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Summer art camp registration open at Rumriver Art Center

By Eric Hagen May 13, 2016



Larry Weinberg, founder of Rumriver Art Center, and Jessica Merk lead a class on painting a dragonfly. The Anoka-based art center has registration open for summer art camps. Photos by Eric Hagen

As the school year comes to a conclusion, the Rumriver Art Center is taking registrations for its summer art programs.

The summer camps last no more than a week and are targeted for children ages 5 to 17, although some advanced course such as the mosaic stained glass class requires a child to be at least 8 years old.

Madeline Adams, 12, of Coon Rapids, is most looking forward to the mosaic stained glass camp in which students will worked on stained-glass pane, glowing bottle and stepping stone projects, for instance. She is excited because it is a new medium for her to work in. Adams said her mother fostered her interest in art.

"I probably had a paint brush in my hand by the age of 2," she said. "I like the Rumriver Art Center because they really support you and give you one on one direction and give you steps. They don't just say, 'Here's a brush. Now draw a dragonfly,'" Adams said.

Until the end of May, the fee for all-day camps is \$200 instead of the normal \$235 rate. The camps run from Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The art center also offers a few other packages such as five-day morning camps for \$125 or four-day afternoon camps for \$110. Each session is three hours.

The summer camp schedule kicks off June 13 and wraps up on Labor Day weekend. If unsure what camp to sign up for, the Rumriver Art Center has open houses on June 9-11 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and June 12 from noon to 4 p.m. where there will be examples of projects and prize drawings.

Larry Weinberg's Rumriver Art Center started as an after-school program in the summer of 2009 and within a year moved into the Old Milk Factory building at 2665 4th Ave. in Anoka. He first had a small space within his wife's cosmetics business storefront. Eventually he started leasing a second unit to have classrooms for the adults.

Last year, about 250 students came through this art center's summer programming and Weinberg hopes to reach 300 this summer. Some are homeschooled kids who come to the art center throughout the year and others are fairly new to art and their parents want to give them a new, fun activity to do for a week during the summer.

"We try to explain to them it's just like anything else, you have to practice to get there. And they see that through practice over a week's time how much they improve," Weinberg said.

One of the newest interns is 15-year-old Carli Vrchata, of Nowthen. She started doing pencil sketches at a young age of her family cats and anime characters inspired by the comics and TV shows she liked. But she said she became better at her craft after first coming to the Rumriver Art Center two years ago.

"It's a good way to be creative. My older brothers are planning to be engineers so they definitely think differently think different than I do from a creative kind of way."

The summer programming has a variety of mediums and genres, and many of the classes will be outdoors. The Star Wars art camp from June 20-24 is full, but there's many options to choose from including a camp on dinosaurs, super heroes, animals and nature, for example.

Vrchata will be an intern for the nature art journal class where students will be drawing plants, animals and bugs they see along the Rum River from Peninsula Point Park Two Rivers Historical Park to Anoka High School, and she will be part of the observational drawing class where students will draw still life, natural landscapes and portraits. Charcoal, pencils, pen and ink, oil pastel and watercolor are the different styles that will be done in these classes.

The art center also offers a three-day clay sculptures and hand-built pottery course in late June for \$95. The Rumriver Art Center hopes to have its own kiln placed on the roof of the Old Milk Factory someday, but this and the spinning wheels to mold the clay pottery is expensive and the art center has been unable to receive any grants to cover the cost of this equipment.

But in the meantime, a teacher from the Northern Clay Center in Minneapolis is coming to Anoka to teach the three-day course and will bring the artwork back to Minneapolis to finish the projects before the artists can come back to the Rumriver Art Center to pick it up.

Weinberg said the Rumriver Art Center offers a limited number of scholarships when it is able to. He is excited about the involvement of Artists del Norte in the art center because that organization has a lot of different scholarships. Artists del Norte will be sponsoring three workshops later this year with two happening in the summer including landscapes in pastel on June 25 and a polymer clay class on Aug. 13.

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