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FEATURED

## Rumriver Art Center begins Vitality Arts program for seniors

Olivia Alveshere Staff Writer Mar 10, 2018



The Rumriver Art Center will begin a new Vitality Arts program in April. After receiving a grant from the Aroha Philanthropies, eight-week courses will be offered to older adults for \$75, materials included.

Photo submitted

After receiving a grant from Aroha Philanthropies, Anoka's Rumriver Art Center will begin a Vitality Arts program next month, offering classes for adults over 55.

"Our program was initially developed here for kids," said Larry Weinberg, director of the Rumriver Art Center.

But over the years, Weinberg has seen seniors actively seeking creative opportunities, and Rumriver has stepped up as a true community art center.

The Plein Air Club, an adult group dedicated to painting outdoors, formed last year and continues to grow in 2018. Led by Paul Boecher, who will also teach one of the three Vitality Arts sessions, the club meets every Thursday morning, stepping inside during the winter months.

In his mid-70s, Boecher “has got more energy than most of the kids we teach right now,” Weinberg said, noting that artists tend to live longer than the general population with the positive effect creativity has on the body and spirit.

Aroha Philanthropies’ new Seeding Vitality Arts MN program hopes to build on that concept, improving the lives of older adults through creativity.

“The creative process ignites certain parts of the brain that helps people keep healthy,” Weinberg said. Additionally, creating art in a class environment provides social stimulation.

The hope is that after enrolling in one or more of the upcoming eight-week classes, adults with no previous experience or limited experience in various media will have the skills to continue creating on their own or be inspired to enroll in additional courses.

Currently, about half of the dozen spaces available in each of the three courses – mixed media and collage, hand-built pottery and acrylic painting – are full.

Individuals 55 and older are encouraged to register for courses by calling 763-323-8830, emailing [info@rumriverart.com](mailto:info@rumriverart.com) or dropping by the Rumriver Art Center.

Mixed Media/Collage runs Mondays April 2 through May 21 from 9:30 a.m. to noon. Creating with Clay: Hand-Built Pottery meets Tuesdays April 3 through May 22 from 9:30 a.m. to noon. Finally, Painting with Expression – Acrylic Painting, runs Wednesdays April 4 through May 30 from 9:30 a.m. to noon, with the exception of April 25 when no classes will be held.

Classes will be taught by professional artists Angie Renee, Boecher and Mary Leah Marshall, respectively.

Each eight-week session costs \$75, including materials. The price is considerably lower than it normally would be with the support of Aroha Philanthropies; Weinberg estimates the value of each session to be around \$250, with materials costs alone topping \$75.

“It’s very affordable compared to other classes because of the grant,” Boecher said.

Art created by participants will be on display in Rumriver’s gallery during the month of June.

A fourth Vitality Arts session is slated to begin in June.

The program is “going to be something that I think is going to grow,” Weinberg said. “We’re filling a void.”

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