



Art students (from left) Jessica Wymbs, Mackenzie Musso and Amanda Fabans kneel on the floor to get a better angle while painting one of their ceramic projects at The Art Beat. The special workshop was for children creating old-fashioned gifts.

Holiday Joy

Gifts made from the heart at The Art Beat

By EMILIE CROFTON

Photographs by JACQUELINE RAMSEYER

Santa's elves were hard at work making gifts for the holidays in downtown Campbell's The Art Beat. These small elves came in the shape of eight children between the ages of 6 and 12.

Throughout December, Erinn Turi, owner of The Art Beat, ran the Children's Holiday Workshop where youth created homemade gifts for their friends and families.

The Art Beat, located near the

intersection of E. Campbell Avenue and Winchester Boulevard, is a working studio where children and adults can explore their creative side.

Turi says the holiday work-

shop and homemade creations reminded her of her childhood and the true meaning of the holidays.

"I was one of nine children, so growing up we all made our own

cards and gifts," Turi says. "It was something I always enjoyed and looked forward to during the holidays."

During the three-week workshop, children created hand-

made gifts that included clay wreaths, candleholders, glass and ceramic ornaments, personalized stamps and wrapping paper, all of which would be given to friends and family as holiday presents. The classes allowed the children to experiment with a variety of media, including clay, paint and glass.

On the last day children wrapped their gifts with the hand-crafted wrapping paper and threw a small holiday party complete with snacks and music.

"Everyone appreciates a handmade gift. It has a special meaning," Turi says. "The children put their hearts into it and are giving a gift of love."

The holiday workshop also gave families a respite from the hectic pace and overly stressful atmosphere that has become endemic during the holiday season.

The children discovered the simple pleasure a handmade gift can bring to others and to themselves

"During the holidays things are always so hectic," Turi says. "The class offers a time to slow down, enjoy the holiday spirit and remind children of the true meaning of Christmas."

Creating personalized gifts was just as much fun as giving them to loved ones, Turi's students say.

"It's cool to be able to start with a lump of clay and make it into something usable," says 12-year old Dakota Musso, who was in the class with his sister Mackenzie. "Making your own gift is interesting and fun. It makes gift giving more personal."

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"I'm really excited to give my gifts," says Jessica Wymbs, 9. "I want to give one to everyone in my family."

The Art Beat is designed as an open environment to foster creativity and experimentation. Turi says today's children do not have the same opportunities for art exploration as in her generation.

"I show them the basics of construction and then let them go. Here, suggestions are just suggestions. We allow room for creativi-



Erinn Turi, owner of The Art Beat, helps Themis Hadjiioannou with one of his ceramic projects that were part of The Art Beat children's holiday workshop. Children worked on a variety of gifts that they wrapped as presents for family and friends.

ty," she says. "It's art, so I want them to explore and add their touch to a project."

In addition to the holiday workshop, The Art Beat offers various classes for different age groups ranging from preschool to adult.

The studio has a variety of art media and projects to choose from, including hand-building with clay and pottery, glass and canvas painting.

Classes offered include painting, cartooning, comic art, fantasy art, knitting and photography, as well as open studio sessions.

The Art Beat also offers children's parties. Different packages are available and range from painting bisqueware to working with raw clay to making mixed-media projects with items such as stepping stones and wind chimes.

"We all need the opportunity to express ourselves, experience enjoyment and realize personal growth through the arts," Turi says.

The Art Beat is located at 68 E. Campbell Ave. For more information about classes, call 408.370.5002 or visit www.theartbeat.net.



One of the art projects for the holidays involved working with beads for an ornament project. Children (from left) Mackenzie Musso, Dakota Musso, Themis Hadjiioannou, Jessica Wymbs and James Jeon sort through a collection of beads with the help of The Art Beat owner Erin Turi.