



Strokes of creativity

Boys & Girls Club of Gr. Lowell to host regional art competition

By **Amaris Castillo**

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LOWELL — Angelina Khiem studied her pastel drawing of a mermaid swimming gracefully to the surface of water. Fishes swim below the mythical creature's orange-yellow tail.

It took hours for Angelina, a Lowell High School sophomore and teen member of the Boys & Girls Club of Greater Lowell, to complete the piece titled "To The Surface" at the club's Makerspace.

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Above, fourth-grade student Alanah Chhum-Mam displays an acrylic at the Boys & Girls Club of Greater Lowell. Below, eighth-grader Sorida Hou works on her Doodle for Google. The club will host a regional Boys & Girls Clubs fine-arts exhibit this weekend.

SUN PHOTOS/JULIA MALAKIE



STROKES OF CREATIVITY: Boys & Girls Club of Gr. Lowell to host art competition

ART/ From Page 3 The 16- year- old said it was her first time using the pastel medium, so it got really messy at times.

Along with several other members, Angelina will have her work displayed this Saturday at the Boys & Girls Clubs of America’s Northeast Region Fine Arts Exhibit. The show hosted by the Boys & Girls Club of Greater Lowell will be held from 5 to 7 p.m. at The Onyx Room at Western Avenue Studios, 122 Western Ave., Lowell.

Seven club members from the Boys & Girls Club of Greater Lowell were chosen from a panel of judges to be a part of the exhibit this weekend. A group of Lowell artists on Saturday will judge all pieces from up to 10 states and choose the top picks, which will then advance in May to the Boys & Girls Clubs of America’s National Fine Arts Exhibit in San Diego, California.

There was a nervous excitement Monday as Angelina and a few of the other young Lowell artists sat at a table and spoke about the exhibit. For Angelina, who also has a digital arts piece that will be competing, the experience has taught her that she can do much more than she thinks she can.

"Art is something you improve over time, not something that you're perfect (in) right off the bat," she said. "It's just like singing. You need to practice in order to get better."

Meghan Jewell, of Lowell, painted a moon over water in acrylic. The 13-year-old gushed about space, adding that she likes the idea of leaving Earth and coming back.

"I want to be an astronaut," she said with a smile. "I have big goals."

At one end of the table sat Sorida Hou, 13, of Lowell, who worked on a mixed media piece titled "Broken Wings." In it, a girl who suffers from depression is seated on the floor, hugging her knees. An umbrella is propped above her head and the surrounding space on the canvas is filled with blue origami butterflies. According to Sorida, the girl depicted in the painting wants to fly away. The Stoklosa Middle School eighth-grader added that her goal through the piece is to have others look from a perspective other than their own.

"This girl could be smiling to people and they would just think that she's fine," she explained. "But then when she's by herself, she would be a different person and she would be the opposite of what people think of her."

Na Lam, the club's Makerspace Lead, said she was really excited for the young artists.

"A lot of the kids, they need that extra push to try something new, especially if it's a medium that they've never used before," Lam said. "Right now it's just a matter of pushing them forward so that they can try new things."

Alanah Chhum-Mam, 10, will have her acrylic painting, "The Green Mountain," in the exhibit this weekend. The canvas has green hills at sunset.

"I feel a little nervous, but I'm also happy because this is the first time that I've done a painting on a canvas, and I'm going to the exhibit which made me really happy," she said. "I've never made a lot of art before."

Tristen Huynh, 14, will be entered in the multi-color category for her piece titled "Break, Build, Breath." The words on the piece inspired the drawings of a heart and pair of lungs. The heart, which has traces on it of being broken and put back together several times, belongs to a female character.

But like a true artist, Tristen said this character her piece is based on does not have an age at the moment. Nor does she have a name.

"She's kind of just more free-flowing in this moment," she said. "But then I feel like it can apply to more people, so then I don't try to label her as much."

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