

# C is for CREATIVE SOLUTIONS



In the summer of 2018, The Counseling Center and The Ly Hotchkin Art Program embarked on a collaborative journey to provide art therapy services to children on the Autism spectrum. The LyArts studio was abuzz with young people and the delightful sounds of art being created. A piece of paper being ripped for a collage, a crayon tapping on the table, the swipe of a paintbrush on a canvas. Alex, a young man diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder was a participant in the program and he was interested in only one thing. Drawing sharks.



When encouraged to participate in other activities or engage socially, Alex would demonstrate aggressive behavior or walk away from the group. As time went on and Alex observed his peers from afar, he became more interested in the work that was being done.

During a project called "Carousel", where students walked around a table in a circular formation, picking out one color, contributing to a large scale drawing, Alex anxiously joined in. He watched his peers closely, and commented on their contributions to the drawing. With the help of the program's therapist, Alex began to make lines with his crayon that connected each of the drawings. This made Alex very happy and he began to laugh and enjoy the work. His anxiety lessened and he started to engage more with his peers, who eventually became his friends.

The Counseling Center at The Community House has been awarded a grant from Autism Speaks, Inc. to support the Creative Connections Art Therapy Program that helped Alex and students like him express their emotions and improve their social skills through artistic expression. #LightItUpBlue