

After-school art program also teaches intangibles

Young Rembrandts is offered at several school districts.



PHOTO PROVIDED

Grace Stavn, 8, holds a picture she drew during the Young Rembrandts art program this spring at Ledgewood Elementary School.

By Greg Stanley

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ROCKTON — Young Rembrandts Inc., an after-school art program that serves several school districts in Winnebago and Boone counties, will expand this fall to home-schooled students and to Simon Elementary School in the Winnebago School District.

The Rockton branch of the national Young Rembrandts program has 16 teachers and serves about 400 students a year in the Rock River Valley.

The teachers travel to the participating schools to teach drawing classes for children ages 3 to 12 once a week for six weeks. Parents can enroll their child for about \$50, and the classes come at no cost to the school district.

'It's a great asset'

"We're working on fundamental drawing skills," owner Laurie Mueller said. "We focus on teaching the children how to see the line. It's more about building self-confidence and attention to detail. It's all about these things inside the child. And they're learning how to draw, too."

The class sizes range from six to 17 students.

“One hundred percent of the schools we work with have an art program,” Mueller said. “But just like kids in school take P.E. and then go outside and play baseball or have a music class and then go home and take piano lessons, this is another avenue for them to explore art. It’s a great asset because the schools’ art programs have to cover the big world of art. We just concentrate on drawing.”

Repeat customers

Grace Stavn, an 8-year-old third-grader at Ledgewood Elementary School, has participated in the program for three years.

“She just loves to draw anything,” said Stephanie Stavn, Grace’s mother. “I’m not very creative, so being able to have someone else to help her draw certain things is wonderful. She loves to do it after school, and that structure really helps her.”

Option for elementary kids

Pecatonica Elementary School has used the program for the past five years.

“The reason we started it is because there are not as many extracurricular options at elementary schools,” Principal Carrie Brockway said. “The kids aren’t old enough for basketball or volleyball, and this gives them a chance to do something after school.”

“We have a lot of kids come back again and again,” Mueller said. “It’s so much fun to see their growth and to see them get excited when they draw something they think they could never do.”

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About Young Rembrandts

What it is: An after-school drawing program for ages 3 to 12

Where it’s available: Kinnikinnick, Rockton, Harlem, Belvidere, Winnebago and Pecatonica school districts

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