

Joe Hand Boxing Gym opens doors to area kids



Children from NLArts recently completed their community project with computer assistance at the Joe Hand Boxing Gym.

Computer lab is a perfect fit for Northern Liberties arts program.

When children at the NLArts summer program were told they would complete their community project at a computer lab, they didn't expect a field trip to the Joe Hand Boxing Gym to be on the agenda.

Maybe a stop at the library or middle school. But a boxing gym?

But that's exactly what they got, and it turned out to be a per-

fect fit for the Northern Liberties community arts group.

"At first they said we're just going to the computer lab, and one of my friends asked, 'Where's the computer lab?' " said Zillah, a 13-year-old seventh grader at Frankford Friends. "And they said, 'Oh, at a boxing place.' We just stared at them for a second.

"How are we going to type? With boxing gloves?" laughed Zillah.

For three weeks in August, the Joe Hand Boxing Gym and Computer Lab played host to NLArts, a non-profit community arts program that operates out of the Northern Liberties Community Center at 3rd & Fairmount. Each

Joe Hand Boxing Gym welcomes NLArts program

week, approximately 12 to 15 junior counselors filled the gym's computer lab to work on their "Community" project.

For their assignment, the group researched a specific community in Philadelphia, such as Northern Liberties, West Philadelphia, Old City, and, in Zillah's case, Frankford.

For some, the project involved poetry, paintings, collages and various art-based projects. Their objective was to find out what makes up a community.

"One of our projects is about community and how it changes over time," explained Zillah. "How a diverse group of people put together can make a very good community."



Prior to their visit to the Joe Hand Boxing Gym, computer time for the kids was very limited. According to Monika Kreidie, director of NLArts, the kids would have one laptop and computer to share.

"Not even two

(computers)," said Tia Hall, teacher for the junior counselors. "One of them doesn't even work. This is perfect. It's just perfect."

And Kreidie couldn't agree more.

"This was a real help for us.

The idea was that we would share these two computers that we had, but when I talked to Joe (Hand) before the camp, he said we could use the lab. It was a godsend for us."

The Joe Hand Boxing Gym & Computer Lab

was more than happy to help out.

In fact, gym owner Joe Hand Sr. would like to see more organizations take advantage of the free access to the

computer lab. The invitation is not only for children, but also extends to any

senior citizens in the neighborhood.

The Joe Hand Boxing Gym and Computer Lab is located at 547 N. Third St. If interested, please make an appointment by calling Joe Hand Promotions at (215) 364-9000.



NLARTS