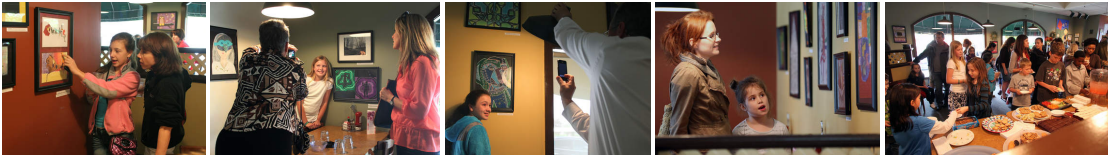


# Exhibit lets student artists from Park Ridge, Niles put talents on display

By TRACY GRUEN Contributor July 3, 2012 4:24PM



Artist Liv Conklin, 12, talks about her picture with her mom, Ava, during a reception for students at LePeep Restaurant. | Jerry Daliege~For Sun-Times Media

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PARK RIDGE — Children and their parents looked around at the impressive artwork displayed across Le Peep restaurant in Park Ridge. Despite its quality these weren't the creations of famous professional artists — but rather their own.

Varied paintings, drawings, photographs, mixed media and other artistic disciplines executed by 42 students from Park Ridge-Niles School District 64 are on display in picture frames across the restaurant from until October. An opening reception for the students was held in May at Le Peep, where awards were given to six students from each district school selected by art teachers.

"I think art expresses your feelings without words," said Mohammed Rasheed, a fifth-grader at Washington school.

Rasheed won an award for an M.C. Escher-inspired painting that creates an optical illusion.

"I'm very proud of him," said his mother, Firdous Afreen, adding that she's very proud that her son also gets good grades in school.

The exhibit poses a great opportunity for youngsters to see their work on display, said Lee Deines, an art teacher at Lincoln School who selected six students to participate in the gallery. He said there is a lot of talent among local students

"It's really well-deserved," Deines said of the children's artwork being highlighted.

Julia Borrelli and her mother, Jean Borrelli, were all smiles at the event.

“It’s really fun and exciting,” said the seventh-grader, who attends Emerson School, adding that she is thrilled that a lot of people are going to see her artwork while dining at Le Peep.

Julia’s exhibited piece is a tempera painting of a lagoon.

A community partnership, Le Peep during the other half of the year displays artwork from Brickton Art Center of Park Ridge.

First-grader Dina Hagerty’s drawing of the four seasons also was displayed at the restaurant.

“I always knew she had talent,” said Dina’s mom, Anna, who acknowledged being extremely proud of her daughter.

Sonja Dziedzic, the District 64 curriculum specialist for visual arts, said the event is a great community partnership between Le Peep and the Brickton Art Center, and is also made possible by grants from the Elementary Learning Foundation and the Cultural Arts Center.

“When you have a strength in art it is as valuable as any other strength that’s going to be in their lives,” Dziedzic said.

<http://parkridge.suntimes.com/photos/galleries/12522710-417/exhibit-lets-student-artists-from-park-ridge-niles-put-talents-on-display.html>