

Art Matters

To your health: Fine art is good medicine



By Janet Sellers

Imagine visiting a friend in the hospital or in recovery at a nursing facility and actually enjoying the art on the walls, not as mere decoration filling up the walls but as respite in an enriching moment during a stressful time. Wouldn't that brighten your day and put a smile on your face? Imagine, too, the healthy effect on patients as they go through the hallways in recovery mode in a wheelchair or how uplifting that short rehab walk could be with refreshing art on the walls or as sculptural way-finding elements.

Healthcare art programs are growing. Hospitals are using fine art to help patients heal faster. Yes, you read that right: Patients that have pleasant art to view benefit from lowered stress, reduced anxiety and pain. The fine art appears in traditional and video formats where they are even adding audio guides. Research has shown the hospitals that the fine art is a big plus, and they are putting big money into the effort.

"We firmly believe that fine art is good medicine," explained Jennifer Finkel, curator for the Cleveland Clinic Art Program, Arts & Medicine Institute. The healing power of art has been well documented. According to the 2009 State of the Field Report: Arts in Healthcare, "Studies have proven integrating the arts into healthcare settings helps to cultivate a healing environment, support the physical, mental, and emotional recovery of pa-

tients, communicate health and recovery information, and foster a positive environment for caregivers that reduces stress and improves workplace satisfaction."

Finkel said in an interview for Currents magazine that the clinic's 91 years of art collection contains 5,000 works spread throughout its main campus, hospitals, family health centers, and inter-continental Cleveland hotels. "Many main campus visitors have been entranced by Jenmfer Steinkamp's Mike Kelley 1, a video installation of a tree that transforms through the seasons," and Finkel added that the clinic has collected art in part because "The founders realized the benefits of arts in the healing process." Richard Mayer, MetroHealth's director of construction management, added, "Over 175 years, you [MetroHealth] start to collect some incredible pieces."

The Wall Street Journal reported in August this year that, "researchers are learning more about the precise ways paintings and other works of art help patients and families in the healing process. With studies showing a direct link between the content of images and the brain's reaction to pain, stress, and anxiety, hospitals are considering and choosing artworks based on the evidence and giving it a higher priority than merely decoration for sterile rooms and corridors."

More and more care centers are investing in or at least investigating in the arts for healing, both on the walls and

as restorative activities for patients and families. Hospital art curators usually look for works that provide levity and at least a positive distraction. This is important news for artists, and our state has multi-million-dollar investments in art for its hospitals statewide, on a hospital-by-hospital basis, including state mental hospitals and others.

At Anschutz Medical Campus, Denver Medical Center in Aurora, the Fulginiti Pavilion first floor houses a 1,000-square-foot art gallery that will be open to the public during regular business hours, and the gallery offers changing exhibits meant to inspire rich thought. The campus has policies and art locations to "ensure that the arts are incorporated into student education, clinical practice, and the daily life of our community, the gallery provides a secure venue for curated exhibitions of painting and photography and multimedia installations."

For years now, we artists and our venues have touted the benefits of pleasant fine art as restorative creative aspects for work, school and home, and I have always suspected art in hospitals would be great to have as well. I guess seeing the research makes that idea seem more concrete. Anyhow, it's great to know that hospitals are acting on what we believe: that fine art is good for us in body and soul!

Our local art scene has year-round fine art to enjoy, and each month most locations have special offerings and

changed exhibits for your pleasure and for purchase. Please visit them or take a class or give a class as a gift. Keep the arts strong in your heart and your health!

Local art events in October

Oct. 8 Empty Bowls dinner—Lewis-Palmer High School; \$20 ticket includes dinner, a handmade bowl, and more. One child 12 or under admitted free with purchased ticket. Tickets available at the door, local merchants, or online at www.MonumentHillKiwanis.org.

Bella Art and Frame Gallery—Over a dozen fine artists exhibit their work in wall niches throughout the gallery. Realism and abstract works in oil, acrylic, watercolor, photography, jewelry, ceramics, textiles, and a gift shop with fine art gifts and greeting cards. 183 Washington St., Monument.

Tri-Lakes Center for the Arts—Through Nov. 1, Wendy Francisco art exhibit, Twice Upon a Time by debi Story Maddox, jewelry making classes by Elaine Teevens. 304 Highway 105, Palmer Lake.

Janet Sellers is a noted local artist and art teacher. Her paintings and sculptures are exhibited at local businesses, the Monument Sculpture Park, and various museums and cities, and her large-scale murals are in Los Angeles and Colorado. She can be reached via OCN at JanetSellers@OCN.me.

Snapshots of Our Community

Patriot Golf Tournament



Above: The Donald Wescott Fire Protection District Patriot Team members are, from left, firefighter Brian Crawford, engineer Mauricio Ayala, Lt. Shannon Balvanz, and Capt. Sean Pearson. *Photo courtesy of Dean Jones.*

The 13th annual Patriot Golf Tournament on Sept. 8, sponsored by Gleneagle Sertoma Club, attracted 126 golfers who played 18 holes at the Air Force Academy's Eisenhower Golf Course. Honored guests comprised patriot teams from Peterson Air Force Base, Air Force Academy, Colorado Springs Police Department, Colorado Springs Fire Department, and Donald Wescott Fire Protection District. Their green fees were paid by friends of Sertoma and local businesses.

This tournament is held each year near Sept. 11 to memorialize those who served and lost their lives in the disasters inflicted by terrorists in 2001. The Patriot Annual Golf Tournament has become a tradition honoring those in our community who would make the same heroic efforts anytime and anywhere.

Proceeds from the tournament will benefit Home Front Cares and other local charities supported by Gleneagle Sertoma.

American Legion Flag Ceremony, Sept. 11



On Sept. 11, members of American Legion Post 9-11 and Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District firefighters commemorated the anniversary of the 2001 terrorist attacks, and the moment when the first jet plane hit the World Trade Center tower in 2001, by lowering the flag to half-staff. The ceremony is an annual event for the American Legion Post. See www.americanlegiontrilakespost911.com to find out about dozens of other post activities supporting veterans and the community. *Photo by post Historian Ray Kinder.*

Frog Festival benefits Healing Warriors



Above: Bob Gould won Best in Show with his painstakingly-restored 1949 Oldsmobile. *Photo by Lisa Hatfield.*

On Sept. 14, the Whimsy County Frog Festival and Show of Classic Conveyances raised money to benefit the Healing Warriors Program, which provides pain management for post-traumatic stress and traumatic brain injury symptoms not paid for by traditional medical coverage for veterans and their families. Frog on a Limb Primitives and Pikes Peak Brewing Co. organized the event. For more information or to donate to Healing Warriors, visit <http://healingwarriorsprogram.org>.

Black Forest Park



Above and below: As described in the caption on page 1, volunteers install log erosion barriers (LEBs) in Black Forest Regional Park. *Photos by Lisa Hatfield.*

