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Karbo functions as an artist. She possesses an affinity for collaborating with others in order to pool talents, ideas and resources into something greater and more meaningful than a person could accomplish on their own.

“(I find value in) having that different energy, that different set of hands, that different take on it,” Karbo said. “That’s the kind of work that really feeds me.”

Her love for working with others has been a cornerstone of many of the projects she’s completed in the past, whether it be organizing a large, school-wide arts event or developing a book of cooking recipes and poems with a dear friend.

### Education through the arts

Karbo dabbles in a variety of arts and crafts including basket-weaving, tin smithing, stenciling, paper casting, quilting, printmaking, metal working and puppet making.

“I’m compelled to work in mediums that are extraordinarily time-consuming and labor-intensive, and you could never make a living with,” she said. “I’ve been always interested in those things that are tactile, textured, functional, beautiful and that have real integrity.”

Karbo’s natural curiosity and desire to work with her hands led her to pursue education and development through several sources. She studied colonial crafts at the Montclair Historical Society in Montclair, New Jersey; John Campbell Folk School; Mendocino Art Center; Marylhurst University; the Oregon College of Art and Craft; and University of California, Los Angeles.

Karbo has no intention of slowing down her pursuit of new knowledge, skills and techniques.

However, Karbo considers teaching others what she is learning “really is the magic for me,” she said. She refers to herself as a teaching artist and views art as one of the most powerful conduits for robust education.

With art, she said, “Whatever kind of learner you are, you’ll find a way in. You’ll be captivated in some way.”

Years ago, with the help of Portland artist Sarah Ferguson, she developed a Día de los Libros program to take around to various libraries in the metro area. The show involved music and bilingual storytelling. Karbo continued working in libraries in a similar way for another 20 years.

In the past, she also volunteered to teach art in various classrooms at Buckman Elementary School, which her son attended. One of the things she is most proud of was transforming the school’s art sale into an event that included performances from the



children and a number of activities.

“I just felt I was hosting the best party in the world,” Karbo said.

### Art on the coast

Upon moving to Oregon in the 1990s, Karbo and her husband, Robert Felder, started visiting Gearhart during the off-season. About seven years ago, they bought a house in the community and Karbo became a member of Trail’s End Art Association.

Over the next year, with her husband retiring, Karbo will spend more time on the coast — as well as traveling and continuing to learn. She views the support of her husband as instrumental in enabling her to be involved in the arts and impact her community through that means.

Although Karbo will miss the “cultural flyway” of Portland, she looks forward to her increased capacity to contribute to Trail’s End and the community at large through public events, fundraisers and workshops.

“In smaller places, you can create community and connect and make a difference,” she said.

Her vision involves working with other members of Trail’s End to aid the organization in continuing to become more accessible for people of different ages and abilities. She recently attended a webinar held by Creative Growth Art Center, a nonprofit in Oakland, California, that serves artists with disabilities by providing a professional



TOP: A set of baskets made by Kathy Karbo. ABOVE: A book, created by Karbo.

studio environment for artistic development, gallery exhibition and representation. Karbo shared the information she garnered from the webinar with other members at Trail’s End. She hopes to factor her learnings into the organization’s vision for the future.

“We need to make sure our organization is inclusive and inviting,” she said, adding it’s not necessary for the organization to reinvent its identity. “We just need to extend our reach and our invitation and make it possible for all people to develop to artistic sensibility.”