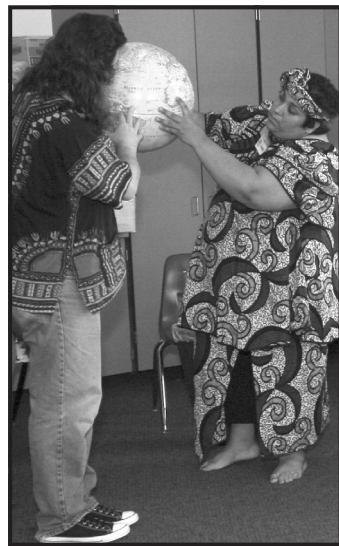


# African culture comes alive with LTA

By PATTI CULVER

For the fourth consecutive year, the Illinois River Valley Arts Council Learning Through Art (LTA) program



Locating Senegal on the globe.

brought its three-day Africa Project to seventh-grade students at Lorna Byrne Middle School.

LTA conducted two-day workshops in conjunction with the school's Africa studies program. On Wednesday and Thursday, May 14 and 15, directed by coordinator Noralene Harland, African arts were presented to the students in the forms of mud-cloth and adinkra textiles,



Student art on display

affia dolls and gourd masks. While some dolls in Africa are created from fabric, most are made of wood and highly decorated with beads. They are often used not as toys, but instead, as part of rituals: Raffia symbolizes "something good," and the raffia dolls the students created represented the people of African culture.

African masks are used also in rituals as well as healing ceremonies. They are symbols of authority and objects of worship. Every mask has its own spirit, and when not in use, usually sits on a shrine. Because masks incorporate symbolism in their decoration, students were asked to design their masks for personal significance.

Adinkra involves printing designs in a black dye made from tree bark, employing stamps carved from sections of calabash gourd. The seventh-graders used the adinkra symbols and paint to stamp designs on fabric.

With kente, stark black-and-yellow designs of mud cloth have become one of the best-known African cloth traditions. Traditionally, designs are drawn onto cloth using a mud solution. It can

take several weeks of slow and painstaking work before the entire cloth is covered.

For this workshop, the students worked with fabric dye discharge to create their elaborate designs.

Gabi Salas Groth, feast and music coordinator, organized a one-day celebration on



Rebecca Saavedra in traditional Senegalese garb with African drums.

Friday, May 16. It consisted of a live African music performance, provided hands-on opportunities for the students and included African food.

These programs are made possible by volunteer support, and funding from the Carpenter and Cow Creek Umpqua Indian Foundations. For information, contact Patti Culver, LTA Program administrator, at [irvac.lta@gmail.com](mailto:irvac.lta@gmail.com). To become a member, or find out more about IRVAC, visit [irvac.com](http://irvac.com).



Dome School elementary students created Animal Masks with Nedd & Jen Wyant. The class is preparing for an end-of-the-year performance during an open house on Thursday, May 22, beginning at 6:30 p.m. The play is titled *Flower Power* and is being directed by Jack Dwyer. The public can attend. For more information, phone 592-3911. (Photo provided)



Takilma Bible Church conducted its 25th bi-annual clothing giveaway program Saturday, May 17 at the church on Takilma Road. Mounds of clean, good clothing are made available free to all comers as part of the church ministry. Abigail Robinson, daughter of Pastor Dan Robinson, is recognized as the driving force for the project. (Photo by Ali Madjdi)

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