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TOP STORY

Free after-school arts program offers creative outlet for students

By JOHN REECER jreecer@bgdailynews.com

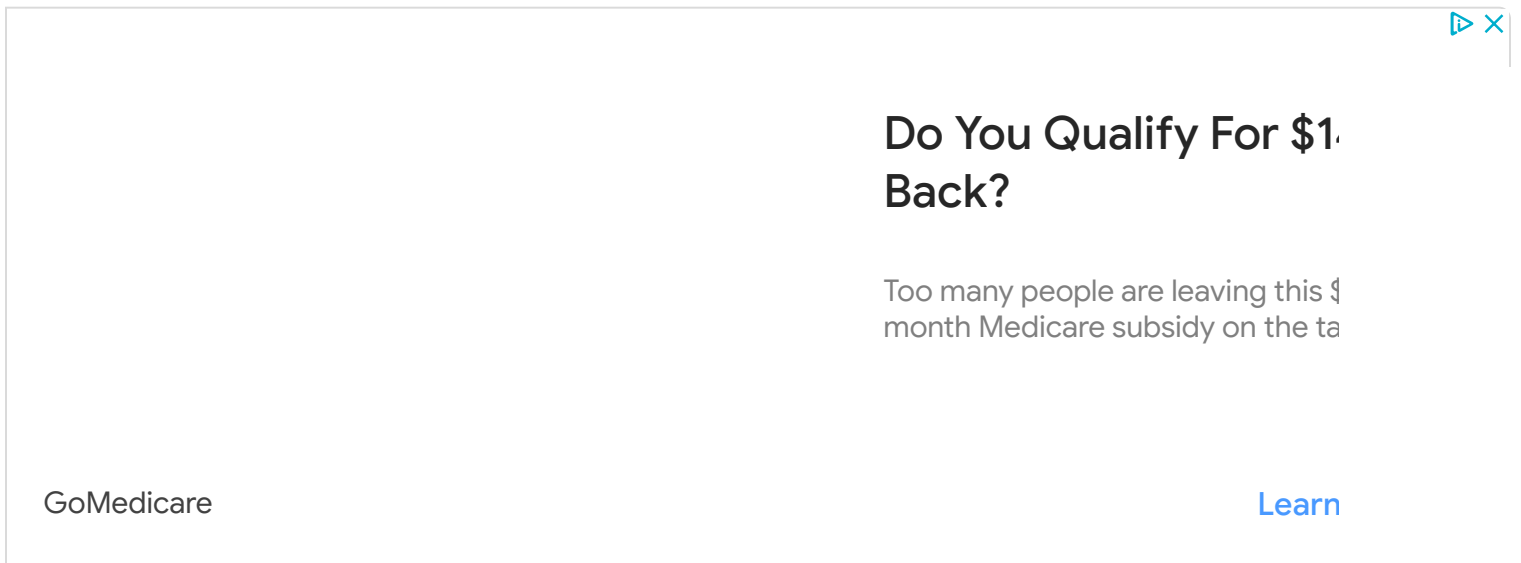
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Light of Chance founder Eric Logan talks about classes for the 2021 spring semester at the facility at 527 State Street on Thursday, March 11, 2021. The program, open to students, offers virtual after-school arts classes, including music, visual arts, dance and yoga classes. Photo by Grace Ramey

A local nonprofit is providing free after-school art classes as an avenue for students to express themselves and to showcase their abilities.

Located at 527 State St. in Bowling Green, Light of Chance Inc.'s Breathe Youth Arts Program offers a number of classes to students in grades 5-12 in the areas of visual art, creative writing, yoga, dance and music.



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Too many people are leaving this \$ month Medicare subsidy on the ta

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The advertisement is a rectangular box with a white background. In the top right corner, there is a small blue play button icon and a close 'X' icon. The main text is centered and reads 'Do You Qualify For \$1. Back?' in a large, bold, black font. Below this, in a smaller, grey font, it says 'Too many people are leaving this \$ month Medicare subsidy on the ta'. At the bottom left, the text 'GoMedicare' is displayed in a black font. At the bottom right, there is a blue link that says 'Learn'.

Students enrolled in the program have their own curriculum and lesson plans that explore different emotion-based themes such as anxiety and happiness.

Light of Chance founder Eric Logan said the goal of each class is to have a community showcase where families can watch their children perform what they have learned as a way to celebrate the children.

Logan, 40, began the Breathe Arts Program in 2012 in his hometown of Madisonville, where he said the program experienced a lot of success.

“We just really felt the need and that it was time to bring it here to Bowling Green,” Logan said. “It hasn’t been the easiest thing, but we have been fortunate enough to be able to provide these services at no cost. We just really believe that art and the ability to access art is really important. The things that kids are learning here are transferable skills that they can use throughout the rest of their lives.”

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There are three main classrooms at the Light of Chance facility.

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The first is a space devoted entirely to the visual arts (painting, writing and Adobe Photoshop), the second is a space for yoga and dance classes and the final room is a music studio with instruments and recording equipment.

Logan said each classroom is staffed by two teachers who either have degrees or a wealth of experience in their respective fields.

Teachers in the program, who are called “teaching artists,” also have complimentary skills in other areas of interest, he said.

Light of Chance also provides individual and family counseling services. Counseling comes at no cost.

Therapists are trained through the state and are certified. Case managers can connect families to needed services. Individuals can come just for the counseling or just for the arts.

“We have seen that the arts help kids inside and outside of the classroom,” Logan said. “As a gradual progression to make our program more holistic, we wanted to be able to provide those services as well – especially during a pandemic.”

Logan said the after-school program was started just a few months before the COVID-19 pandemic began. Now, it’s ready for the spring season with more of the public becoming vaccinated each day.



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A range of students from different socioeconomic backgrounds have attended classes thus far. Logan said it doesn't matter what situation they may be coming from as art links them together.

"All that matters is a love for art," Logan said. "One of the perks is that sometimes kids can come and make friends and be better connected to others their age. To be able to bring that out and develop that is really special."

Logan started the nonprofit in 2005 when he was 25. He has a bachelor's degree from Western Kentucky University in communication, a master's degree in corporate organization and a master's degree in organizational leadership.

"For me, it's kind of like the American dream to be able to find something you love that doesn't really feel like work," Logan said of his nonprofit. "The bonus part is to be able to make a difference at the same time. It doesn't really get too much better than that."

In-person music, dance and visual arts classes are scheduled Mondays and Wednesdays from 4 to 6:30 p.m. while yoga class is on Thursdays from 4 to 5 p.m.

Precautions for in-person classes include temperature checks and mask requirements for all students, teaching artists and staff.

The program also offers virtual options. Those students who opt to participate virtually will utilize Google Classroom and Google Meet. There are sessions for the music, dance and visual arts classes to accommodate varying schedules.

– More information is available at 270-904-4005 or visiting the Light of Chance Facebook page.

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