

National Youth-At-Risk Journal

Volume 1
Issue 2 *Spring 2016*

Article 6

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Recommended Citation

Bunn, B. E. (2016). Art Corner: "A Glimpse of Discernment" and "A Thousand Blessings". *National Youth-At-Risk Journal*, 1(2).
<https://doi.org/10.20429/nyarj.2016.010206>

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Art Corner: "A Glimpse of Discernment" and "A Thousand Blessings"

Abstract

Bradley E. Bunn, a self-taught artist living and working in Mid-Michigan, reveals the nature of resiliency found in adolescence through his artwork in this issue. His work captures the glimmers of hopeful expectancy found within the many faces of youth who have crossed his path over the years.

Keywords

artwork, adolescence, resiliency, bullying

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Bradley E. Bunn, a self-taught artist living and working in Mid-Michigan, reveals the nature of resiliency found in adolescence through his artwork in this issue. His work captures the glimmers of hopeful expectancy found within the many faces of youth who have crossed his path over the years. As a veteran youth worker, Bradley still feels that he is scratching the surface when it pertains to working with youth: “There is always something new and burgeoning within the twists and turns of adolescence. I still get that overwhelming sense of gratitude when a teenager trusts me enough to share his/her story.”

“A Glimpse of Discernment”

This piece is of my oldest daughter (Kaetlyn, 15 years of age). It is an oil painting depicting her in a stain glass-like fashion. My interest in iconography is also present because of the way in which I juxtapose flat shapes with emerging three dimensional ones, as well as the color scheme—earthy, neutral colors. I painted this about six months after my wife suffered a hemorrhagic stroke. Kaetlyn stepped up to the plate and helped out with her other siblings in such a way that reminded me of my readings in *youth resiliency* and *youth thriving* during my studies in youth development leadership at Clemson University. Instead of withdrawing, she became involved at a new high school through joining the cross country team and chorus. She also took leadership roles in her church’s youth group—finding her voice as a leader. But there is also a hint of sadness behind Kaetlyn’s smile—my projecting of what it might be like for an adolescent to lose a portion of her childhood innocence.

“A Thousand Blessings”

This is a graphite drawing of my third child (Ava, 10 years of age). I intentionally drew this in a more realistic fashion, because I adore her smile. Like her older sister, Ava jumped in to do her part when my wife suffered her stroke. Last year in public school, she experienced her first significant issues with bullying. But I was so proud of her, because she handled the situation wonderfully. She and I worked out scenarios at home—discussing ways in which to diminish a bully’s power and how to appropriately discuss with teachers and administrators when needed. Again, this situation reminded me about youth scaffolding—youth mentors and significant others providing youth with the necessary tools and structures, so that an adolescent can engage his/her environments successfully. Lastly, about the drawing, her collar represents a yoke—biblically, the images of the yoke are full of mixed messages—sometimes they are a curse and at other times they are a blessing. In all respects, there is a burden to pay for wearing the yoke. Through Ava’s ongoing life experiences, she will either choose, or life will choose for her, whether or not she views her “burdens” as a blessing or a curse.



“A Glimpse of Discernment” by Bradley E. Bunn



“A Thousand Blessings” by Bradley E. Bunn