

B.A. MORELLI • IOWA CITY PRESS-CITIZEN • February 18, 2011

Class matches artists at UI, UAY

College-level art education students will teach aspiring high school artists through a new class starting next week.

Called the Iowa City School for the Visual Arts, the class is a partnership of the University of Iowa art education department and United Action for Youth, which is an organization that provides activities for youth.

"My college students forget what it's like to be in high school, so the teaching is reciprocal," said Rachel Williams, a UI associate professor of art education, who is co-directing the class with Mickey Hampton, volunteer coordinator at UAY.

The 12-week class will be from 4 to 5:30 p.m. Thursdays on the ground level of North Hall on the UI campus and will end with an exhibit of student work at UAY. Hampton said applications to participate in the class still can be submitted and the class is open to the public.

The class costs \$100, and there are working and transportation scholarships for eligible students.

The effort is really a class within a class.

For the 15 UI student-teachers, the class they are teaching is part of a for-credit class they also are taking under Williams. The two classes meet simultaneously.

"We ask our students, "What does it mean to be an artist and how do they teach that? This is really a chance for (them to figure that out)," Williams said.

For the college students, it's an opportunity to learn through practice, and for the high schoolers, they have access to expertise and talent and a college campus environment, she said.

The model has been used in other places, Hampton said.

"I think it is a really great idea. I just love the idea that everyone benefits," Hampton said. "It's a real opportunity for them to surround themselves with other artistic young people and have the opportunity to be mentored by university students in a more intimate way."

The class fits 60 students who will break up into groups by interest. The groups will take on a project using art to explore different ideas, such as love, poverty, war, peace, friendship and bigotry.

Hampton said the idea for the partnership emerged from a conversation between herself and Williams about getting UI art students to volunteer for an artist-in-residence program, which UAY launched in the fall. The conversation evolved into an idea of "let's have a class," Hampton said.

"This is our first year. I hope, if it works out, we will do it again," she said.