

MORRIS LEDGER

Train stations getting colorful

Artwork by professionals and kids going on display

BY JAMIE DUFFY
FOR THE STAR-LEDGER

Come the end of September, morning commuters in Morristown, Madison and Morris Plains will have a nice distraction as they race to the train, cell phone ringing and a cup of java in hand.

Artwork by area children and professional artists will adorn the walls of three stations, courtesy of Creative Heartwork, a nonprofit, Morris County-based organization devoted to helping children heal through hands-on art, music and sometimes, the culinary arts.

"A lot of times they'll discover they have some talent they weren't aware of. They're often afraid to try something artistic," said Anna Kullaf, one of the art teachers whose own work will be on display at the Madison station along with teaching artists Dan Fenelon and Cassandra Jennings-Hall.

The artwork is expected to be mounted by today in conjunction with New Jersey Transit's Transit Arts program, said Kullaf.

The stations are among a handful of the 162 NJ Transit stations with temporary art displays. Permanent artwork created by local citizens may be found in about 50 stations, including a 70-foot mosaic in Camden funded by Campbell's Soup, said Sheila McKoy, Transit Arts program director.

Kullaf and Karen Carbonello, Heartwork's president, became aware of a similar project going on in New Brunswick and thought of their own students. Typically, the 200 children who go through the program each year come from some kind of distress, be it abuse, neglect, serious illness, trauma, loss or domestic violence.

Heartwork's staff teaches at St. Michael's Peter Ho Clinic for HIV-positive children in Newark, at Morristown's Neighborhood House, the Morris County Youth Shelter, hospitals and at Creative Heartwork studios located close to Morristown.

At the Morris Plains station, the artwork will include photographs of three-dimensional pieces, including masks and tribal dolls. Photos of dressed-up mannequins created by teenage girls suffering from eating disorders comprises a project [See STATIONS, Page 2]

sized, Jackson Pollock-inspired mural was created with the help of Fenelon who played music to encourage artistic inspiration through colors and "flinging the paint," she said.

The idea of using art and creation to work through emotions isn't new, said Carbonello, who founded Creative Heartwork six years ago. But, she said it's a shame that some people have to experience a traumatic incident to use it.

A sociologist who did her master's degree work in resiliency, Carbonello worked at the Deirdre O'Brien Child Advocacy Center in Morristown, spearheading the program, "Mending Art."

"I asked a lot of people who had gone through trauma as a child and I asked them what got them by. Many of them said they wrote in journals, they sketched, they danced, they did all kinds of things to work it out and they use it even today to cope with the bad memories," Carbonello explained.

The displays will change every six months for two years, said Kullaf. Artwork will be sold to help fund more programs. Prices will range from \$100 to about \$3,000. For more information, contact Creative Heartwork at (973) 889-0809.

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Local artwork going on display

titled "Cloaked in Silence." The girls fashioned paper clothes on to the mannequins and inserted secret messages into their pockets.

At the Morristown station, "In Transit," a 9-by-5-foot mural painted by children from the youth shelter, depicts both anxiety and hope with a lot of energy and motion, Kullaf said. Another similarly