

Beverly Farm Artists Showcase Heartfelt Work

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
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ALTON – Earlier this month artists from Beverly Farm presented their works at the “I’m an Artist” Gallery at Old Bakery Beer Company.

The art program at Beverly Farm is mostly directed by residents and sponsored by community donations. Lately, however, they have been working to create more of a self-funded endeavor. Director Krista Kell said a grant from the Riverbend Growth Association allowed them to purchase some photography equipment. Since then, the artists have been traveling to different locations around the area and taking photos. Those photos were edited with software, which added a filter to the image to make it appear to be a painting. Blank cards featuring those images will soon be on sale across the area, and Kell said funds raised by the sale of those would go toward funding the art program and paying the artists involved.

A reporter from Riverbender.com was able to meet with four of the artists from the program on May 9 during the gallery at Old Bakery Beer Company. Kells said some of the work done by Beverly Farm residents has been on display (and is on sale) at the Godfrey Village Hall as well as at Beverly Farm itself.

Artists Zach Rhoads said he has been doing art since high school. He's now 33 years old and proudly showed attendees at the gallery his four-part series of a mountain scene inspired by one of his painting heroes, Bob Ross. The scenes featured an image of spring, summer, autumn, and winter. He also showcased a work he did of a wolf howling a rainbow.

“When I look at an image on a visual or a piece of paper, if I like it, I draw it,” he said.

Some of Rhoads's other images include surfboards and guitars.

Abstract artist Andrea Kelly does designs utilizing colors, shapes, and patterns. She said she worked to put onto canvas some of the things she sees in her mind.

Christian Lake, who Kell described as “always prepared,” said he likes to find images on the internet and do his best to replicate them. Kelly and Lake pointed out several of their works on a blackboard presented at Old Bakery Beer Company on May 9 with lots of joy and laughter.

Gerry Buckstrap said he's been drawing since he was a child. He used to work on making copies of Mickey Mouse drawings and has evolved from there. He was featured on St. Louis media and even was able to sell a painting he made of a giraffe at a charity auction for more than a thousand dollars. He presented several of his paintings, including one of a horse named Dusty.

“He died in the barn on the farm,” he said. “But I used to go out there and make sketches of him. I love making sketches.”