



**Impacting  
young lives  
for good.**

Lawrence Cultural Arts Commission  
Community Arts Grant Application  
2012



**LAWRENCE CULTURAL ARTS COMMISSION  
COMMUNITY ARTS GRANT APPLICATION FORM**

**Applicant Information:**

Name of Organization Van Go, Inc.

Address PO Box 153/715 New Jersey

City, State, Zip Code Lawrence, KS 66044

Telephone (785)842-3797 Fax (785) 842-4628 E-Mail jennifer@van-go.org

**Project Information:**

Project Director Lynne Green

Project Director's Title Executive Director

Project Title Jobs in the Arts Make Sense (JAMS): Summer Benchmark

Start Date May 29, 2012 End Date July 19, 2012

This project is most closely related to:  Visual Arts  Performing Arts  Literature  Media  
 Other, please describe: \_\_\_\_\_

Lawrence Cultural Arts Commission Request \$ 1,000 Total Project Expenses \$ 36,000

Check should be made out to: Van Go, Inc.

EIN or SSN\* 48-1171726

**Authorizing Signatures:** By my signature below, I certify that the information contained in this application packet is true, to the best of my knowledge.

Project Director's Signature  Date 3/23/12

Printed Name Lynne Green Title Executive Director

Fiscal Agent's Signature  Date 3/26/12

Printed Name Chris Kohart Title Financial Director

\*Please provide Employer Identification Number if an organization or Social Security Number if an individual. This will be required in the event of an award. If concerned about confidentiality, leave blank and then, immediately upon notification of an award, call Diane Stoddard at (785) 832-3413 to provide the information. Checks cannot be processed without the EIN or SSN.

### **Project Narrative**

Founder and Executive Director Lynne Green began serving at-risk youth in Lawrence in 1996. Using a donated 1975 Checker limousine, Lynne took professional artists and innovative art programs directly to underserved elementary school-aged kids at local schools, community centers, and housing projects. Responding to gaps in services for older youth and a growing body of research, these 'mobile arts' projects were replaced with JAMS (Jobs in the Arts Make Sense) in 1999. Over the last decade, Van Go, Inc. has hired hundreds of 14-21 year old "apprentice artists," providing them with valuable life and job skills as they create art that is sold to the community.

In 2006, Van Go became the first Kansas organization to be honored with the prestigious Coming Up Taller Award (now the National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Awards), which is given to the most outstanding arts and humanities programs in the country. In 2008, Van Go was recognized by the Kansas Arts Commission when it received the Governor's Art Award for outstanding arts programming.

Each summer during the Benchmark program, Van Go matches twenty-two high-needs youth, ages 14-18, with local businesses, community organizations and private donors to create intricate, custom benches for public display. Benchmark is a highly visible component within Van Go's JAMS (Jobs in the Arts Make Sense) operation and is the program for which funding is requested.

### **Vision**

Van Go is guided by a strong belief in the therapeutic value of creating art. For the youth we serve, it provides a "lifeline" as a vehicle for negotiating the harsh realities of life. Van Go provides a safe setting where teens can express themselves and pursue a deeper meaning of the world even while they are learning important life, social, and career skills. Essential to a setting like Van Go is the team of caring adults: an art instructor, program director, social workers, and artist assistants that help youth find their creative voice and make positive life choices.

### **Program Detail**

Colorful, creative, and unique, Van Go's benches decorate the Lawrence community in banks and restaurants, hospitals and retail businesses. These vibrant benches are the product of Benchmark, which recently concluded its 12<sup>th</sup> year and whose young artists have produced over 230 benches. During Benchmark, apprentice artists consult with a client to design and develop a business plan for their bench. The experience is intense—all youth spend 22 hours per week at the Van Go facility creating a personalized bench for their client, where they earn minimum wage with the opportunity for merit-based raises. In the process, participants gain essential job skills as well as professional experience through interaction with community members.

Without the daily schedule of school and homework, summertime can present a dearth of constructive activity for adolescents; the need for positive engagement is especially true for at-risk teens. Benchmark provides a positive structure: the teenagers are hired to work AND learn. Van Go's Benchmark doesn't just teach kids how to build, paint, and work with business clients—it also provides personal counseling, life skills training, a wellness program, and nutritious lunches. This holistic program provides a level of comprehensive service unparalleled in the community.

### **Community Value**

The eye-catching benches created by at-risk youth represent a partnership between the community and the artists. Each bench is a unique piece of art that helps beautify the city of Lawrence and contributes to its vibrant arts culture. For Benchmark's participants – often the recipient of community resources – the benches are a chance for them to give back. A statement about the program and the artist displayed with each bench explains how the youth benefitted from the program and what the bench means to them. At the dedication ceremony, the benches are unveiled to an admiring crowd of community supporters—a

public recognition that is a great source of pride for the teen artists. Nearly all Benchmark participants will continue to reside in Lawrence and the program allows them a positive and lasting contribution to the community.

### **Targeted Population**

Van Go serves community youth who are at risk for drug and alcohol use, mental illness, teen pregnancy, and truancy or delinquency. 100% of the youth at Van Go qualify for our services because they are at-risk: 80% live in poverty, 47% have an IEP at their school, 65% have a mental health diagnosis, and 20% are involved in the juvenile justice system. Nearly 50% of the youth have more than one of these qualifying conditions. These at-risk teens are Van Go's *only* client base, allowing for specialized services to motivate and encourage this underserved population.

### **Unique Programming**

The following components make the Benchmark program unique and consistently successful:

- 1) Youth engage in the community via their partnership with their bench customer. Each JAMS youth is paired with a community customer (school counselor, judge, store owner, alumni group, etc.) and works with them to create a custom bench.
- 2) The youth must use artistic skills and techniques that will result in a final bench that pleases the customer AND that the customer is proud to display. The youth have a great deal of leeway in the design of the bench and are able to engage in creative exploration that satisfies their desire to express themselves and meets the needs of the customer.
- 3) While the youth work with Van Go's team of adults through the art making process, they learn the value of teamwork, responsibility, and task completion. These vital job-training skills are coupled with life skills education, highlighting how to manage professional responsibility and maintain a healthy lifestyle.
- 4) Youth at Van Go pursue a deeper understanding of the world and of their very own community. Each youth feels 'bonded' to their client and strives to create a custom bench to share with the community. The benches are dramatically unveiled at a public ceremony at the end of the Benchmark.

### **Collaborating Partners**

Van Go, Inc.'s primary partner is the Lawrence School District, USD 497. We work with school counselors and social workers to ensure youth are on track to graduate with their class. Our mission includes giving youth "hope for the future" and that cannot be achieved without a high school diploma. Van Go has onsite tutoring and an Education Coordinator who assesses basic skills and works with the schools to identify youth most in need of additional academic services. Van Go staff members also meet with school personnel in the development of special education IEPs.

Community partners including Douglas County Court Services, the Lawrence-Douglas County Housing Authority, the Bert Nash Community Mental Health Center, and the SRS refer at-risk youth to Van Go. We have decade-long relationships with these organizations, all of whom consider JAMS to be an integral part of the social service network in Lawrence and appreciate the value of the unique, arts-based programming we provide.

Support for the JAMS program comes from the City, the school district, juvenile justice and court officials, the community mental health center, and partnering social service agencies. Van Go's Benchmark has become an integral part of the social service network in Lawrence, KS.

**Match**

Van Go's Summer Benchmark program is supported by the Topeka Community Foundation. This partnership brings over \$21,000 into the Lawrence community.

**Schedule of Events**

May 1 – May 28: Recruitment and enrollment

May 29 – July 19: Summer Benchmark Program

- Week 1: Work orientation and basic painting and design lessons
- Week 2: First client meeting
- Week 3: Preliminary designs and blueprint
- Week 4: Client approval
- Week 5: Sand and prime boards, transfer design to bench
- Week 6-8: Paint bench

July 20: Benchmark Recognition Event



**LAWRENCE CULTURAL ARTS COMMISSION  
COMMUNITY ARTS GRANT BUDGET FORM**

Budget Categories	LCAC Grant Request	Requestor's Contribution	3 <sup>rd</sup> -Party Cash Match	3 <sup>rd</sup> -Party In-Kind Match	Total
<b>1. Personnel</b>	NA	\$11,460	\$7,000	NA	<b>\$18,460</b>
<b>2. Fees and Services</b>	NA	NA	NA	NA	<b>\$0</b>
<b>3. Rental Fees</b>	NA	NA	NA	NA	<b>\$0</b>
<b>4. Travel</b>	NA	\$300	NA	NA	<b>\$300</b>
<b>5. Marketing</b>	NA	\$1,000	NA	NA	<b>\$1,000</b>
<b>6. Operating Expenses</b>	\$1,000	\$3,440	\$5,800	\$5,000	<b>\$15,240</b>
<b>7. Capital Expenditures</b>	NA	\$1,000	NA	NA	<b>\$1,000</b>
<b>Total Project Expenses</b>	<b>\$1,000</b>	<b>\$17,200</b>	<b>\$12,800</b>	<b>\$5,000</b>	<b>\$36,000</b>

**Note:** As you write your budget justification, be sure to address the amount of your matching support, its source(s), and how the match reflects community interest. Your budget should correspond with the plan laid-out in your project narrative.

**BUDGET JUSTIFICATION**

**1. Personnel**

Includes salary for Program Director, Social Worker and Art Director. WIA and Topeka Community Foundation will fund a portion of the salaries.

**2. Fees and Services**

NA

**3. Rental Fees**

NA

**4. Travel**

Includes transportation for field trips, client meetings and social services appointments.

**5. Marketing**

Includes funds for marketing personnel, printing and mailing services for event invitations, event advertising and website maintenance.

**6. Operating Expenses**

Includes paint, brushes, paper, wood, equipment and hardware to create benches. Also includes utilities, postage, and awards for the kids. We are requesting \$1,000 to fund a portion of the art supplies.

**7. Capital Expenditures**

Includes additional building expenses.

## **Artist Resumes and Biographies**

### **Cathy Ledeker**

Cathy Ledeker, Art Coordinator, is a professional teaching artist with 25 years of experience. A nationally recognized calligrapher, she received her B.A. in Art Education from Western State College of Colorado and has worked as a freelance painter and graphic designer. Cathy has been with Van Go since 1999, guiding youth through the process of conceiving, planning and executing public murals, benches and other works of art. In her role as Art Coordinator, Cathy ensures that all arts programming meets the learning goals, maintains inventory and purchases supplies and equipment, and ensures that all products meet the art standards Van Go's customers have come to expect.

Lawrence High School  
1901 Louisiana Street  
Lawrence, Kansas 66046-2999  
Telephone: (785) 832-5050  
Fax: (785) 832-5054



March 9, 2012

To Whom It May Concern:

Please let this letter serve to verify the ongoing collaboration between Lawrence High School and Van Go, Inc.

For over a decade, Van Go has served Lawrence High students with outstanding *after-school programming, using the arts to help keep kids on track.* I've seen the results and know that the collaboration is beneficial to at-risk youth in our community. *Each work session Lawrence High refers twice as many youth as can be hired to work at Van Go.* The spots are highly sought after, and kids continue to apply year after year.

We are proud to work with Van Go and refer students to their programs. Please let me know if I can provide additional information.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "M Santelli".

Maren Santelli, LMSW  
School Social Worker  
Lawrence High School





To Whom it May Concern:

As a representative of the Lawrence Chamber of Commerce, I strongly support the efforts of Van Go, for many reasons.

Van Go is the largest employer of youth in Douglas County. Without the availability of this work experience, many underserved youth would be without employment, particularly in a difficult economic environment.

In addition, Van Go's work providing real world job skills increases the abilities of our upcoming labor force, and we hope many of these youth will continue as productive, working citizens in our community as they become adults.

The art created by Van Go youth and commissioned by community members, as well as the art sold in Van Go's gallery, add to the attractiveness of Lawrence as a tourist and shopping destination for area communities, which is also greatly valued by our community.

The Lawrence business community appreciates and enjoys the presence of Van Go and supports its continuation of services into the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sue Hack".

Sue Hack  
Executive Director, Leadership Lawrence



February 15, 2010

Dear Sir or Madam:

The Lawrence Public Schools has a long history of working with Van Go and, as an art educator I have witnessed the positive impact the program has had on at-risk youth. Students are involved in an activity after school that teaches them to create. I have referred several students to join the program because I know Van Go reaches kids who may not have other opportunities to enrich their lives by creating works of art. It teaches them to have pride in their work and enhances their self-esteem. This in turn helps them to be better students, raise graduation rates and make productive citizens.

In addition, I believe our community is enriched by the work done by Van Go for at-risk teens. Keeping at-risk students safe and engaged in quality after school and summer art programs is a need in every community including Lawrence. The beautiful benches that are Van Go's signature are seen in businesses and public places all over our town. I am proud to be a supporter of their efforts.

I encourage you to support the Van Go mission and help fund the important services they provide.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Laurie McLane-Higginson". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Laurie McLane-Higginson

## **A Letter From a Parent:**

December 22, 2009

Dear Amy and JAMS staff members,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment about the JAMS program. My daughter has been involved with the program for a year (four sessions). It has truly been the highlight of her high school experience. JAMS has offered her the opportunity to interact with peers, learn responsibilities of work and earning money and also to feel the pride in creating art that others enjoy and will even purchase!

First of all and most importantly for a high school student is the social opportunity that JAMS provides. JAMS has given Alex the opportunity to be a "Normal" teenager and be involved with other teenagers. As a special education student in high school, much of Alex's day puts her into contact socially with only special education students, JAMS has given her the opportunity to have a greater mix of contacts. Additionally, some of the education sessions that are held with the JAMS program allows for open discussion of teen oriented topics: health, relationships, careers, in an environment that is comfortable for students to talk and share in a positive way. We absolutely could not have found this type of experience anywhere else in Lawrence.

The first job experience has also been invaluable. Through the JAMS program, students go through interviews, evaluations, receive reward when they exceed expectations and I would imagine are counseled when they are no meeting expectation. This type of experience has also been invaluable to our daughter. She worked for many months to finally receive employee of the week. It meant a lot to her when she got it and I appreciate that she had to meet expectations to receive that award. The staff is very fair and kind and they do an excellent job in working with these students and communicating expectations.

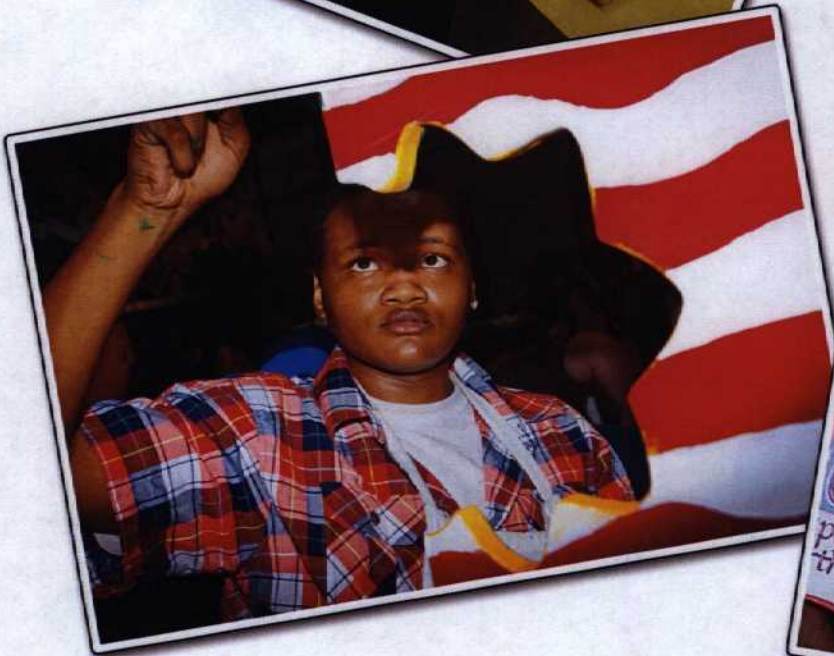
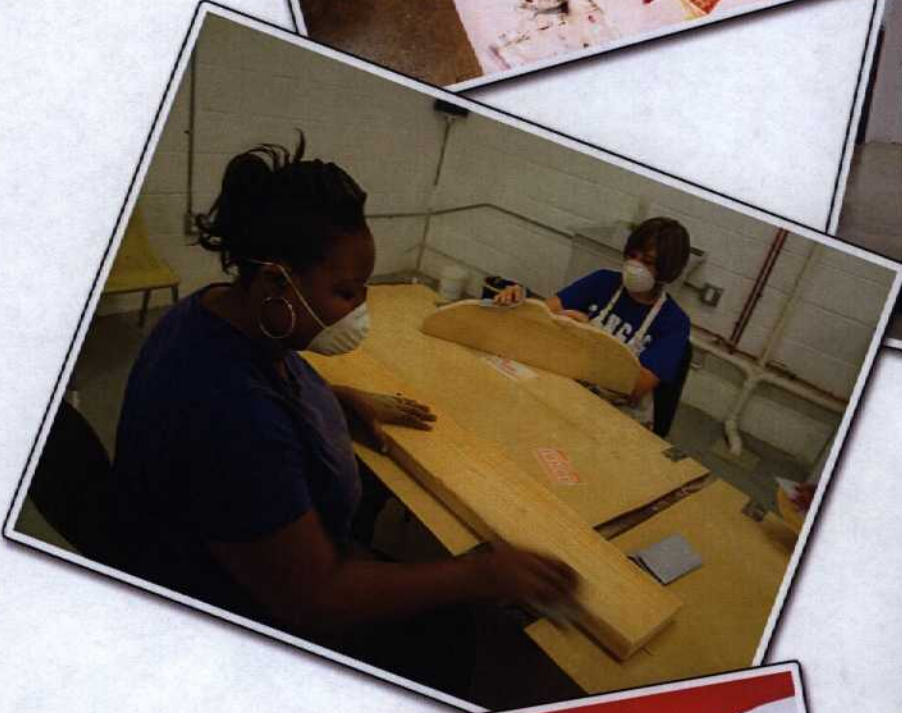
Lastly, is the art. I love the fact that students with all sorts of art skill levels can participate. Alex has always loved to draw and has taken art classes all her life but in school she is not able to take art classes any longer due to her disabilities and skill level. The school district does not accommodate a student like Alex in high school art classes. Alex has been able to participate doing something that she loves and gets paid to do it. JAMS has been a blessing for Alex. Seeing her beam with pride as her bench was unveiled was an experience, as a parent, that I will never forget. Thank you to everyone who works hard to keep this program going.

Sincerely,

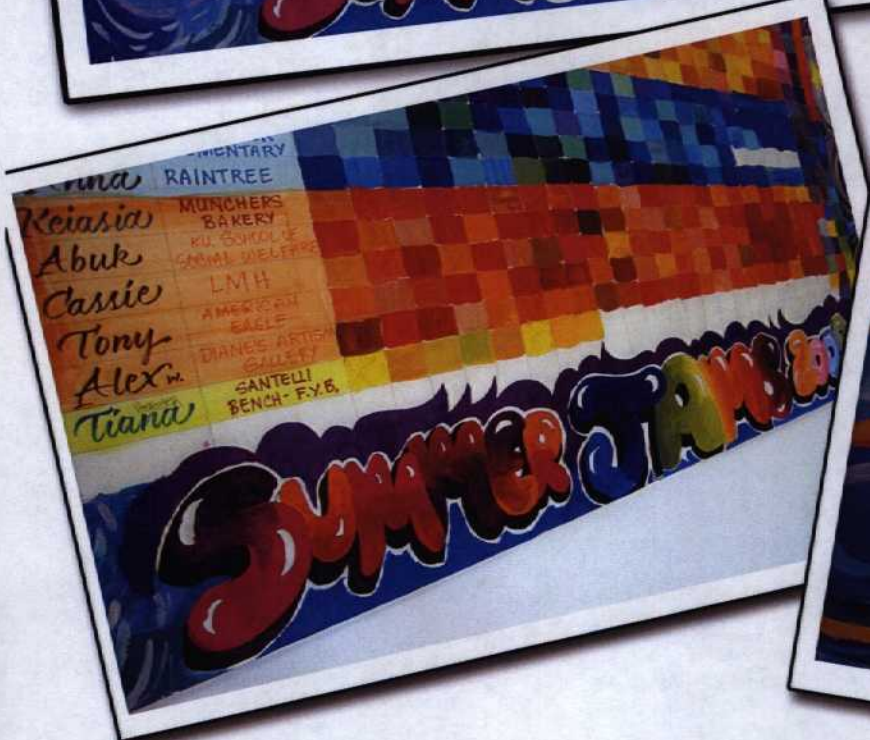
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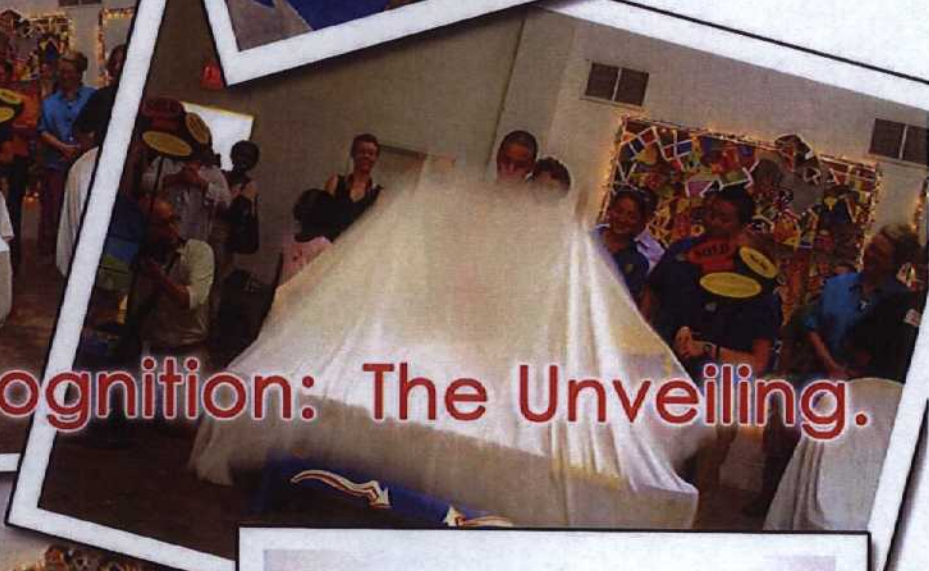
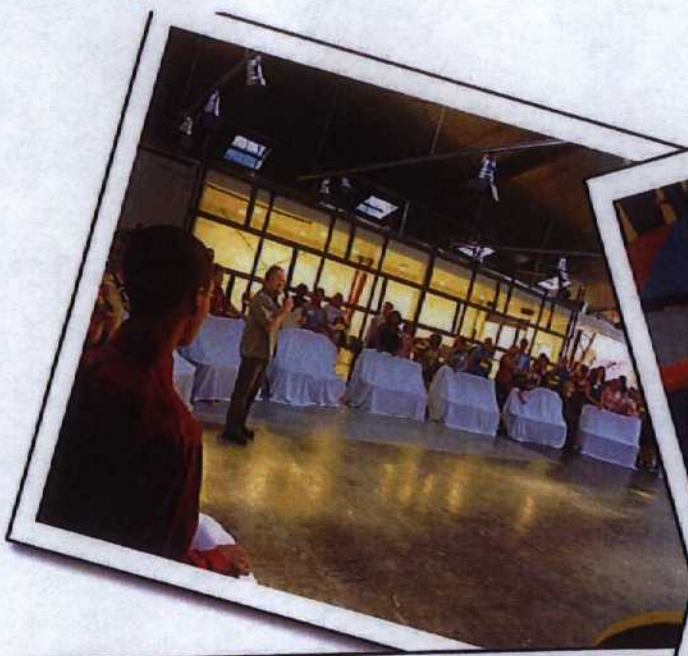


Benchmark experience includes:  
Client interviews, Full-scale  
blueprint creation, Blueprint  
presentation, Bench creation,  
Bench Painting, and Bench  
unveiling at recognition  
ceremony



# Process: The Chart.





Recognition: The Unveiling.





Mass Beverage  
"March to the Future"  
by Demian Sollmar

I am a 16 year old Senior attending Lawrence High this fall. My traditional arts experience has been limited to informal doodles in the likes of classic comic book images influenced by the works of Norman Rockwell and Roy Lichtenstein. Van Go's Summer JAMS expands my horizons in art and confidence to create such stellar work. As a novice, fear of a mistake hindered my progress. Such doubts are demolished by the encouragement and talent witnessed during my employment. I never thought I'd be an artist. With Van Go's guidance in painting, I feel limitless. Van Go's Summer JAMS has taught me the importance of a strong work ethic and the power of reaching out to assist others.

Recreationally, I enjoy reading, video games and computer hardware. Summer holds such enthralling fun, connecting with my fellow coworkers. I feel invigorated in my work with the bench. Fortunately, my client, Mark Wilcox of Mass Beverage, has graced me with such amazing material. In my art I hard to the contrast and parallels between blue collar farmers in the Heartland of the American Midwest to the proletariat of the Soviet Union's motherland. Both working classes labored in the effort of progress. My intention is to capture how their paths wrought the glorious dawn of a new era.

~One of Demian's coworkers commented, "If I was stranded on a desert island with Demian, I would never get bored because his conversation is so good."~

## Van Go JAMS!

JAMS, Jobs in the Arts Make Sense, is a Van Go "earn while you learn," youth employment program for teens 14-18 years old.

Working with local, professional artists, these young people are paid to produce artwork for sale in their community.

Through the JAMS! Program, teens gain valuable job and life skills, while building their confidence and self-esteem through the creative process.

For more information about JAMS year-round programming for teens, call Van Go @ 842-3797, or visit our website:

[www.van-go.org](http://www.van-go.org).



