In this time of infinite unknowns and an ever-shifting landscape, RAW is dedicated to practicing adaptive capacity. It is how we must operate to meet the needs of our kids, staff and community in order for everyone to come out on the other side, however and whenever that might be.

The way in which we work, connect with our youth, and raise funds must be fluid in order to address our kids’ evolving needs and the new challenges we face today. The only thing that won’t change is WHY we do this work; we are completely focused on igniting the desire to create and the confidence to succeed in our kids.

We had a call yesterday with Prentice, one of RAW’s many long-time friends. He leaned in, just like he always does when we sit together—except this time leaning close to the camera on his computer—and asked, “What do the kids NEED now?”

This has been our guiding question well before the current crisis, but HOW we do that has changed in fundamental ways. I spoke with our amazing and dedicated program team to pose the question to them. They gave many answers:

- Kids need interaction.
- They need peer interaction.
- They need consistency.
- The kids need structure.
- Kids and their families need diversion from anxiety and insecurity.
- The seniors need to be celebrated for their accomplishments.
- The seniors need to say a “good goodbye.”
- Everyone needs a way to avert boredom.
- The kids need attention.
- They need hope.
- They need to laugh.
- They need to connect.
- Our kids need to be seen and heard!

After listening to what the program team had to say, I reached out to ask some of the kids how RAW was helping them cope.

Penny told me, “The weekly art challenges help me focus on positives, like how we are healthy, and to move away from the negatives….I get security and comfort each time we (meet on) Zoom.”

Aricin said, “RAW is like my own home away from home, even while being stuck at home…I know that no matter what, I’ll always have RAW. It’s like my family—I am supported and loved no matter what is going on.”

Bruce, one of our program leads, received a hand-made card from one of his “little guys.” It was a happy yellow Sponge Bob on the front. At the end of the note inside, this RAW artist wrote “…thanks for checking on me. It means a lot someone cares about me.”

It is abundantly clear that, despite all of the adversity and uncertainty, we are still having a positive impact on the lives of our kids, as well as on their families. We will keep doing this and we will do so TOGETHER.

We cannot do this without you. And, so it is with the greatest appreciation and deepest care that we send BIG THANKS AND LOVE out to the entire RAW community.

Kari Johnson
RAW is committed to making sure our kids continue to feel seen and heard, while our studios remain closed. Staff are finding new ways to connect with our kids and foster a sense of community when many are feeling alone and disconnected.

Here are some of the ways RAW is staying connected:

- Staff have connected with 100% of RAW’s 400+ youth/parents: from calls, texts, emails, video messages, to mailed letters, care packages, and cards
- Groups are being held over video conferencing software for kids to see, hear, and check-in with each other
- Program staff created and shared 10 art making tutorials posted online to bring RAW into the homes of our kids
- Two activity books have been created, the first designed by staff, the second by RAW alum, to be sent to RAW families--also available to download on our website
- A community resource page was developed on our website--it’s regularly updated with new content for kids and families
- 100% of RAW mentors and mentees have continued to meet virtually
- Project Launch staff are in regular contact with 100% of RAW’s seniors to make sure they are on track for next year, keeping them updated on any changes due to covid-19
- RAW has partnered with:
  - Lynn Public Schools to distribute art supplies and coloring/activity books to LPS families
  - Nonprofit Hope & Comfort to distribute hygiene products to Lynn families
  - Staff have engaged the community in collaborative art projects like Facing Forward, featured on our website

RAW’s having an exclusive art auction ONLINE: Saturday, June 13th.
Check our website for more details!

“ITEM SO THANKFUL TO HAVE RAW IN MENA’S AND OUR LIVES. SHE WAS SO HAPPY AFTER TALKING TO ALI, AND THAT RELATIONSHIP MEANS THE WORLD TO HER. IT’S BEAUTIFUL TO WATCH.”

MENA'S MOM, AMANDA, AFTER RAW ART THERAPIST ALISON, CALLED TO CHECK-IN

WHAT'S GOING ON AT RAW?

RAW middle schooler, Mena, showing off one of the pages from her coloring book

RAW Chiefs having their weekly group meeting on Zoom

Bruce, RAW art therapist, putting together care packages for his kids

RAW activity books and crayons for families at Lynn Tech

String Painting
- RAW Program Staff · 47 views

Printing With Natural Objects
- RAW Program Staff · 47 views

Make a Zine with Jenna and Fernandes
- RAW Program Staff · 27 views

Lisa's FUNvelopes
- RAW Program Staff · 50 views

Fun art-making tutorials made by RAW staff, check them out on our website
WHY RAW & WHY NOW?

AS A TEENAGER, I WAS VERY REBELLIOUS, ANGRY AND LOST - I FELT MISUNDERSTOOD BY MOST AND I ENDED UP AT RAW THROUGH MY INVOLVEMENT WITH THE JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM. IT HAS REMAINED A VIVID AND POSITIVE MEMORY EVEN 15 YEARS LATER. RAW WAS A PLACE WHERE I COULD EXPRESS MYSELF CREATIVELY AND GAVE ME PURPOSE AND DIRECTION, I WAS SO PROUD OF THE SELF-PORTRAIT THAT I COMPLETED AND STILL HAVE IT TODAY. I ALSO REMEMBER THE STAFF, THEY MADE ME FEEL SAFE AND I FELT I COULD TRUST THEM, WHICH WAS SO IMPORTANT FOR ME.

EMILY, RAW ALUM

WHAT RAW DID FOR MY DAUGHTER IS ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TO PUT INTO WORDS. IT GAVE HER A SAFE PLACE TO SHARE WHAT WAS GOING ON IN HER LIFE, TO DEVELOP HER ARTISTIC TALENT, AND HER LEADERSHIP SKILLS. RAW NOMINATED HER FOR A POSSE SCHOLARSHIP AND IT LED TO HER BECOMING THE FIRST LYNN STUDENT TO EARN ONE. THEN SHE WENT ON TO EARN HER UNDERGRADUATE AND MASTER’S DEGREES. THANK GOD FOR RAW AND THE AMAZING STAFF...YOU HAVE MADE SUCH AN IMPACT IN MY DAUGHTER’S LIFE AND THE LIVES OF SO MANY OTHERS THAT HAVE WALKED THROUGH THE DOORS OF RAW!

VALERIE DELAND, PARENT OF RAW ALUM

I SUPPORT RAW BECAUSE I BELIEVE IN ITS MISSION AND IMPACT. THE SAFETY, SUPPORT, AND EMPATHY THAT HUNDREDS OF RAW ARTISTS FIND IN THIS BUILDING, AND THEIR INTERACTIONS WITH RAW STAFF IS LIFE-CHANGING. WHAT HAPPENS AT RAW CREATES A POSITIVE AND LONG-LASTING RIPPLE EFFECT ACROSS THE GREATER LYNN COMMUNITY AND BEYOND. RAW KIDS GAIN CONFIDENCE, FIND THEIR VOICE, AND CHANGE THEIR FUTURES HERE.

MIKE MURRAY, RAW BOARD MEMBER

WHY RAW & WHY NOW?

THERE IS TRULY NO COMMUNITY LIKE THE RAW COMMUNITY AND I HOLD SUCH DEEP GRATITUDE TO KNOW THAT WE ARE IN THIS TOGETHER.

LAURA SMITH, RAW STAFF

Card sent to group leader Bruce Orr, from one of his elementary schoolers

Laura and RAW teen, Alisha, at RAW’s Women’s Breakfast

Valerie with her daughter, Doneeca, the Executive Director of Lynn Museum/LynnArts and a RAW alum, at RAW’s Women’s Breakfast
RAW ART WORKS

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RAW ART WORKS

SPRING 2020 NEWSLETTER

www.rawartworks.org

RAW ART WORKS

THANKS!

RAW teens, staff, and Women’s Breakfast host committee, February 2020

SURF TOWN CAMPAIGN

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