Art Helped My Daughter Heal

When a 7-year-old boy's grandmother wrote to tell me he'd fallen in love with my daughter's self-portrait, I took a look.

March 12, 2012 By Cheryl Gittens-Jones

The first time I saw one of my daughter Amaranthia's digital drawings, I was awestruck. After she returned to the states from Tokyo, where she attended preschool and kindergarten, she found it extremely difficult to fit into a mostly white environment.

Amaranthia is African American, but her early and total immersion in Japanese culture made her feel Japanese on the inside. We discussed what it was like to be African American in this country, but nothing could prepare her for its full reality.

One day, the school nurse summoned me. For one so young, Amaranthia's blood pressure was high. A doctor confirmed the nurse's findings that same day and referred me to a cardiologist. Months later, he diagnosed her with hypertension. In search of stress relief, Amaranthia turned to art.

Today, my daughter is 12 years old. Her art is an extension of who she is and how she expresses herself. She's found a kind of work-life balance that's helped her.

Essentially, Amaranthia's art has healed her. And like that little boy who loved her drawing, I couldn't be a more ardent fan.

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http://beta.docker.realhealthmag.com/article/Art-Work-Balance-22051-4789