

The Examiner

TheExaminerNews.com

Artists' Show Promotes North Castle Recreation

By Abby Luby

If you walk into the Hergenhan Recreation Center in Armonk you might be surprised. In the lobby is a formal art exhibition of original work created by the center's teachers and includes ceramics, paintings, drawing, pastels and poster art.

For art teacher Luis Perez, the purpose of the show is to send a message that says "You can learn how to create work like this right here."

"This is the first time we have had a faculty show," said Perez, who has been teaching drawing and pastels at the recreation center for two years. "We want to promote our teachers, but no one has ever seen our work."

The three art teachers in the show are Perez, ceramicist Sally Ng and watercolorist Joanne Artale. Their wide array of some 40 pieces is cleanly displayed on white covered tables and highlights the brown brick as it overflows down two hallways. Delicate and finely tuned pencil drawings by Perez are tastefully placed next to Ng's masterful bowls, figures and teapots. Splashy and engrossing watercolors by Artale grace the walls.

Recently Perez realized that although the center offers a plethora of children's programs, there are many art classes geared to adults that seem underutilized.

Perez approached North Castle Recreation and Parks Superintendent Bruce Barnard with a few ideas to attract more adults and teens to the center. To Perez's delight, Barnard was on the same page.

"We both noticed that the adult programs were not promoted as much," said Perez. "When people open the catalogue they usually just look at the kid's programs and never get to the back with the adult art courses."

Perez and Barnard realized that getting visual information about art programs would have an immediate effect. A faculty show would not only spark interest but it would show off the talents of the center's teachers.

"It's like advertising our skill and abilities," said Perez who also has two commercial paintings made for movie posters he hopes will attract teens – one created for the movie "Dances With Wolves" starring Kevin Costner and the other of "Spiderman."



Sally Ng & Luis Perez

Perez teaches basic and intermediate drawing, including one charcoal class, for adults. “We are proposing to offer life and figure drawing for adults and teens as well as advance drawing,” said Perez.

He also holds an open studio for figure drawing every Saturday mornings for teens and adults at all levels who are free to work in any medium they choose that includes sculpture but not oils. Ng has her pottery studio adjacent to the lobby where she teaches ceramics to young children and adults. About five people are registered in her two adult classes. Artale teaches three adult watercolor classes with limited enrollment to four adults.

The show, which formally opened Jan. 10, has already peaked interest in the art classes. “The feedback has been interesting,” said Perez. “Some people were not aware of the quality of the work instructors here did, nor were they aware of the different art course offered.”

The show also inspired some to become art patrons; however requests to purchase the creations were turned down because of town restrictions. It’s Perez’s hope that the center’s lobby and hallways might promote community artists in general, sending a message about the center’s programs: It’s never too late to learn how to be an artist.

“There are a lot of people here who want to learn about art, dancing, and even take computer instruction,” he said. “All of it can enhance whatever life style they have or want.”