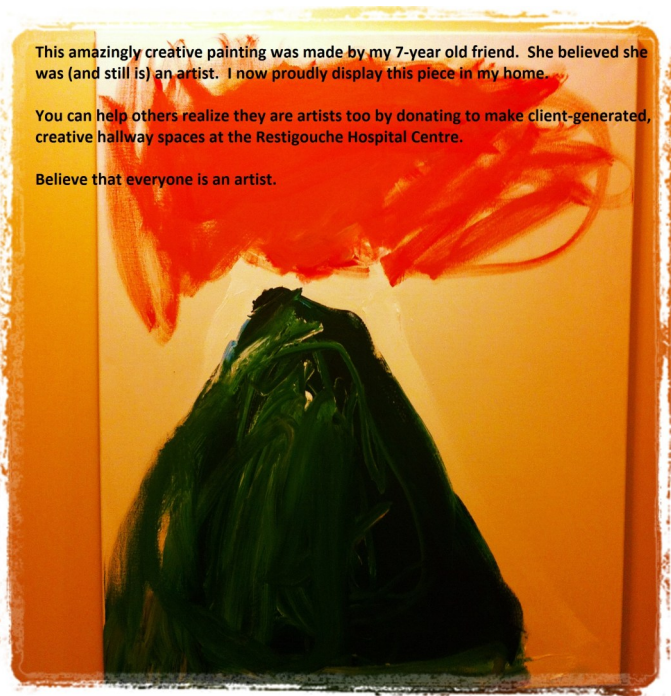
### *Believe that everyone is an artist*

My tagline for my Indiegogo campaign was 'believe that everyone is an artist'. This is based on a rather famous quote from Pablo Picasso, which I stumbled upon in Sir Ken Robinson's TED talk, 'Ken Robinson says schools kill creativity'.

([http://www.ted.com/talks/ken\\_robinson\\_says\\_schools\\_kill\\_creativity.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/ken_robinson_says_schools_kill_creativity.html)).

Picasso said that 'every child is born an artist, the problem is to remain one once they grow up'. I agree with Picasso (and Sir Ken).

I want to acknowledge the painting to the right, which was made by my 7-year old friend, Evaye. In many ways, it was inspiration for the project. I added the text to the top of this photograph as part of my campaign.



### *It takes a village*

The support for the project was fabulous—it wouldn't have been possible without it. I raised the required funds from over 20 contributors before the deadline. I have to give special recognition to my mom, who went out and bought canvas upon canvas for me and asked for an update on the campaign every day!

As perks for contributions through Indiegogo, there were 2 options for recognition in paintings: 'recognition in a painting' and 'art aficionado'. The final products are pictured here. Because Picasso was an inspiration for the project, the 'Art Aficionado' painting is done in his style (with my own interpretation, of course).

I have to say thank you again for the generous financial support, and also to the many people who helped by sharing my campaign through social media.



I also have a special thank to you to the gentlemen at Startup Kitchen ([www.startupkitchen.ca](http://www.startupkitchen.ca)), who interviewed me about the project and the crowdfunding approach to raising funds for the project. You can check out my interview here:

<http://www.startupkitchen.ca/home/2013/1/30/vanessa-paesani-from-artempowers.html>.



### *Empowerment through creative expression at the Restigouche Hospital Center*

It was a very rewarding day at the RHC. One of the first comments I received from a client was ‘thank you for bringing colour’. I hope you enjoy the photos and this brief story, and please get in touch if you have any questions or feedback—or if you want to hear more stories about the project!

Plans are in the works for another project of this nature in the future—let me know if you’d like to be involved!



A sincere thank you to the vibrant staff of the Restigouche Hospital Center for helping me make this project possible!

*Please note that there are no photos of clients due to respecting of privacy.*