

Wrightsville Beach School News



Local artist encourages kids' imperfections

By Abby Cavanaugh

Staff Writer

Wilmington artist Deborah Cavanaugh practices what she preaches. The self-proclaimed "imperfect artist" taught children at Wrightsville Beach School (WBS) to celebrate imperfections and turn them into art during a day-long art workshop on Friday, Oct. 6.

Since Cavanaugh is famous for her colorful, whimsical paintings of houses, she was guiding the students through painting portraits of their own homes.

"I did brief interviews with the students, to find out things like what their family likes, what might be outside their houses, like, for instance, surfboards, and then asked them to paint those things," Cavanaugh said.

Some of the children's paintings will be transferred to various items, such as coffee mugs or T-shirts, as part of WBS' "Art by Me" fund-raiser. The art workshop also complemented this year's Academic Adventures program, which focuses on storytelling, said WBS PTA president Lynn Walker.

Cavanaugh did not begin her career as an artist until she was in her 40s. "I never had any art lessons," she said. "My children got me a set of paints for Mother's Day, and I just started painting. Now it's what I do full time. I've sold some work in galleries, and even have some paintings in galleries overseas."

She's clearly a celebrity in the eyes of some WBS students, since she was repeatedly asked for her autograph once her teaching session was over Friday morning.

"They have me here today to talk about art



Staff photo by Beth Watson

Artist Deborah Cavanaugh speaks to fourth- and fifth-graders at Wrightsville Beach School on Friday, Oct. 6, as part of the Academic Adventures program.

because I'm an imperfect artist," she said. "It's not always about straight lines, and I don't draw in straight lines. Art has to be about you."

Cavanaugh also stressed to the children that they must have a willingness to serve others. "I don't care who you are, if you're not willing to serve, you're not going to be successful," she added.

Editorial/Opinion

Letters to the Editor

A TRUE ROLE MODEL

Editor: I really enjoyed Abby Cavanaugh's article about Deborah Cavanaugh's visit to Wrightsville Beach School ["Local artist encourages kids' imperfections," Oct. 12-18, 2006]. Deborah is one of my favorite artists, so much so that I decorated our office (Seaside Pediatrics) entirely around her work. Her upbeat titles and

bright colors can't help but make you smile.

I hope that all of the children remember her message that "you must have a willingness to serve others." As you probably know, Deborah lives that philosophy every day. She is one of the many talented Wilmington artists who are always willing to help a worthy cause. (Two others that immediately come to mind are

Dumay Gorham and George Pocheptsov.)

Today, when so many of us are guilty of overindulging our children, it is wonderful to hear "I don't care who you are, if you are not willing to serve, you're not going to be successful." Now that is role model.

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