

Blue Spirit Award:

Claremont Museum of Art brings new spirit to the city

Despite the bustle of activity surrounding Claremont's annual Independence Day bash, time is always taken to refocus on the individuals and groups that make the community worthy of the celebration.

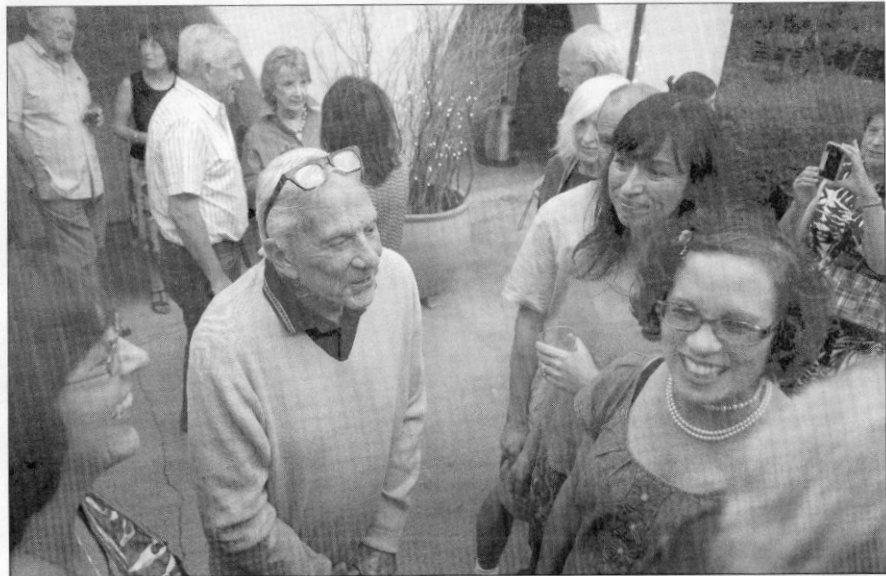
A Grand Marshal, Honored Individual and Honored Group are traditionally recognized with special fanfare both before and during the Fourth of July festivities. This year, an additional group is being awarded for embodying the spirit of the Claremont community.

Community members will join in honoring the Claremont Museum of Art, bestowed with this year's resurrected "Blue Ribbon Spirit Award." The nonprofit is recognized for its exhibitions and educational programming promoting local arts and culture.

For years the Claremont Museum of Art has focused on exposing the Claremont community to the richness of art and culture, with family art activities—offered at the Fourth of July Celebration, Village Venture and Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden's Art in the Garden—and through special exhibitions at local galleries. The nonprofit's latest display featured the work of longtime artist Paul Darrow, and in September they will honor another famed area artist, the late Phil Dike.

CMA does not limit their art promotion to those

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COURIER photo/Peter Weinberger

Paul Darrow turned on the charm while speaking with former students at the Paul Darrow Collages and Cartoons gallery opening. The event, which was curated and hosted by the Claremont Museum of Art, was held at the Claremont Heritage Ginger Elliott Exhibition Space in Memorial Park in May.

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works found inside a gallery, however. The nonprofit hosts day trips to local artists' homes and artistic landscapes, and has begun a new program called "Artful Evening," featuring the homes of local art collectors. CMA also sponsors the revived Padua Hills Arts Festival, an outdoor fair filled with art demonstrations, music and historic exhibitions.

CMA has spent a great deal of time highlighting artistic treasures from the community's past. However, with their latest venture, ARTstART, the museum is taking a look towards the future. ARTstART, kicked off in 2011, seeks to train college and high school students in art appreciation. Their new-found skill set is then used to educate elementary-aged students at Claremont schools, in a program currently at Sycamore and Oakmont but expanding to Vista in the fall. Students are given lesson plans and taken on field trips to the places they have learned about.

Olivia Hengesbach, a recent graduate of Claremont High School, joined ARTstART in 2011, eager for a chance to be involved in the formation of a

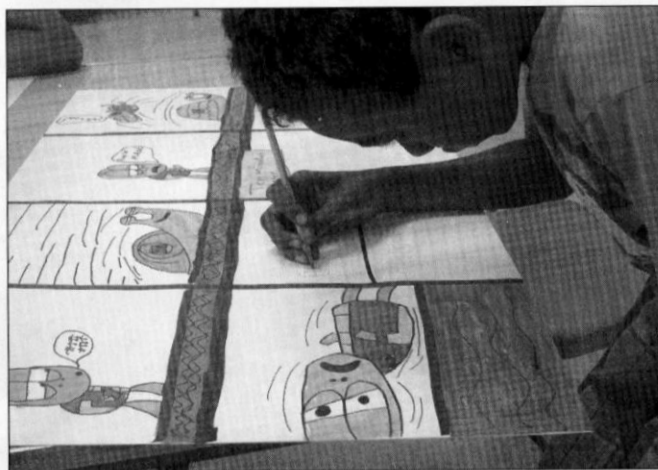


Photo courtesy of Catherine McIntosh
One community project led by the Claremont Museum of Art was its ARTtoon program held at El Roble Intermediate School this March.

new group on campus. The fact that the organization focused on the arts, one of her passions, was an added bonus. At age 14, Olivia began her own crafts business, Liv Wild. The young entrepreneur takes recycled sweaters, shrinks them down and

repurposes the felt to make stuffed animals and other crafty creations.

As an ARTstART mentor, she hopes to inspire artistic inclinations in the next generation of Claremont students, whether through encouraging them to dabble in the visual arts or adding a lit-

tle bit of history and background to a routine field trip to the Maloof house.

"It's really fulfilling to see these kids enjoy and be able to talk about art," Olivia shared, noting the transformation she has witnessed in her mentees. With budget cuts stripping arts programming from school curriculums, ARTstART is a creative solution to provide the younger generation with the chance to enjoy the art that helps define Claremont, according to ARTstART director Rich Deely.

"We want to help break down any barriers," Mr. Deely said. "These [students] are the future cultural consumers. They are the ones who will go on and share how their community had an important role to play in 20th century art, and continues to honor those who are still making art today."

As the CMA mission affirms, when it comes to art there should be no boundaries.

"It's all around us," Mr. Deely said.

For more on the CMA and its programs, visit www.claremontmuseum.org or visit their booth at this year's Fourth of July Celebration.

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