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Fine Art Miracles visits Westwood Commons



Westwood Commons residents in North Chili create pieces of art during a program hosted by Fine Art Miracles Inc. Pictured, from left, are Evelyn Gravina, Florence Francione, Berta Desormeau, Madison Major, Jane Wargo, Mary Masceri and Joyce Hinshaw.

[PHOTO PROVIDED]

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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 Westwood Commons, a DePaul senior living community in North Chili, channel their inner Picasso each month.

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," she said.

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,

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