

Puppets *from A1*

a rekindling of connection and a daily exercise in expression.

"Every day was something a little different," said Dowell.

Through puppetry, Creative Chaos members were provided an opportunity to emote through an alternative means, rehearse dance routines and practice

taking on different voices with their avatars.

Dowell introduced the group to other forms of socializing from a distance with group hugs whereby everyone extends their arms as if attempting to take in the whole room and "throwing" high fives across the spaces between each other.

On Friday, Creative Chaos members and volunteers sat spaced out



DAMIEN SHERWOOD/COTTAGE GROVE SENTINEL

Creative Chaos member Ian Miller (left) and program founder Carmen Dowell perform a dance with puppets as part of the group's latest workshop amid social distancing mandates.

in the open performance area of the Opal Theater, all wearing face shields, and discussed the impact of the pandemic on the program and their lives.

"We miss our audiences. We miss our supporters. We miss the liveliness of it all and the

excitement that builds up," said Dowell. "And also to watch them grow. From day one of practicing the play to opening night. I think I'll miss that the most."

With the pandemic clearing the program's calendar, some members found the restrictive pat-

tern of day-to-day life a bit tiresome.

"It's boring," said Creative Chaos member Natasha Cosper. "There's nothing to do at home."

Member Ian Miller was disappointed that he can't enjoy any of his favorite sports due to the virus, but he was happy to return to the program.

"It's great to see everyone here after seven months," he said.

To combat the chal-

lenges of solitude, the Opal Center came up with a couple ways to find respite in the meantime.

Because Creative Chaos members tend to not use social media or computers, organizers started a letter-writing project, sending notes and letters through mail to keep connected.

Dowell also organized a car parade in the spring

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