

Caroline Garnaat helps residents make art

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Caroline Garnaat, an artist for 40 years and teacher with the non-profit organization Fine Art Miracles Inc., helped residents at Woodcrest Commons, a DePaul Senior Living Community in Henrietta, channel their inner Picasso once a month.

Garnaat coached Woodcrest Commons residents Andrea Heath, Shirley

Merton and Rosanne Bourne on an art project. Activities Coordinator Lindsay Lown said Garnaat made art less intimidating by walking residents through each project step-by-step.

“She is no rush and she is quick to jump in with pointers, while allowing the residents the freedom to personalize each project,” said Lown. “Caroline has a

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Joan Rangus and Caroline Garnaat work on a project.

[PHOTO PROVIDED]

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way of making sure everyone is proud of what they create, and the end results are brag-worthy for sure!”

Garnaat said completing an art project gives residents a

sense of accomplishment.

“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,” said Garnaat.

The mission of Fine Arts Miracles Inc. is 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. Fine Arts Miracles CEO Tess Lojano said studies show that people may express their feelings through colors, images and artistic impressions.

“Verbal skills often fail

the elderly over time,” said Lojano. “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,” said Garnaat. “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!”

Visit depaul.org/locations/woodcrest-commons or call (585) 334-1800 for more information.