

Journal of Progress

October 17, 2012

Today I had a meeting with the Melinda Adams in the Honors Program to learn about the Hillcrest Scholarship opportunities. I've never heard of an opportunity like this. I can't pass this up. I just have no idea what to do...it has to be with the Arts, I know that. But...what....there are so many possibilities that it's actually daunting.

November 16, 2012

Lots of thinking has been done....lots of imagining. I know I want to dance. And, I know I want to help people. Today I submitted my "intent to apply" to the Honors Program. I still have a lot of time to figure this out...something will pan out.

January 25, 2013

I applied I applied! Dad told me about Deborah House, which is an amazing organization that takes care of girls who have been sexually abused by family members. My heart yearns for them; I could not imagine a life so dark so early on. I am so blessed to have the family – and especially father – I have. The sad thing is that they do not provide the arts for the girls – they can't afford to. This is my perfect place. It is serendipity. It's where I belong.

March 15, 2013

Wow. So many revisions have been done. I've never thought and worked so deeply on something. This could be the start to my life's work. I honestly think this is where my heart belongs. I turned in my final proposal today and I'm so happy to send it off in hopes that someone will see the passion I have for these girls. I really value professional artists who take time and money to do volunteer work like this. I want to be an artist, but I also want to show the world that they can be artists too. Everyone has a creative, childlike spirit and each person deserves to know that about themselves. Getting to show the world that seems unfathomable, and like the best thing I could possibly do with my life.

April 20, 2013

Today I had my final interview for the Hillcrest Scholarship. It's finally here! I hope I get it, but I'm also so nervous about getting it. I've already put so much work in that I can't imagine the iceberg below this tip. I'm exhausted, but I'm also thrilled. These girls deserve this, and even if I don't get it I know in my heart I have to pursue this.

I can't believe it. I got it. I GOT IT!! I have never felt so much pride and joy in my entire life! This is happening. Romania is happening. Working with these girls is happening. I can't wait to tell them I'm coming. I feel my life changing before my very eyes.

July 3, 2014

I have had a lot of time to really let this marinate. I have been in touch with the girls, and I'm so excited/nervous to be there. I just have to add final touches to my curriculum and I am READY TO GO.

July 28, 2014

Day one. Oh wow. Here we are. It took so long to get here. One horse accident. One week gone. Two cancelled flights, 48 hours gone. We are down to four days. FOUR DAYS to get all of this done. I'm already jet lagged, so this is going to be an exhausting event, but so well worth it.

I met them. Most of them were receptive. Some of them were not. We played the Name Game. How fun is that? We didn't even need language. They were very shy, although some of them were not. I'm just looking forward to getting to know each of their unique personalities. I am so blessed.

July 29, 2014

Today was the first big day of events! We danced inside....so cramped and dark. That was not fun. But they loved learning their dance moves. We got some real talent here! It was so fun to watch them grow on the very first day and open up to me. We played and danced, and hung out all before lunch. I feel like I've been here for weeks. They have made me feel so warm and welcome.

Tonight we started putting the show together. And it's rough. They don't remember anything from the morning. I don't know if this is going to pan out. I told the leaders in charge that if it doesn't come together I don't want to put the girls in a bad situation by having them showcase bad or embarrassing work. I hope it works out....but it seems impossible.

July 30, 2014

Day 2. We are dancing outside now. It is much better. In fact it's amazing. Beautiful to be surrounded by these huge mountains; I feel like Maria in the Sound of Music. I think they like it better, too. We really got a lot done today. They remembered more from last night! The middle group – the early teenagers are really tough. They're not nice, they don't listen, and I don't know what to do with them. The other two groups are fabulous. Just sweethearts. Maybe it's an age thing?

July 31, 2014

Day 3. Halfway there! It's still seeming very very impossible to put on this show, but I'm still keeping the hope alive. We added another rehearsal today, plus their costumes! I think that made the difference. Once they got their tutus, leotards, and tights on they were all of a sudden incredibly excited, proud, and focused. I think they realized that the performance is

happening and they want it to be good. We had a great rehearsal. We finished the dance! It's still very rough, but I'm so proud of these ladies.

August 1, 2014

Today we took a break. We went to a high ropes course and went hiking. It was just what we all needed. I did the highest course with the bravest girls – Romanian regulations are MUCH LIGHTER than U.S. ones. I felt like I could have died at any moment. How exciting. It was a really sweet time getting to know the girls as their friend and not their teacher. The thought of leaving is something I don't want to think about. But, there's a lot to do before then!

August 2, 2014

Last day of rehearsals! The name of the game today was to just affirm, affirm, affirm. Yes, I made corrections and changes, but after lunch it was all about running it so they feel comfortable and empowered. It's bittersweet to watch this come together and know that with another group of people it would have been completely different. This art is unique to us, and is so beautiful because of that.

August 3, 2014

It's the day! We performed in the town park today and I could not contain my nervousness. I really didn't know how it would be received by the girls or the audience. But, it was a hit! Everyone watched in silence in the

middle of this park and applauded so loudly. The girls could not stop giggling and hugging each other and me. It was a beautiful moment. They were so proud of themselves, and that's exactly what the point of this was. I can't wait to go back. I'm applying for another grant. And I can't wait to continue making programs like this, because they are important. This work is important.