

'Keeping Arts Alive' Awards Teachers

Written by Marshal Ashcraft, Watauga Schools
Thursday, 12 September 2013 08:04

The four elementary/middle school art teachers in the Watauga County Schools will each receive \$1,000 in art supplies for their schools through the "Keep Arts Alive Awards" made possible by Cheap Joe's Art Stuff and the Watercolor Society of North Carolina (WSNC). The four art teachers receiving the awards are Chad Safferstone, who teaches at Bethel and Hardin Park; Jill Huffman, who teaches at Blowing Rock and Valle Crucis; Rae Filsinger, who teaches at Mabel and Parkway; and Tyler Deal, who teaches at Cove Creek and Green Valley. Each teacher will use the awards to purchase art supplies for their classes during the remainder of the current school year. To win the awards, each teacher prepared an application that was reviewed by the Watercolor Society.

"This is an exciting opportunity to support arts education in Watauga County, and both WSNC and Cheap Joe's Art Stuff are proud to sponsor this award," said Janie Johnson of the WSNC. "We are truly pleased to help develop the creative minds of our future artists."

Cheap Joe's and the Watercolor Society each donated a total of \$2,000 to the awards. Watauga County residents Welborn and Patty Alexander contributed the funds for the Watercolor Society's share of the awards. The funding is officially designated for use by the schools and will remain available to each school if any art teacher should leave his or her position before the end of the year.

In addition to her funding for school art supplies, Tyler Deal was also awarded a scholarship to attend a week-long watercolor workshop with Mary Ann Beckwith, a nationally known watercolor artist who is offering workshops in Blowing Rock this fall and who was the featured presenter at the Watercolor Society's annual meeting this year. The scholarship package includes up to \$500 for the cost of a substitute teacher for Deal while she attends the workshop and a free "start-up" package of watercolor materials for her use.

Each year since 2007, WSNC and Cheap Joe's have partnered to give Keep Arts Alive awards to the schools in the county where the WSNC holds its annual exhibition. This year's exhibition took place in Blowing Rock, making the Watauga County Schools the beneficiary of this year's awards.

This is the final year of the Keep the Arts Alive Award by that name. In recognition of the continued contributions of Joe Miller, the awards will be renamed the Cheap Joe's Art in Education Award in future years.