Making Something from Nothing

“Sometimes the things you throw away or recycle can make a really cool piece of art.”
— 29 Pieces Education student

SEE THINGS IN A NEW WAY

It’s important for every young artist to understand and experience the depth of creativity, ingenuity, and cleverness that they possess — no matter what their history or socio-economic background.

If we are talking about the creation of art, it is reassuring to students to discover that they do not need a two ton piece of marble, a $3,000 computer system, or even an expensive set of colored pencils to make powerful and beautiful art. All of us, no matter what our resources, are capable of beauty, expression and creativity, using the simplest of free or inexpensive materials, such as you see on these and the next two pages.

And as the students learn about Great Peacemakers like Mahatma Ghandi, Cesar Chavez, Mother Teresa, and Jeremy Gilley (founder of the International Day of Peace) they will see that these great people did not begin their work with a lot of money and resources at their disposal. And yet, they achieved great things, and helped hundreds of thousands or millions of people. What do these great ones possess? Creativity, a desire to help people, tenacity and commitment in sticking with their goals, a belief in fairness and justice, and above all, a sense of compassion, concern and kindness for all. So if these qualities define “greatness”, we can all agree that these are qualities that don’t cost a penny. And they are qualities that we can all work to develop.

So, suddenly, the things that are free to everyone become the definition of greatness. And in art, that which might be thrown away becomes something we look at and say “Wow! How did you think of that? How beautiful!”

— Karen Blessen, Program Manager, 29 Pieces Education
Can you find all these materials in the art you see here?

Cardboard  
Colored papers  
Sticks  
Netting from fruit bags  
Straws  
Buttons  
Yarn  
Bottle caps  

Styrofoam bubbles  
Chopsticks  
Fabric scraps  
Paper bag  
Pipe cleaners  
Wire  
Bottle caps  
Beads  

Sand dollars  
Bubble wrap  
Old jewelry  
Ribbon  
Crayons  
Markers  
Wrapping papers  
Maps  

Feathers  
Foam bits  
Cotton fluff  
Twist ties  
Cork  
Seashells  
White chalk  
Balsa wood scraps