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## Southside Art Center making its move

### Art program for developmentally disabled adults thriving in new Downtown Auburn location

By Loryll Nicolaisen, Journal features editor



Ben Furtado/Auburn Journal

Jim Maloney proudly poses with his eye-popping mural, titled "Green," at the Southside Art Center in Downtown Auburn.



It's all about location.

The Southside Art Center is reaping the benefits of a recent relocation.

The art program for adults with developmental disabilities sat tucked away off of Atwood Road for 10 years before moving earlier this year to a spot on Lincoln Way. The building's owned by Community 1st Bank, they're across the street from the post office, the Boys & Girls Club is next door and PlacerArts is just a block away. They're settling in nicely as a Downtown Auburn fixture.

"We've had great art here for 10 years," said Matt Rhoades, Southside Art Center planning director and co-founder. "We just haven't been able to get it out to the public."

"This site is great," noted Mike Everson, associate executive director. "People just walk in off the street."

Southside Art Center has been established in Sacramento for 25 years, and they started the Auburn site 10 years ago. Participants in Southside's art program spend their weekdays at the center creating everything from ceramic sculpture to oil paintings and tile mosaics.

"They are participants. Everybody has to be doing something," Everson said. "We're really trying to help them get active and empowered in the community."

Everson said staff members work with individuals to make sure everyone finds a creative outlet.

"Some of our artists are full-on artists and some are looking for something to do," he said.

Participants sell their artwork just like any other artist. If it's an individual art project, all the money goes to the artist. If it's a group project, the money is split, Rhoades said. In addition to participants creating whatever they're inspired to do, Southside Art Center also works on commissioned art pieces.

Everybody's got their favorite art forms at Southside — Debbie Lockwood is a big fan of making beaded jewelry, and Patsy Aaronson's quite handy with yarn.

JoyAnne Jones, who said she's been coming to Southside Art Center for four years, particularly likes painting. She spent a recent Thursday afternoon working on a bright portrait of Britney Spears, top pop star in Jones' eyes.

"I'm her favorite fan," she said.

Tammi Wright's medium of choice is colored pencil. The current piece she's creating is extremely detailed and involves hearts and hexagons of varying sizes, filled in with all sorts of colors and portraits of various animals.

"I came up with my own ideas for the drawing," Wright said. "I like to use warm and cool colors."

There are a couple reasons why Wright enjoys creating artwork at Southside Art Center.

"When I do drawings like these it makes me feel good inside," she said. "I think it's a really good place to be."

It also doesn't hurt when a creation generates a little cash.

"I like to make a lot of art and sell it," Wright said. "By selling my art I like to earn money."

Wright and the other participants are excited about Southside's new location and the potential for increased exposure.

Southside participated in its first-ever Auburn Art Walk in April.

During Art Walk, which takes place four times a year, more than two-dozen businesses and venues throughout Downtown and Old Town showcase the creations of local artists. April was hopefully the first of many Art Walks for Southside, Rhoades said.

"It feels like we're really being embraced by the art community," he said.

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Chuck Owens, who teaches ceramics, shared a similar thought.

"What I was excited about was having the community be able to come in to see the artwork," Owens said.

Owens said it's also great that Southside Art Center participants have easy access to art viewing opportunities within walking distance.

"They start feeling like they're a part of everything else," he said.

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#### Southside's Mission

Southside Art Center creates a forum that applies the medium of opportunity, blending artistic expression, personal progress, and active citizenship toward individual empowerment.

#### Keywords

Southside Art Center

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