

Fine Art Miracles at Westwood Commons

Caroline Garnaat is making art approachable to all ages and abilities. An artist for 40 years and teacher with the nonprofit organization Fine Art Miracles, Inc., Caroline helps residents at Westwood Commons, a DePaul Senior Living Community in North Chili, channel their inner Picasso once a month.

Caroline 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."

The mission of Fine Arts Miracles, Inc. (FAM) 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.

According to Fine Arts Miracles CEO Tess Lojacono, studies show that people may express their feelings through colors, images and artistic impressions.

"Verbal skills often fail the elderly over time," she explains. "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 Caroline. "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!"

Provided information



Pictured here with their completed artwork are **Evelyn Gravina, Florence Francione, Berta Desormeau, Madison Major, Jane Wargo, Mary Masceri and Joyce Hinshaw.** Provided photo.