



Left: Cezanne Maragni, 7, of Barnegat works on a drawing. From Top: Luke Plesniarski, 5, of Long Beach Island and Bridget Little, 6, of Long Beach Township work on their quill snowflakes.

From left: Jessica Deuber of Tuckerton instructs a class at the Youth Arts Program at LBI Foundation of the Arts and Sciences. (PHOTOS: SHAWN HUBER/SPECIAL TO THE ISLANDER)

Artists in the making

Budding artists explore their creativity through Youth Arts Program

By SUSAN BLOOM
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Lively banter emanates from a room full of kids enthusiastically cutting, pasting, drawing, gluing and working together to create crafts from an array of materials.

The occasion? Just a typical Saturday morning session of the Youth Arts Program at Long Beach Island Foundation of the Arts and Sciences in Loveladies. The LBIF's Spring 2011 Youth Arts Program, which runs through May 28, offers an array of fun projects for kindergarten through fifth-graders, including the creation of rain sticks; van Gogh flowers; dragonfly, butterfly and bird sculptures, and texture paper pendants.

"The kids always enjoyed the projects presented by different teachers each week in past sessions, but we're excited because this is the first season we've had a program theme and a single instructor," said Candice MacLuskey, public programs and membership coordinator for LBIF. "We feel the kids will attach to her and will enjoy the continuity and the ability to work on their various projects continuously throughout the eight-week session."

Instructor Jessica Deuber said she conceived of the session's Elements of Art theme and collection of projects as a way to teach young artists the basic concepts of line, color, form, shape, space, texture and value.

"The projects combine several of these elements at a time and are designed to inspire and engage the kids while 'secretly' helping them to learn the concepts," she said.

Deuber, a 39 year-old Tuckerton resident, teaches visual arts at Stafford Intermediate School in Manahawkin. She also is artist liaison for Stafford Education Foundation's Young at Art program and has previously taught the Teen Arts program at LBIF.



"I love encouraging kids to be creative while helping them learn something at the same time," Deuber said of the "relaxed but structured atmosphere" in her classroom.

According to LBIF Executive Director Chris Seiz, initiatives such as the Youth Arts Program fill an important need in the community.

"With so many schools seeing a steady decrease in funding for the arts, it's great to be able to offer kids the opportunity to learn about a variety of new mediums and get a quality education in foundational arts," he said. MacLuskey agreed.

"The Youth Arts program is a fantastic way for kids to explore their creativity and embrace a love of art early on," she said.

During the Youth Arts class on March 5, students excitedly crowded around Deuber as she showed them how to make snowflakes using rolled paper coils, an antique art known as quilling.

"I like this class because it's fun and messy, and you get goo all over you," said attendee Cezanne Maragni, 7, of Barnegat.

Deuber said she loves her students' energy.

"As a teacher, the greatest thing is to watch kids grow and see that flicker in their eyes when they create things and accomplish what they want to," she said.

The spring 2011 session of LBIF's Youth Arts Program takes place from 10 a.m. to noon Saturdays through May 28. Registration is preferred, but walk-ins are welcome.

Single classes are \$20 for members and \$25 for nonmembers, or classes can be purchased in packages of four for \$60 (members) or \$80 (nonmembers).

LBIF is at 120 Long Beach Blvd. in Loveladies. For more information on this session or upcoming ones, call 609-494-1241 or visit www.lbifoundation.org.



Examples of quill snowflakes the children recently made at the Youth Arts Program. Far right: Class instructor Jessica Deuber works on a craft.