Dartmouth-Hitchcock Creative Arts Program

Telling Our Stories: Turning an In-Person Event Into a Virtual Experience

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The DH-H Creative Arts Team

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Our services are made possible through collaboration between Norris Cotton Cancer Center and the Dartmouth-Hitchcock Arts Program, and is primarily funded through Philanthropy.
A Highlight of our Creative Arts Program is our “Telling Our Stories in Word and Image” Event

This annual special occasion highlights the work of cancer patients and caregivers as they share their stories though the written word, song, and/or visuals arts.

Due to Covid, we realized this intimate event, usually filled with emotion and empathy, could not be held in person in 2020.
What were our options?

How could we recreate this intimate event without bringing people together physically?

Due to Covid, our Creative Arts Program had recently transitioned to virtual small groups and individual sessions, which were generating interest and increasing levels of participation.

Drawing on this success, we determined we would transition the Telling our Stories Program to a video event.

We gathered our resources, enlisting our communications and marketing colleagues to assist us.

We learned that they could help with producing the final video, but first we needed to collect the patient and family work and produce a draft of the video.
Marv shared helpful hints with his writing circle participants and others he had worked with, showing them how to record a video.

Marv also shared instructions on how to submit their video by uploading it to our DH-H drop box.

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### Top Tips for recording a video of yourself!

1. **Lighting**
   - Record yourself facing the window or light source and not with your back against it.

2. **Tripod**
   - Keep camera steady and stable so use a tripod, lean it up against something OR use both hands when recording.

3. **Location**
   - Avoid a distracting background. Try to shoot somewhere there isn’t a lot of background music, clutter, or noise.

4. **Horizontal**
   - Your laptop is good as is but turn your phone or tablet sideways.

5. **Camera**
   - Switch the camera mode so you can see yourself.

6. **Eye Contact**
   - Look at the tiny camera hole. Smile!

7. **Record**
   - Aim for a natural approach.
Michelle Davis, sent a “Call For Art” to participants of our monthly Art Outlet Classes, inviting them to contribute work to our Telling our Stories Art Exhibit. In previous years this exhibit was displayed in the Cancer Center, this year we would also have a virtual exhibit.

Patient and Caregiver Media Releases were collected for the videos, art and written work.

Our marketing colleagues filmed introduction videos of Steve Leach, Director of the Cancer Center, and Marv Klassen-Landis, Creative Writer and Master of Ceremonies.

Margaret Stephens created harp videos to be included in the Virtual Art Exhibit and Telling our Stories Video.
Marv encouraged collected and reviewed all submitted videos. He curated the videos and created the credits list.

Marv worked our video consultant who combined the short videos into a 45 minute program. This in turn was edited and fine tuned by Marv and team until it reached the final form.

Meanwhile, Michelle collected the photos, artist statements and actual pieces of art for an on site Art Exhibit.

Labels were made of the artists statements and the onsite exhibit was hung in the cancer center hallway by Michelle, Marianne and Kim.
Kim Hall created the Virtual Art Exhibit and inserted Margaret’s harp music.

Simultaneously, Marv was collecting copies of the written pieces for the annual Telling Our Stories Anthology, which Michelle would design and combine with the art images to be printed at a later date.

We determined we needed a way to bring a sense of intimacy into the event, and came up with the idea of a “Watch Party.”

Kim sent a Zoom invite for a “Telling Our Stories Watch Party” to all who had submitted to this program, including staff and friends of the cancer center.
AND THE CURTAIN WENT UP

Meanwhile, We advertised the public program through Face Book, Web Site and newsletters to staff and community.

When all was in final form, links were posted of the Telling our Stories Art Exhibit and Program Videos on the Dartmouth-Hitchcock Website and Face Book Page.

On Tuesday, October 6, 202 the event went live on Face Book, and we simultaneously held the watch party

To give you a taste of the event, Here is an excerpt:


Tom Davis, A Handful of Pills
Excerpt from the Telling Our Stories Video
We met our goal of producing a distinctive event which reached far more people than expected.

75 Previous Attendees  700+ This years attendees

THIS WAS TRULY A SUCCESSFUL TEAM VENTURE
Connecting to our Creative Arts Team

Creative.Arts@Hitchcock.org
https://www.dartmouthhitchcock.org/arts/creative_arts_program.htm

- Marv Klassen-Landis, Creative Writer
- Margaret Stephens, Therapeutic Harpist
- Kim Wenger Hall, Visual Artist

- Marianne Barthel, Director, D-H Arts

- Andrea Buccellato, Program Manager, Norris Cotton Cancer Center

- Michelle Davis, Patient and Family Resource Specialist Norris Cotton Cancer Center
Patient & Family Support Services
Thank you Thank you Thank you Thank you Thank you
ADDENDUM

OFFERING CREATIVE ARTS DURING THE PANDEMIC

CURRENT VIRTUAL PROGRAMS
Current Virtual Creative Arts Virtual Programs:
Creative.Arts@Hitchcock.org

Monthly Art Outlet Art Expression Classes

Individual virtual sessions

Art Kits distributed to inpatient units upon request
Current Virtual Therapeutic Harp Programs

Creative.Arts@Hitchcock.org

Facebook videos (over 2000 views!)

Daily Calls to staff on nursing units to set up virtual therapeutic harp sessions with patients in their rooms.

Working with Virtual Visit Coordinator Volunteers to connect to patients phones or provide IPad.

Weekly Virtual Concerts for staff.
Virtual Creative Writing Programs
Creative.Arts@Hitchcock.org

Writing Circles for patients, caregivers, D-H volunteers and staff

Bereavement group utilizing creative writing to express grief and loss

Individual writing sessions