



The Lawrence Arts Center's Summer Youth Theatre production of *Les Misérables*.
Photo by Matt Foerschler

Kansas

Lawrence Arts Center

Lawrence

For more than 30 years, the Lawrence Arts Center (LAC) has provided its community with quality arts programming and its artists with support and opportunities for exhibition. Reaching more than 95,000 people through its performing and visual arts programs, LAC provides arts education programs for children, youth, and adults; hosts concerts, local arts groups, fundraisers, and conferences; and is home to the Seem-To-Be-Players and the Prairie Wind Dancers.

In FY 2005, LAC received an NEA Summer Schools in the Arts grant of \$34,970 for its Summer Youth Theatre, a challenging, full-immersion arts education experience serving 300 children, ages 4-18.

Theater artists and arts professionals provided two four-week sessions for the students. In line with the Kansas Curricular Standards for Theater, students received instruction in the standard's four major areas of

theater skills: script structure and development; skill in acting, dancing, and singing; design and production; and familiarity with dramatic elements and principles.

Each class culminated with a public performance, allowing students to demonstrate their new skills and knowledge and understanding of theater. For 2005, a total of 20 performances took place in June and July, all exploring the theme, “A Summer of Social Change and Challenge.” The 4- to 8-year-old students performed *Lessons from Fairy Tales*, the 9- to 13-year-old students performed *Cinderella* and *Free to Be You and Me*, and the 14- to 18-year-old students performed *Les Miserables* and *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

Lucas Arts and Humanities Council

Lucas

Lucas, a small rural town in Kansas, grew into a center of grassroots/nontraditional art during the 20th century. Using

materials found in the area, local self-taught artists create unusual constructions in their yards and homes. The Lucas Arts and Humanities Council (LAHC) promotes this art form and these artists by exhibiting, preserving, documenting, and educating others about grassroots art and traditional folk art.

In FY 2005, LAHC received an NEA Challenge America grant of \$10,000 to support a sculpture and mural design competition and the installation of the winning entries. The citywide theme was “Expect the Unexpected,” and design entries made up of recycled materials had priority in the judging. More than 80 entries were submitted for the competition from art professionals, students, and local citizens. At the end of April, a panel of judges selected three public art projects out of a total of 82 entries submitted by applicants ranging from art professionals and college art students to local citizens. The exhibition will be completed in October 2006.



Erika Nelson leads the workshop to begin construction the “world’s largest travel souvenir plate,” part of the Lucas Arts and Humanities Council’s sculpture and mural exhibition.

Photo by Rosslyn Schultz

The community will be integrally involved in the exhibition—as members of the selection committee and as donors of the property on which the sculptures are to be displayed. The community also participated in group art projects, such as the creation of “the world’s largest souvenir plate,” for the exhibition. Such a project not only highlights this unique contemporary art form and provides an opportunity for artists to exhibit, but also builds up the perception of the town as a welcoming home for artists and residents.