



Caroline Garnaat helps Horizons residents Pat LaBell and Shirley Carr with their "Koi Pond" paintings that feature pre-cut shapes and oil pastels. [PHOTOS PROVIDED]

Making miracles at Horizons

Fine Art Miracles visits Horizons in Canandaigua to help residents channel their creativity

Messenger Post Media

CANANDAIGUA — Caroline Garnaat is making art approachable to all ages and abilities. The artist of 40 years and teacher with Fine Art Miracles Inc., a nonprofit organization, helps residents at Horizons, a DePaul senior living community in Canandaigua, channel their inner Picasso each month.

"The knack is trying to determine where people are in terms of their abilities, and to find a project that will challenge the more experienced people and give confidence to the less experienced," she said.

Sarah Mason, activities director at Horizons, said Garnaat is patient and breaks the art projects down to a step-by-step process, making adjustments based on each resident's different skill levels.

"Caroline provides encouragement without being pushy and praise without being patronizing, making everyone feel comfortable and genuinely proud of their work," Mason said. "She encourages people to get creative and make their picture their own, whether it be using different techniques or colors or a different composition."

Fine Art Miracles seeks to bring the cognitive and social benefits of art to the elderly living in nursing homes and assisted living facilities through fine art lessons, art therapy, music therapy and social robot-enhanced learning for all ages and capabilities.

Tess Lojacono, CEO of Fine Art Miracles, said studies show that people may express their feelings through colors, images and artistic impressions.

"Verbal skills often fail the elderly over time," she said. "Researchers believe art therapy can help people express themselves when this happens. Drawings, paintings, collages and simple sculpture offer a visual art dialogue."

Participation in art class stimulates the temporal lobe of the brain, and can induce the use of motor skills.

"I really love working with the seniors, because they're very interested in learning," Garnaat said. "Most of them are still very capable, even if they may have physical limitations. They still want to use their brains and be involved, and they are a lot of fun."

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Susan Stewart presents her art project, "Koi Pond," that she made during a Fine Art Miracles Inc. program at Horizons in Canandaigua.



Caroline Garnaat, of Fine Art Miracles Inc., helps Horizons resident Susan Stewart



Pearl Osterman shows off her finished piece of art after a program with