

**VSA arts of Michigan Career Forum for Artists with Disabilities**  
**2007 Michigan Rehabilitation Conference Presentations**  
**October 24-26, DeVos Center and Amway Grand Plaza Hotel, Grand Rapids**

**Conference Theme: Investing in Ability: It makes good sense**

**Wednesday, October 24 – 2:15-3:30 PM – Location to be determined**

**Title of Presentation: Ben's Story – How Music Benefits a Life**

Meet an aspiring musician who has Williams Syndrome, and learn about the importance that music has in his life. **Presenters: Ben Monkaba**, musician, and **Terry Monkaba**, executive director of the National Williams Syndrome Association. **Lora Frankel**, VSA arts of Michigan executive director, will introduce the presenters and welcome artist participants to the conference.

**Presentation Objectives:**

- To inform people about the characteristics of Williams Syndrome.
- To inform people of the benefits of music in the lives of persons with disabilities.

**Wednesday, October 24 – 5:30-6:30 PM – DeVos Center Ballroom A**

**Exhibitor Grand Opening:** Ben and his musician friends will perform at this event.

**Wednesday, October 24 – 6:30-8:00 PM – DeVos Center Grand Gallery D**

**Cracker Barrel – “You've Got Talent”:** Come share with peers your passions, ideas and/or arts. All participants will have opportunities to share during this open mic Cracker Barrel. If you are looking for a relaxing time, come by for some pizza, art, talk and rhyme. **Duncan Wyeth**, executive director of the Michigan Commission on Disability Concerns will serve as MC, and **Shaqe Kalaj** will curate the exhibit. This session is a collaboration between Michigan Statewide Independent Living Council and VSA arts of Michigan.

**Thursday, October 25 – 8:30-11:45 AM – DeVos Center Grand Gallery D**

**Title of Presentation: The Business of the Arts**

Artists and others will learn how to develop and implement a marketing plan, portfolios of their creative work, basic nonprofit accounting practices, and resources available to them in their pursuit of making a business of their work in the arts. **Presenters: Robert Moore**, Michigan Rehabilitation Services, Lansing, **John T. Baron, CPA**, Baron Tons Associates, East Lansing, marketing professional to be determined, Ann Arbor, **Ed Cheeney**, film/video producer, Lansing. This session will be moderated by **John Bracey**, executive director, Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs.

**Presentation Objectives:**

- To provide assistance in making art a business.
- To give artists and others the skills to become professional in their work.

**Thursday, October 25 – 11:45 AM-1:15 PM– DeVos Center Grand Gallery D**

**Luncheon: Featured Performer and Speaker: Jaehn Clare, Director, Artistic**

**Development, VSA arts of Georgia** VSA arts of Michigan will host participating artists and presenters for a roll-in buffet luncheon.

**Thursday, October 25 – 1:15-2:30 PM – DeVos Center Grand Gallery D**

**Title of Presentation: Journeys of Professional Artists with Disabilities**

Learn about the dedication of these artists to creativity, artistic expression, and the various journeys that they have taken in order to make it to professionalism in their chosen art forms.

**Presenters:** **Bess Bonnier**, jazz musician from Detroit, **Jaehn Clare**, actor and playwright from Atlanta, GA, **Shaqe Kalaj**, visual artist from Livonia. This panel discussion will be moderated by **Stephen M. Laux**, member of the Board of Directors of VSA arts of Michigan, and former 504/ADA coordinator for the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs.

**Presentation Objectives:**

- To illustrate how individuals with disabilities achieve success in their artistic work and make the arts their career.

**Thursday, October 25 – 3:00-4:15 PM – DeVos Center Grand Gallery D**

**Title of Presentation: Working as an Artist without Jeopardizing Your Benefits**

**Description of Presentation**

Artists with disabilities and other interested persons will learn about the rules governing Social Security benefits and how they impact on one's employment, especially as related to sales of artwork and fees for services as professionals. Learn how the process for reporting income does not have to jeopardize your benefits. **Presenter: Karen C. Larsen**, Work Incentive Coordinator, Area IV Director's Office, Social Security Administration, Lansing. This presentation will be hosted by **Lora Frankel**, executive director of VSA arts of Michigan.

**Presentation Objectives (required):**

- To dispel the existing myths and mysteries about Social Security benefits.
- To make it possible for artists and others to work and earn the kind of income that they rightfully deserve.

**Friday, October 26 – 10:45-12:00 AM – Location to be determined**

**Title of Presentation: Goal Setting and Strategic Planning**

Artists will gather to build a business plan complete with goals, strategies and timelines against which they can measure their progress over the course of the coming year. Stated goals and methods of obtaining them will be collected for follow-up throughout the year. Information will be gathered from the artists regarding additional concerns and needs for further training and knowledge. Facilitators for this session will include **Lora Frankel**, VSAMI executive director, **Jaehn Clare**, VSAGA director of Artistic Development, **Shaqe Kalaj**, visual artist and VSAMI coordinator of visual arts, and **Carol Thompson**, VSAMI director of Community Outreach.