

VanGo showcases young artists in area library exhibits

by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources

After logging 10,000 miles on the roads of Central Oregon since June 2006, VanGo is concluding its pilot year as Arts Central's innovative community outreach program. To celebrate the success of VanGo's art students, exhibits are being held in the public libraries of three communities where VanGo has provided art classes over the past year – La Pine, Madras, and Prineville. The VanGo art exhibits are in the libraries through June.

Above: Arts Central's VanGo. Below: Prineville Boys & Girls Club - submitted photos A mobile art studio, VanGo and its able art instructor, Debra Fisher, has been traveling to small, rural towns throughout Central Oregon to bring high quality arts curriculum to children and youth. Partners include Boys & Girls Club in Prineville, Jefferson County School District's after-school program in Madras, LaPine Elementary School, and Deschutes County Juvenile Justice Center.

Arts Central raised \$75,000 from several sources to help purchase the vehicle and pay for art instructors, art supplies, equipment and travel costs for its "pilot" run. Major donors include: Ford Family Foundation, The Collins Foundation, Oregon Arts Commission, Roundhouse Foundation, Templeton Foundation, and Trust Management Services. Local business support came from Sign Pro, Bob Thomas Car Co., and Cascade A&E. A Bend gas station, Expressway, donates \$50 worth of gas each month.

Arts Central is the state-designated regional arts council for Central Oregon based in Bend. It administers the Art Station, Artists in Schools, and Mirror Pond Gallery to carry out its mission of advocating for the arts and arts education.

VanGo was created because many children and youth in Central Oregon do not receive adequate arts education in their schools, due to state budget restraints. In addition, towns in this region are often isolated and do not have access to professional artists and arts education. VanGo is a bright light in their week which brings joy and self-affirmation to these children. Their response to VanGo driving up has been remarkable, with children jumping up and down and swirling around Debra when she comes in the door. For most children and youth visited by VanGo, it is the only arts programming they receive.

Now that the pilot session is completed, partners are asked to help pay for VanGo to continue bringing much needed arts education to Central Oregon.

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