



arts shorts

Signs of Hope

Young artist Amy Bowers spent a great deal of time over the past four years gathering cardboard signs once used as a means of survival for the numerous homeless citizens of Eugene.

"I came upon my first sign by chance and was immediately intrigued by the idea of collecting a large amount of them," reads the self-authored description of Bowers' installment. "At first I didn't know whether or not I'd ever find enough signs to call it a 'collection,' but as soon as I started keeping an eye out for them, they started piling up in my room."

For Bowers, the collecting of signs has become a discovered art form. But aside from this, it has also given her the opportunity to get involved with rehabilitation and improvement of the Eugene community as a whole. Her installment on Friday, June 3, was not only an art show but a fundraiser for local organization ShelterCare, which serves members of the Lane County homeless community, giving them a voice. "They [ShelterCare] specifically work to rehabilitate those who have families and/or mental illness," Bowers explained.

Among ShelterCare's services are emergency shelter, one-on-one group support and assistance with basic needs such as food, clothing and supplies. It is all too fitting that Bowers' display would sit hand in hand with such an important organization.

Many of the signs featured are more than just a source of intrigue. Indeed, on these scraps of beer boxes and old "For Rent" notices are scribbled all breeds of truth, ranging from sharp and humorous wit to desperate and heartbreaking cries for help. The collection makes visible the community that many members of our public deem invisible. In this, a chance at optimism is cultivated both for the homeless community and for those who wish to make a difference.

Amy Bowers' Homeless Sign Collection is part of the Eugene Storefront Art Project. For more information about ShelterCare, go to www.sheltercare.org - *Andy Valentine*



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