

Expo Night a hit at middle school

By Helen Schmidling
Correspondent

Last Thursday was Expo Night at Sisters Middle School. The commons and surrounding classrooms were awash in color, music, invention, and creation. The audience was students, parents, volunteers, and interested friends. The collaboration was off the charts. Involving many disciplines, the event attracted more than 100 visitors, at least doubling last year's attendance.

A bright sign welcomed all. "Don't just walk through ... stop and wonder about what you're seeing. Ask some questions. What do you like? What surprises you? What do you want to know more about?"

Judy Fuentes, art teacher at the middle school, encouraged all disciplines – not just art – to be part of the Expo. In a world where STEM and STEAM (standing for science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics) are the keys to a well-rounded education program, it was important for technology instructor Wes Estvold to set up an entire room with iPads mounted on stands where kids and parents worked together to make stop-action animation sequences. Seeing their work on screen rewarded both individual and small-group efforts.

At this age, some students can be quite shy around adults and visitors. So it was also important for students

to interact with those who came to explore. Seventh- and eighth-graders welcomed visitors to "Fortune's Hallow," an interactive art installation with three-dimensional trees, a waterfall, lighting effects, music, a fortune wall guarded by a "Protectress" and a three-dimensional paper dragon. The point was to venture into the "unknown," where you may be rewarded with joy and good fortune.

Sisters High School Americana Program students provided music during the first part of the event, before the Middle School Strings Program took the stage. Under the direction of Taylor Rheault, violin and cello students performed, most for the very first time in front of a large audience. Rheault, whose "day job" is managing the Sisters Coffee Company, took the reins as strings instructor two years ago, working most afternoons with nearly 20 students in this program. This little concert was added to the Expo when the original performance date was snowed out.

One of the most popular stations was called "U Create – Abstract Art." Kids created an inviting sign: "Anyone can make art, right? Maybe you're an artist, or maybe you have never painted. Or maybe you did, long ago ... blah, blah. Did you know (art) is good for you? Being creative grows your brain, relaxes your body, and is good for your soul! So here is a game for you to play!

(no emojis)." The goal was to make a mural on a huge canvas, spread across several tables. Artists were given brushes, colorful paint, and cues, based on a roll of dice. By the end of the evening, the canvas was covered in abstract shapes and positive words.

Fifth-graders explored landforms, with two tables full of three-dimensional models demonstrating their comprehension of volcanoes, waterfalls, geysers, mountains, lakes, deserts, rivers, canyons, and the sea. Creative choices of materials included machine parts and candy, in addition to the standard cardboard and paper maché.

Sixth-graders created landscapes, using one resource to develop another, such as looking at a photograph of a tree to draw the tree and interpret color and texture. Renderings were developed step by step, first with pencil gradations, then moving on to color in any medium, concentrating on blending and creating new colors. After studying hieroglyphics and pictographs, they also made their own, and glyph banners decorated the columns in the commons.

"Juxtaposition," a wall of words, invited participants to mix metaphors and create images by combining words in ways that would enable others to see an image on the wall. "Juxtaposing words is a poetic art form," the sign advised.

A few feet away, students made a wall of art history that



PHOTO BY JERRY BALDOCK

Students explored their creativity at last Thursday's "Expo Night" at SMS.

depicted Vincent Van Gogh's bedroom. Van Gogh famously painted his own modest bedroom, and the students created a life-sized model complete with painted chair and Vincent's jacket hanging on the back. Participants were invited to take their photo while sitting in the chair. "In just over a decade, he created about 2,100 artworks, including around 860 oil paintings, most of them in the last two years of his life," the sign said.

A refreshment station kept everyone going with donated cupcakes, cookies, brownies, lemonade, coffee and tea.

No wall, table, or window surface was left blank. Wherever you looked, there were art pieces, including small paintings on canvas, big banners, and tons of positive

reinforcement. Full STEAM ahead, these projects show how students learn to collaborate, discuss and critique. "Students who appear to be casual are working hard – thinking visually, analytically, critically, and creatively," Fuentes said.

Much of the artwork remains on display in the Sisters Middle School commons as a positive reminder to students, faculty and parents. Some of it will make its way to the Sisters Library next month for the annual Student Art Exhibit. Several pieces won awards in the annual statewide Scholastic Art and Writing Awards. And, as artist-in-residence Gary Hirsch prompted parents during the week, "Save your kids' artwork. It matters."

bliss
HAIR AND NAIL DESIGN
Hair, Skin & Nails
Brow Wax Only \$18
541-549-6566
484 W. Washington Ave., Ste. B

Serving Sisters Since 1976
HOYT'S HARDWARE & BUILDING SUPPLY, INC.
Need to get going on spring projects? We've got everything you need!
FREE Local Delivery
Lumber • Hardware • Paint
Fencing & Decking • Doors & Windows
Hours: M-F 8 to 5, Sat. 8 to 4:30, Closed Sundays
440 N. Pine St. • 541-549-8141 • www.hoyts.net

**Carpet • Upholstery • Tile
Grout • Area Rug • Hardwood
Granite & Tile Polishing**
Look for us on the Web at BendCarpetCare.com
Thank you for your business!
LARSON'S CARPET CARE
LOCAL FOR 24 YEARS!
Licensed, Bonded & Insured
541-549-1175
541-815-1208

When life changes, you still want a place that feels like home!
Absolute Serenity Senior Care
Enriching the lives of those we serve, one day at a time
We help create special moments for residents and their families. Each day we learn how we can continue to meet or exceed their expectations for the care we provide in a smaller, intimate setting.
HELEN'S HOUSE 115 NW Greenwood, Redmond, 541-588-6119
ANNA'S HOME 192 E. Tall Fir Ct., Sisters, 541-549-1726
PENNINGTON'S PLACE 182 E. Tall Fir Ct., Sisters | 541-549-1336
DAVID TOLLE | OWNER/OPERATOR
Business Cell 541-848-3194

The Episcopal Church of the Transfiguration
HOLY WEEK SERVICES
Maundy Thursday, April 18
7 p.m.
Good Friday, April 19
11:30 a.m. – Stations of the Cross
Noon – Good Friday Service
6:30 p.m. – Stations of the Cross
7 p.m. – Good Friday Service
EASTER SUNDAY, APRIL 21
8:30 a.m.
Ecumenical Celebration of Easter
10:15 a.m.
Episcopal Easter Celebration
68825 Brooks Camp Rd., off of Hwy. 242, in Sisters
541-549-7087 • episcopalsisters.com