

Pleasant Ridge School Wins \$500 for its art programs

Art takes many forms in schools across the Driftless region. In some classrooms, young people paint with watercolors or acrylics. In others they make collages. In still others they create pots and figurines out of clay, and then wait for them to be fired.

Some art teachers work in large and well-equipped studio-type classrooms, others have more modest digs. But all of them are dedicated to helping their students both see and express the beauty in the world around them.

Many of these young artists will see their work exhibited in the upcoming Driftless Area Art Festival, set for September 17 – 18 in Soldiers Grove, WI. They'll be part of a ten-year tradition, one of the Festival's most popular attractions, the Youth Art Tent, where annually more than 400 works of art are displayed and reviewed by professional artists. Elementary school works are part of the KidsArt Gallery, and teen artists show their works in the Teen Art Gallery.

To thank art teachers for participating, and to help support the art programs in schools, the Driftless Area Art Festival each year conducts a drawing from among elementary schools exhibiting in that year's Festival. The winning school receives \$500, and the winner this year is the Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School in Viroqua. Last year the \$500 grant went to the Doudna Elementary School in Richland Center.

"We love participating in the Kids Art Gallery, and what a wonderful surprise to have won the drawing," said Marianne Fieber-Dhara, Pleasant Ridge administrative chair. "We believe artistic experiences strengthen us as human beings, and so Waldorf schools weave art in its many forms into our academic program to engage the hearts and hands of the children as well as their heads."

Art teachers are reminded that there's still time to register their art programs for the 2016 Festival. All works are exhibited, and there's no fee for participating. Three pieces, one from each elementary grade group, are selected as blue ribbon winners. They are sold during live auction on Saturday evening of the Festival and the money goes to support the art program in each you artist's school. Together with the \$500 drawings, a total of \$10, 235 has gone to support art education in the Driftless region.

Teachers who want to exhibit student works can contact KidsArt coordinator M'Lou Wilkie at sunbead@mwt.net or 608- 624-3437. Teen artists, whose works are considered for cash prizes and art supplies, can also contact M'Lou Wilkie.

Full details on the KidsArt and Teen Art galleries and on the Festival itself can be found at driftlessareaartfestival.com and on the Festival's Facebook page.