Creative courses for care-givers

KAREN RUTTER

THE Community Arts Project (CAP) is holding a series of visual and performing arts courses and workshops at its headquarters in Chapel Street, Woodstock, and at community centres in Guguletu, Langa and Khayelitsha.

The activities range from arts administration sessions through to drawing, printmaking and design courses, with one of the more unusual workshops called Art Towards Healing, which begins this Monday at CAP.

Co-ordinator Liz Brouckaert explained that this is a 14-session course aimed at care-givers, those who “provide input to marginalised communities”, such as social workers, with “a particular focus on people who work with limited resources, especially those who cater to groups with special needs such as abused children”.

Appropriate

“Participation is important,” Liz continued, “this is not one of those situations where you just sit back and take notes.

“Each course member must bring their own content aboard, to be shared with others. In this way, one can work out what appropriate skills are required for specific situations.”

She gave an example: “We may have, as a course member, a social worker who works with sexually-abused children in a township. She will tell us what she has found works with her group and she can learn what other people do in different situations.”

The emphasis is on using creativity – specifically, music/movement and visual arts – as a healing tool.

While British-trained arts therapist Tinny Rosser will run the visual side of the course, Liz will co-ordinate the music/movement workshops.

A trained nursing sister, Liz completed a two-year diploma in Remedial Music (Music Therapy) and is registered as a Single Medium Therapist with the Occupational Therapy Board.

For the past two years she has been working on community outreach programmes for UWC, UCT and other groups, sharing her music therapy skills with a diverse range of people, including returned exiles, street children and patients in hospital.

“For this course the music/movement side has to be accessible and sustainable. I won’t be working with guitar or piano; we’ll learn how to build our own instruments out of low-cost and easily available materials (such as kelp from the beach),” Liz continued.

While the idea of music/movement therapy may sound “elitist”, Liz hastens to explain the whole thrust of the course is to take specialisation skills out into the broader community.

“It’s the dissemination of skills into appropriate places.

“Interestingly, the idea came about in response to surveys carried out by CAP which identified a need in this area.”

“It’s critical that the course be followed up by the establishment of a supportive network. I’ll also be going into the communities to observe situations so as to examine them during the course.

“And the whole procedure will be monitored by professional supervisors.”

Art Towards Healing will run every Monday from July 31 to October 31 at CAP.

For details, call (021) 45-3648.