

NEIGHBORS

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BRINGING THE ARTS HOME

An outreach program from the Perez Museum of Art Miami traveled to dozens of Miami-Dade summer camps and community centers to encourage kids' creativity.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER: Rashad Mitchel, 10, attaches an art piece with assistance from PAMM teaching artist Asser Saintval during a PAMM in the Neighborhood art class at the Juan Pablo Duarte Park & Recreation camp on July 24.

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BRINGING ART TO KIDS

The Pérez Art to more than Miami-Dade.

BY CRYSTAL CHEW
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Starting with a pile of colorful twist-ties — those flat, wired ribbons that keep your bread in the bag — two dozen Miami-Dade kids made frogs, spiders and hats.

The kids, ages 5 to 14, then attached their creations to the ceiling of a community center at Juan Pablo Duarte Park in Allapattah, creating a larger work of art.

The art-making exercise was part of the Pérez Art Museum Miami's outreach program, "PAMM in the Neighborhood," in which the museum traveled to more than 70 camps and community centers throughout Miami-Dade County, from North Miami Beach down to Richmond Heights. The project reached more than 8,000 budding artists.

"It's important to introduce art to kids," said Rosa Maday Garmadea, a teaching artist at the museum since 2008 who didn't go to an art museum until she went to art school for college. "Through art you learn about geography, languages, other communities and culture, and it just makes you a better human being."

For Rey Luis Escalona, 11, a student at Henry H. Filer Middle School in Hialeah who wants to be an architect, it was a learning lesson he would not soon forget.

"It was fun and interesting and I was entertained. I learned and it brought out my creativity," said Rey Luis, who made a replica of a DNA sample. "I liked connecting all the art works from different people. It was different minds, different creations hanging together on the roof."

The museum opened in December 2013, a reincarnated Miami Art Museum.



COLLABORATIVE ART: Perez Art Museum Miami teaching artist Rosa Garmendia, top, assembles a hanging wire sculpture made by campers during a PAMM in the Neighborhood art class. Above left, Crystal Parra, 11, holds a frog wire sculpture, while Marylis Cinotti, 11, shows friend Diamond Viera, 12, her wire sculpture human.

When the program began 11 years ago, it was called "MAM in the Neighborhood" and came out of a need for arts education during the summer months. Initially hoping to serve a few hundred kids, with three teachers and an assistant, the program reached 3,000 stu-

dents in its first summer.

"It's really the responsibility of any major museum to facilitate access to cultural experiences," said Emily Mello, deputy director for education programs. "Many kids don't have arts education outside of school, particularly in the summer months."

The community program paid one-time visits to summer camps, recreational centers and other nonprofit organizations and encompassed three parts — a lesson by trained artists, museum field trips and free family passes for future visits.

"This kind of inspired me,"

said Crystal Parra, 11, a student who made butterflies with the eight twist-ties she was given. "Being able to express myself makes me believe in myself."

This year the theme was "fine lines," mirroring an exhibition going on until Oct. 12 by Monika Sosnowska, an artist best known for large, sculptures made of steel, concrete and other industrial materials.

"How much do you weigh?" asked Assar Saint-Val, a teaching artist during a recent visit to Juan Pablo Duarte Park. He held up a black-and-white photo of Sosnowska's piece titled *Market*.

"This is you times 20. It weighs 2,000 pounds and hangs on a ceiling."

After each visit, students and sites are left with extra art supplies to spark creativity throughout the year.

"Arts serve as the unifying force across cultures in our communities and as a bridge to understanding," said Maria Alonso, a senior vice president for Bank of America, which sponsors the program. "They're enriching and, quite frankly, economic drivers that help our communities thrive."

After their workshops, the children go to the museum the following day.

"This connects the art-making experience immediately to what they see at the exhibit," said Marie Vickles, education associate for outreach programs.

For some of the participants, this was the best part of their day. For others, it was the best day of the summer.

"I don't even like art that much," said Rashad Mitchel, 10, who goes to school in Allapattah and prefers science, social studies and physical education classes. "But I learned that you can make anything out of scratch."



Museum Miami's outreach program traveled
70 camps and community centers throughout



FINISHED PIECE: A spider sculpture made by PAMM teaching artist Asser Saintval is displayed on the table during a PAMM in the Neighborhood art class.