

Artist Vincent Wilson works on a landscape at the studio at The heART of Friendship Art Gallery

ART,
GIFT ITEMS
& MORE AT

heART

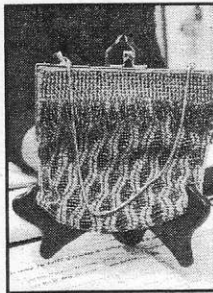
OF FRIENDSHIP ART GALLERY

By ROCHELLE A. SHENK / *Special Features Writer*

As you look for unique holiday gifts to fill your list this year, you may want to consider visiting The heART of Friendship Art Gallery, 39 E. Main St., Ephrata. Items that may be found at the gallery include watercolors, acrylics, pottery, jewelry, greeting cards, felted purses, beaded purses, mosaics, textiles, sun catchers, and glassware.

"Every piece has an interesting and unique story, especially those made by our 'heART' artists, which is what we call our artists with disabilities," explains Marsha Petery, gallery coordinator.

A program of Friendship Community, the gallery celebrated its second anniversary in June. "The name represents the fact that our mission is to serve people with disabilities with care and compassion. Art is a way for people, especially those with disabilities, to freely express themselves, and they put their whole hear into what they do," she says. The art program at Friendship Community got its start in the basement of one of its group homes. "It blossomed, and people became very passionate about



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it. We started a search for a location where we could have studio space for our artists as well as a gallery space. Our Ephrata location has that and more — not only is the gallery in a visible location, but there's a good bit of foot traffic, and the community is being revitalized by DEI (Downtown Ephrata Inc.), which holds a lot of activities that bring people downtown," she says.

The gallery also hosts featured artist exhibits, which focuses on the work of a local professional artist and a heArt. November's artist is Bob Redcay, who paints on non-traditional items such as dried leaves, and the heArt artist is

Vincent Wilson, who works in acrylics and has a wide variety of styles ranging from abstract to realism.

The majority of artists whose work is in the gallery are served by Friendship Community, but there are also some artists from other organizations that serve people

with disabilities as well as the work of professional artists that partner with the gallery. Petery explains that the professional artists not only exhibit, but also instruct classes and often work one-on-one with the heART artists.

Classes are held Tuesdays and Thursdays and are offered in six-week sessions. "The heART artists work in various media, and although each session has a theme, if the instructor sees that the artist has a particular interest or passion, we give them the freedom to explore it," she says.

One of the class projects involves decorating vases with either paint or decoupage. Through a project entitled Petals for Palettes, the gallery partners with area businesses to display the vases and people may request a heART artists' vase when ordering flowers at Roxanne's Flowers in Akron, Flowers by Paulette in Lancaster, Goody Expressions in New Holland.

Visitors to the gallery can see the heART artists at work in the gallery Tuesdays and Thursdays 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. and 6:30 to 8 p.m. and Friday 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT THE HEART OF FRIENDSHIP ART GALLERY, PLEASE VISIT WWW.FRIENDSHIPART.NET.