

Student-Designed Sculptures Unveiled at Art on the Square VIP Reception

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BELLEVILLE, IL., MAY 16, 2013 . . . Students from Governor French Academy in Belleville, along with shareholders from the law firm [Mathis, Marifian & Richter, Ltd.](#), (MM&R) and artist Marina Lee, unveiled the City's newest sculptures to a crowd of several hundred guests attending [Art on the Square's](#) VIP Reception in downtown Belleville on Fri., May, 16, 2014. Art teacher Evan Wilson and



nine of his students worked with Lee to design the pieces as part of Art on the Square's **High School Sculpture in the City** program, an interactive arts project that challenges local students to create one-of-a-kind sculptures for their school campuses. The program is sponsored by Mathis, Marifian & Richter, Ltd. a long-time, recognized supporter of the arts in Belleville and surrounding communities.

The sculptures, titled “Family, Community, Life” and “The Tree of Heart,” are a large functional bench and a wall sculpture that were created with a plywood base covered with spray foam and modeling compound to create the forms. Under the guidance of Lee, students learned the fundamentals of public art design and how to create a full-scale art sculpture. Students conceptualized the designs and were involved in every stage of building the sculptures from designing, applying the spray foam and modeling compound, to painting the vibrant color patterns.

Lee stated, “The students were great throughout the entire process. It was a really hands-on project and the students really applied themselves creatively.”

The designs were inspired by the students’ desire to communicate unity, family and community. The bench incorporates a large tree with its roots spelling out the word “family”, while the wall sculpture includes a smaller tree, two moons and flames.

Art teacher Evan Wilson commented, “This was a great opportunity for the kids to get their hands dirty and to gain a thorough understanding of what’s involved with making large-scale public art. Marina was tremendous to work with and the students certainly valued the opportunity to learn from her. We’ve all really enjoyed the experience!”

As the official sponsor of the program, Mathis, Marifian & Richter, Ltd., is proud to help create such a unique experience for local students. Pat Mathis, shareholder of MM&R, commented, “We are so pleased to help provide the opportunity to broaden art education in our community. Now in its fourth year, the program continues to provide a very valuable, hands-on learning experience for local students.”

The sculptures will be permanently installed at Governor French Academy following Art on the Square. Both pieces will be on display at the Mathis, Marifian & Richter, Ltd., booth Saturday and Sunday during the fair. Governor French Academy students will be on site talking to fair patrons about their experience.

High School Sculpture in the City will continue to engage area high schools in years to come so that more students benefit from the experience. The program has already involved several-hundred student participants from Althoff, Belleville West, Belleville East and Governor French Academy. The program has resulted in five unique sculptures for the participating schools and the City of Belleville.

About Mathis, Marifian & Richter

Established in 1984, Mathis, Marifian & Richter, Ltd. has emerged as one of the most trusted and respected law firms in the St. Louis and southern Illinois areas. The firm has offices in Belleville, Edwardsville and Nashville, Ill., as well as Clayton, Mo. MM&R’s

principals and associates possess knowledge and experience in practice areas that include business law, taxation, estate planning, employee benefits, banking law, bankruptcy, and commercial and tort litigation. For more information, please visit www.mmrltd.com.

About High School Sculpture in the City

High School Sculpture in the City is a program created by Art on the Square in 2011 that supports art education and helps beautify the City's landscape with unique art sculptures. It is an interactive program for local students to learn how to create public art by working one-on-one with a professional artist who guides them through the creative process of designing and building art sculptures. From start to finish, students are completely engaged in the process and gain an invaluable real world, hands-on experience. Five art sculptures have been created so far through the program for schools around the Belleville area.

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