

## **Kids' art a big hit at Art in Barn**

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This past weekend's weather was ideal for enjoying the artistic talents displayed at the 25th annual Art in the Barn.

The exhibit at the southern end drew quite a crowd of artists and admirers alike. Some of the artists walked to the tent and some arrived in strollers. Children's Art always makes quite a splash.

Several years ago, Children's Art co-chair Sam Oliver delighted children by painting their faces. Then she thought, "Why shouldn't children have the chance to be the creative ones?"

Children's Art was born.

That winter, building and grounds manager Hank Kraus built a large easel so 24 children could paint. Over the years, Kraus enlarged the program by building stools and smaller easels. This year's addition was a stroller parking area.

Although Kraus is retiring this year, Oliver hopes he still will be involved with the program.

"Many children paint for the very first time," Oliver said. "They come out of the strollers and paint!"

She estimates about 1,000 paintings were created over the two-day period.

Three years ago, Kraus decided to grow pumpkins for the kids to paint. "Pumpkin Painting," run by Children's Art co-chair Beth Satter, has become as popular as the "traditional" easel area. This year's pumpkin crop was bountiful, producing a plethora of organic canvases for the young Picassos.

With the help of several energetic volunteers, the potentially chaotic areas remained very organized.

One of the original volunteers is Derek Oliver who, Mom says, "has been volunteering since he was a very little boy."

What was he saying about those early years not being entirely "voluntary"? The force of 60-plus helpers is made up mainly of Barrington High School students, including many members of Community Connections. Many come every year.

Donations to Children's Art are given to the pediatrics department of Good Shepherd Hospital.

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