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Hydrants Become Art Canvas

Friday, June 17, 2011 - 8:00am

Eight fire hydrants in North Wilkesboro are receiving a face-lift this week, thanks to a group of teens selected for the Wilkes Art Gallery's annual Summer Honors Art Program. The program has been held each summer for the past 21 years.



The 2011 program title is "Art Around Town: Get the Art Out on Downtown Fire Hydrants." During this year's program, students have been paired with Jeffrey Elmore, local artist and educator, to design and paint eight of the downtown North Wilkesboro fire hydrants.

The project is a collaboration between the Wilkes Art Gallery, Historic Downtown North Wilkesboro and the Town of North Wilkesboro Public Art committee. It has been designed to engage a wide audience in the creation of this community art project.

The students are: Joshua Murray, East Wilkes High School, senior; Brittany Serbeck, North Wilkes High School, sophomore; Katherine Pena, Wilkes Central High School, junior; Ashley Brooke Billings, North Wilkes High School, junior; Dustin Hicks, North Wilkes High School, sophomore; Kristian Roten, East Wilkes High School, junior and Breyetta Elam, Wilkes Central High School, junior.

On Tuesday students were cleaning and scraping paint off the hydrants in preparation for their paintings of local scenes and interest. The students created the designs for the hydrants on Monday, the first day of the camp. Around noon Tuesday, Brittany Serbeck and Ashley Billings were working on a fire hydrant close to the North Wilkesboro Police Station. They were scrubbing diligently, but looking forward to their lunchtime break and to painting their designs on the hydrants.

Ms. Serbeck's design includes a train winding around the hydrant with flowers at the top. That design will be painted onto the hydrant near the police station. Ms. Billings' design is of a MerleFest theme with an array of colors used in the painting. It will be painted onto the hydrant near Melody Square.

Students will also be painting designs on fire hydrants located in front of Keystone Grill (Brame's Drug), Michael's Jewelry, Park Place, the Brushy Mountain Ruritan Park, Wilkes County Library and at the corner of C and 10th streets.

The program is sponsored by the Katherine Ann Greene Foundation, Kulynych Family Foundation and Herring Family Foundation. The Summer Honors Art Program was started in 1990 through a grant from the Katherine Ann Greene Foundation.

This is not the first year the Summer Honor Arts Program has created art projects in downtown North Wilkesboro. Previous projects have included windows on Wachovia Building, flagpole and decorative flags at Gallery, banners for downtown and mural at the back of the Gallery building.

The Wilkes Art Gallery is sponsoring several camps and art lessons for youth this summer. A two-week summer art camp with the North Wilkesboro Housing Authority will begin next week.

Art classes at the Gallery also include ones for Rainbow Center youth, ADAP, Smart Start, and Wilkes County Schools' exceptional children's program. It also includes Art in the Afternoon for elementary and middle school students, and adult art classes.

For more information on the Wilkes Art Gallery contact Kara Minton-Elmore at kara@wilkesartgallery.org, go to the website at www.wilkesartgallery.org or call 667-2841.

Beginning this month, the Wilkes Art Gallery will be offering a series of weeklong adventures in art for children ages three to 13. The camps are diverse in their subject and media. All Summer Art Camps are open to members and nonmembers of the Gallery. Upcoming camps with open registration include:

"Draw, Paint, Sculpt" will meet June 20 to 24 and will be instructed by Connie Broyhill. Ages 5 to 8 will meet from 10 a.m. to noon and 9 to 13 will meet from 1 to 3 p.m. Campers will mix their own paint to create a landscape painting, a still life painting and best of all, a Super-Hero self-portrait. After painting, campers will transform the painting of their choice into a mixed-media sculpture. Cost will be \$55 for members; \$65 for nonmembers. Registration deadline is Tuesday, June 14.

"Art FUNDamentals" will meet July 11 to 15 and will be instructed by Jenna Bailey. Ages 5 to 8 will meet from 10 a.m. to noon and 9 to 13 will meet from 1 to 3 p.m. Explore drawing, painting and other two-dimensional media using the building blocks of art: shape, line, color and value. Campers will create a variety of 2-D artworks themed around the ideas of their choice. Cost is \$55 for members; \$65 for nonmembers. Registration deadline is Tuesday, July 5

"Draw a Masterpiece" will meet July 18 to 22 and will be instructed by Janet Randazzo. Ages 5 to 8 will meet from 10 a.m. to noon and 9 to 13 will meet from 1 to 3 p.m. Adventures with exciting drawing in all shapes and sizes. From life-size portraits to downtown streetscapes, you will be drawing it all. Throughout the week, campers will sketch ideas and doodles in their own sketchbook to keep. Cost is \$55 for members; \$65 for nonmembers. Registration deadline will be Tuesday, July 12.

"Can you Make it with Clay" will meet July 25 to 29 and will be instructed by Jane Maddocks. Ages 5 to 8 will meet from 10 a.m. to noon and ages 9 to 13 will meet from 1 to 3 p.m. Instructor Jane Maddocks will instruct students on hand-building techniques that will allow them to create fantastic objects with clay. Cost is \$60 for members; \$70 for nonmembers. Registration deadline is Tuesday, July 19.

Limited scholarships are available. For more information or to register your child for any camp, contact the Wilkes Art Gallery at 667-2841 or email inquiry to info@wilkesartgallery.org or allie@wilkesartgallery.org.

**Photo and article by Frances Hayes of the Wilkes Journal-Patriot.
