

Arts celebration reflects community

By Jim Cornelius
News Editor

Over the better part of two decades, Sisters Folk Festival's arts celebration My Own Two Hands has reflected the values of an arts-oriented community that the organization itself has sought to foster. It's a symbiotic relationship, in which artists donate their work and talents to support a community that supports the arts.

"We're celebrating exceptionally talented individuals and how they contribute to our community," said Brad Tisdel, creative director of Sisters Folk Festival (SFF). "I think it's about community values. I think it's about the schools and school opportunities mirroring the Sisters community."

One of the festival's goals as an organization, Tisdel says, is to foster intergenerational relationships, where established artists mentor young artists and those youths inspire their elders. To that end, student artists are featured in the My Own Two Hands art auction at Ponderosa Forge and Ironworks, which raises thousands of dollars for SFF-supported programs in the schools. Students also work at the event, from setup and takedown to serving appetizers to displaying the auction art.

"The art auction is a fantastic way to engage young people with that arts community," Tisdel said.

Tisdel notes that the arts education programs that SFF supports are about a lot more than "art for art's sake" — though he is quick to acknowledge art's intrinsic value. Study after study has found that students who are engaged in the arts are more engaged in school. Arts provide forums

in which to develop problem-solving skills and the ability (and courage) to create something and present it to an audience. Such skills — the ability to confidently develop and present an idea — transfer to almost any career.

Students who build guitars and ukuleles in Sisters Folk Festival's luthier program in the schools learn woodworking skills, computer-assisted design — and less tangible skills like attention to detail and problem-solving when they (almost inevitably) run into difficulties in crafting an instrument.

And the arts can be integrated into "core" academics as well, creating what Tisdel calls "opportunities for young people to learn through the arts in many disciplines."

Whether it's the intersection of math and science in the production of sound, or creatively writing reflections on scientific study of Whychus Creek, the integration of arts into school curriculum provides different pathways for learning — and a broader perspective, Tisdel believes.

Tisdel also notes that the arts and cultural events are a major economic contributor to Sisters. The Sisters Folk Festival, the Sisters Outdoor Quilt Show and Sisters Rodeo all bring thousands of people to town — and the vibrant community they help create also attracts people who want to live here. And businesses from art galleries to music venues to Thompson guitars and *Catch Magazine* reflect a commercial community that is increasingly connected to the arts, he said.

Ultimately, Tisdel says, support for the arts in Sisters has helped to "really create outstanding citizens."

Softball in Sisters is on the rise

The Sisters Little League junior softball team is having a great season. After eight games the juniors have an 8-0 record, with their latest game resulting in a 14-4 win over Redmond. Other big wins this season include games versus Bend, Crook County, and Madras.

The Juniors team consists of players ages 12 to 14. They are coached by Desmond Boots and Shad Sitz.

"This group of girls are like sponges. They absorb nearly everything that they are coached, and then they go out and execute at a very high level," says Coach Boots.

"Coach Sitz and I couldn't be happier with our players' attitudes, their willingness to learn, and their desire to play the game," Boots added.

Youth softball in Sisters has seen an overall spike in numbers over the past three seasons. The pipeline of



PHOTO PROVIDED

Daisy Patterson at bat.

players from the minors level up to majors, and then up to the Junior level, is incredible. With a consistently high number of players and positive

coaching staff at each level, Sisters is going to continue to see a large increase in talent continuing all the way through high school.

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