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RumRiver Art center, Ramsey partner to increase bee population

By Eric Hagen Mar 30, 2017

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More than a dozen people came out to Elmcrest Park Monday evening to decorate bee houses.

It was an art and naturalist project rolled into one.

The RumRiver Art Center, based in Anoka, has been coming to Ramsey parks more frequently and is scheduled to be at the Elmcrest Park community building every month this year for a different art project.

On March 27, children worked with their parents and grandparents to paint bee houses and in some cases add mosaic glass to add another unique look.

Larry Weinberg, director of the RumRiver Art Center, had heard about the decline of pollinators from news stories. But he never heard of a bee house and did not quite comprehend the importance of helping to grow the bee population until Mark Riverblood called and asked if he would be interested in helping to decorate these for the city of Ramsey.

Weinberg loves that his art students will be helping bees while expressing their artistic creativity by choosing different paint colors and mosaics to put on the wood bee houses.

"We're building awareness and bringing a creativity to it," Weinberg said.

With the help of adult volunteers through a Kohl's community service outreach, the RumRiver Art Center built 50 bee houses, which included drilling 15 to 20 small holes in a block of wood to simulate natural holes in a tree that a bee would like to fly in. The students and adults who created their own bee houses on March 27 were invited to bring their artwork home, Weinberg said.

Bee houses without a home would be given to the city of Ramsey to be placed in parks.

Coincidentally, a group of Girl Scouts from Troop 16479 in Ramsey were working on a bronze award project to save the bee population when they heard about this art project.

"I love nature. It's so nice to see the flowers and to know that the bees are pollinating them," said Jordann Lewis.

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