

## Barnes trust bolsters Southington art program for disabled adults



In this file photo, All Access director Lauri MacLean right talks with a patron Sunday during a Summer Sidewalk Sale at Southington Community Cultural Arts Center in Southington July 22, 2018. | Justin Weekes / Special to the Record-Journal



August 31, 2018 02:26PM  
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SOUTHINGTON — A recent grant from the Barnes trust will continue a growing arts program for disabled adults at Southington Community Cultural Arts.



The arts group, headquartered on Main Street, received \$105,900 from the Henry H. Barnes and Leila Upson Barnes Memorial Trust for its All Access arts program. Similar funding helped start the program in 2015.



Intellectually disabled adults take part in art classes, including painting, weaving, pottery and more. Their art is then sold at the art group's gift shop. Lauri MacLean, the program director, said it provides socialization, teaches art skills, builds confidence and allows participants to earn money from their creations.

"To be able to earn an income through creativity is pretty special," she said. "It's a sense of accomplishment."

All Access started with adults from The ARC of Southington but has since drawn disabled adults from Southington High School's transition program and the region. It serves about 50 people, MacLean said.



She's run exhibits of her students' art, most recently one featuring cartoons. Another of the projects was a calendar of students' creations.

"If they made it into the calendar, they were over the moon," MacLean said.

Susan Sadecki, CEO of the Main Street Community Foundation that manages the Barnes trust, said the program fit well with the intent of the Barnes family to further health care in Southington.

"The particular skills they learn in the program is to help them with overall self-sufficiency and improve the quality of their lives," she said.

This year's grant money will fund salaries for program leaders as well as purchase screen printing equipment.

"This is going to add a whole other element to the products they can create," Sadecki said.

In addition to drawing and fine arts, All Access participants use looms at the arts center to create fabric that's turned into pocketbooks, scarves and table runners.

The grant supports a program director, assistant director and three workshop assistants.

In addition to improving skills, the program showcases what disabled adults have to offer. MacLean said it's an often-overlooked population.

"This allows us to show that they have special talents, that they have these wonderful assets that are quite magical," she said.

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