

Senator Clarke offered the following resolution:

Senate Resolution No. 124.

A resolution commemorating May 2006 as VSA arts of Michigan Month.

Whereas, It is with the greatest pleasure that the members of the Michigan Senate join in commemorating May 2006 as VSA arts of Michigan Month in Michigan. May is the time of year when hundreds of children, youth, and adults with disabilities, educators, artists, advocates, parents, and VSA arts of Michigan volunteers gather to celebrate their learning and participation in the arts at the conclusion of yearlong programs and activities with a series of festivals and special events that take place throughout the state; and

Whereas, VSA arts of Michigan promotes creative power in people with disabilities and seeks to create a society where people with disabilities participate in, learn through, excel in, and enjoy the arts. VSA arts of Michigan is part of an international network of VSA arts affiliates encompassing more than 60 countries around the world that engage millions of people in the arts each year. VSA arts was founded in 1974 and is an affiliate of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC; and

Whereas, Since 1978, VSA arts of Michigan has trained hundreds of artists with and without disabilities, educators, social services workers, arts and cultural organizations, museum docents, and others to include the arts in the education, work skills training, and leisure-time activities of people with disabilities, thus enriching their lives and contributing to a new dimension of understanding. The arts provide different modalities for the communication of feelings, ideas, and perceptions--mediums that are open to all who have the capability of expressing themselves. Children, youth, and adults who have physical, cognitive, or mental impairments enjoy and benefit from opportunities to learn more and connect with their communities through worthwhile endeavors like those offered in VSA arts of Michigan programs. They discover and further develop their potential through the arts; and

Whereas, VSA arts of Michigan supports the work of more than 100 district volunteers who plan and conduct arts educational activities and services that benefit people with disabilities in their respective communities. CHARLEVOIX-EMMET has increased participation in the arts by students with disabilities from 250 to over 550 during the last four years; COPPER COUNTRY has conducted a weekly art class in Hancock, Michigan, for young adults with developmental disabilities for the past 15 years; DEARBORN has provided music and dance classes for youth and young adults through the city recreation department for the past eight years; GENESEE COUNTY has provided arts education opportunities through artists-in-residence programs and festivals to approximately 80 pre-school to adult special education classrooms per year for the past 15 years; GRAND RAPIDS is celebrating its 20th anniversary of making the arts accessible to all children, youth, and adults with disabilities throughout Kent County through 12 annual programs and arts opportunities; GRAND TRAVERSE is celebrating its tenth year of providing arts activities to over 5,000 students and their families in schools and at major community celebrations, such as the National Cherry Festival and Festival of Trees, coordinates the Kids on the Block program for all fourth graders in the area, and brings children with diverse abilities to the Dennon Museum Center to engage in the arts each fall; MT. PLEASANT plans to begin its district activities by establishing the Summer Promise Arts Camp in 2006; NEWAYGO has made it possible for hundreds of older adults to participate in and enjoy the arts and share the arts with young children from the community; ST. JOSEPH COUNTY is hosting its third annual VSA arts Festival this month, bringing together more than 500 participants; the SOUTHEAST committee will be conducting its 16th VSA arts Festival this month at Livonia Mall, where children, youth, and adults with disabilities will showcase their talents through dance, drama, music, and visual arts; and WASHTENAW just recently celebrated its third art exhibition at the ISD administration building, showing work created by special education students from elementary and secondary schools throughout the county; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate, That we hereby commemorate May 2006 VSA arts of Michigan Month in Michigan; and be it further

Resolved, That a copy of this resolution be transmitted to VSA arts of Michigan as evidence of our highest esteem.