

# Artists produce “six-word story”

By Sianna Flowers  
Correspondent

People say a picture is worth a thousand words, but what if it can only equal six? Writers and artists of Sisters High School both faced this challenge during their second trimester, in the collaborative six-word project.

The six-word story was invented by Ernest Hemingway with his haunting tale: “For Sale: baby shoes. Never worn.” But it was the imagination of creative-writing teacher Samra Spear and art teacher Bethany Gunnarson that brought this story to Sisters High School students. The creative writing students wrote several six-word stories such as, “It’s gravity that’s getting us down,” (Cierra Mann) which were then given anonymously to the advanced art students. From there the artists picked a story that intrigued them and turned it into a painting.

Creative writing is offered once a trimester and gives students a unique English credit. As Summer Roberson, a senior, said, “[the class involves] more creative expression and (makes English) something that students enjoy.” It attracts a wide variety of students. Some have written only in previous English classes while others plan on writing as their career.

Advanced art is offered

every trimester and has an ever-changing curriculum. It attracts most of the school’s top artists. This is the first time they have done the six-word project, but probably not the last. Students loved the project. “I really enjoyed getting to create an illustration for the six-word story I got!” said junior Sierra Hummel.

On both sides of it, the project was a stretch for the imagination. Logan Gill, junior, said they were difficult at first because “you get an idea of (the story) you want and then you try to find the words” — which can be challenging with only six! However, writers did see the skills they were gaining with the project.

“You put a lot more thought into (the six words)... You chose your words more

carefully. I put more thought into those than a lot of the longer pieces,” said Roberson.

Spear’s vision for the project was to teach students to be “precise rather than accurate.” Students achieved this with some chilling results like, “You’re not a good artist, Adolf” by junior Blake Bell.

Once the writers have refined their work to the best of their abilities it was up to the artists to see the big picture. For some artists like Hunter Blakelock, junior, “it took a long time to think of ideas because only six words can create many possibilities.” Some stories were quite clear (“It’s a boy!” the mother exclaimed,” by Caylyn Sheldon) while others were a bit more ambiguous (“Mountains shrouded in more than mist,” by Sianna

Flowers).

Artists worked closely with each other to provide ideas and give feedback. Kayla Neil, for example, “had lots of feedback from peers which was really encouraging and inspired me to challenge myself.”

The six-word project was one that helped both artists and writers grow in their creative specialty. It required huge amounts of creativity distilled into one short sentence and then reinterpreted onto a canvas. This “really fun and wonderful experience,” as Sierra Hummel described it, is just one of the many interdisciplinary projects that make Sisters High School a unique learning environment. The paintings are currently displayed in the Sisters High School commons.



PHOTO PROVIDED

Artist Dakota Wagner and author Sianna Flowers collaborated on “We’re rich kids with skinned knees.”

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