



Contact: Merry Parker Whidby
(229) 460-1225
mpwhidby@turner.org

For Immediate Release

Visualizing a New Life Through Art

VALDOSTA (March 29) – Seven years ago, Quinton Mueller was a mischievous seven-year-old child. With his father in jail and his mother on drugs, Mueller had to move in with his Aunt Sophie. Mueller was headed down a path of irresponsibility and delinquency—that is, until he entered the Grassroots afterschool program, at the Turner Center for the Arts.

After months of detention and reckless behavior, Mueller’s teacher, Anne Harvey, thought she was going to have to pull Mueller out of her class and send him to transition school.

Mueller was failing all of his subjects at Sallas Mahone Elementary School and was a regular in the principal’s office.

“Nothing seemed to work for Quinton,” said Tim English, principal of Sallas Mahone Elementary School. “And believe we tried everything from in-school suspension to detention and everything in between.”

Mueller started fights with his peers on a regular basis, vandalized the school gymnasium and was disrespectful to teachers and faculty members.

“I didn’t know what I was going to do with Quinton,” said Harvey. “I was talking to another teacher, Mrs. Keller, about the situation and she said she had the perfect solution.”

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Two weeks later, Mueller entered Grassroots.

“For a little over the first three weeks, Quinton was doing his same old tricks again,” said Anthony Miller, director of Grassroots. “He was picking fights, braking art supplies and talking back to the instructors. We knew Quinton just needed a little love and a little attention.”

Miller began working with Mueller at each meeting. In the beginning of Mueller’s time at Grassroots, he would not even pick up a paint brush or participate in activities.

“One day, he [Quinton] finally picked up a marker and started scribbling as hard as he could until he broke the marker,” Miller said. “I think this helped him get out all his built up anger out of his system.”

Mueller is now 14 years old and is on the honor roll at Valdosta Middle School (VMS). The boy who was almost sent to transition school, is now quarterback of the VMS football team and president of the VMS art club.

“Grassroots really helped me,” Mueller said. “It helped me to get on the right path and straighten up. Art has let me find a way to express myself.”

Mueller’s artwork will be displayed in the seventh annual Spring Into Art show at the Turner Center. The show will be held from April 1, to May 31.

Grassroots has helped thousands of children like Mueller statewide. For more information and ways to volunteer, please contact the Turner Center for the Arts at (229) 247-ARTS.

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