

## Cultivating Artistic Talent

By Amy Lavalley - Post-Tribune correspondent  
May 11, 2011 02:03AM



Artist Ron Sinclair of the Village Park Enrichment Center at Banta Center speaks about some of his works on display at Valparaiso University's Christopher Center Library. | Michael Gard-For Sun-Times Media

Paula Nicholson used to run Valparaiso's Village Park Enrichment Center at the Banta Senior Center. At the time, Suzie Rosso started offering art classes there, and at Meridian Woods and Pines Village.

"When that program started there, I was envious of the people taking the class," said Nicholson, 67, who stopped running the activity center about two years ago.

She's no longer envious. About a year ago, Nicholson, who lives in Morgan Township, started taking Rosso's class.



The works on display at Valparaiso University's Christopher Center Library as part of the Artists In Bloom program include many different media. The artists are from local seniors groups. | Michael Gard-For Sun-Times Media

This month, she joins 25 other artists in the program whose work is on display for the Artists in Bloom exhibit, at the Christopher Center on the Valparaiso University campus.

Nicholson had been through some art classes years ago and liked them, but didn't have the time to pursue her creative side. Through Rosso's class, Nicholson has experimented with sketching, from geometric shapes to people and streetscapes, as well as different mediums, including acrylic and oil painting.

She found acrylics frustrating to work with because they dry so quickly. Oil paint, which takes several days to dry, was easier to master. "It's a very forgiving way of painting," she said.

This is the third year for the art exhibit, which features work from class veterans as well as those new to the program. Regardless, many of the students had never drawn or painted before they took Rosso's class.

"I had one 94-year-old lady who had never seen red and yellow mixed before. When she created orange, her eyes lit up like magic," Rosso said, adding her students have always had artistic abilities and her class brought out that talent.

The classes provide a sense of accomplishment and prove that learning never stops, said Cherylene Brennecke, director of programs and events for Pines Village Retirement Communities.

The signed artwork also leaves a lasting legacy of the artists' interest, which was developed later in life.

"I always tell our artists that this is the part of us that lives on," Brennecke said.



The works on display at Valparaiso University's Christopher Center Library as part of the Artists In Bloom program include many different media. The artists are from local seniors groups. | Michael Gard-For Sun-Times Media

That's certainly true for Judy Bornstein, 74, who lives in Meridian Woods. After the first art exhibit two years ago, Bornstein started selling her pieces. She has done commissioned works for friends, as well as created note cards.

Bornstein joked that she couldn't draw a straight line with a ruler when she showed up in Rosso's class, and initially went to see which of her neighbors signed up for "Drawing for Scaredy Cats."

"(Rosso) said sit down, you might surprise yourself — duh!" Bornstein said.

If you go:

The Artists in Bloom exhibit, featuring artists from Pines Village, Meridian Woods and the Village Park Enrichment Center at the Banta Senior Center, will be on display through May 31 at the Christopher Center, 1410 Chapel Drive, on the Valparaiso University campus.

The exhibit is in honor of National Older American Month. Exhibit hours are daily from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

---

Copyright © 2011 — Sun-Times Media, LLC

---