

# ERHS Brings Music, Drama And Art to Roosevelt Center

by Melissa Sites

High school students flocked to Roosevelt Center on Saturday, April 21, to show off what they've been working on over the past year at Eleanor Roosevelt High School (ERHS).

Visual and performing artists from ERHS offered a festival to give something back to the community as part of a school-wide effort to increase community involvement and participation at ERHS. With performances from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., the ERHS Music and Art Festival featured music and theater students, along with an art show at the New Deal Café that will be open until May 7. An artist reception followed on Sunday afternoon.

### A Variety of Music

Past festivals have included musical groups from schools around Greenbelt, but this festival featured acts from various disciplines all at ERHS. Supported by funds from the Jim Cassells Community Service Award and spearheaded by art teacher Christine Wilkin and Kevin Hawk, music department chair, the festival was planned to celebrate the art, music and drama projects of students. Since Eleanor Roosevelt High School is located away from the town center, having the festival in Roosevelt Center helps the students to better share their accomplishments with the community, according to information on the Cassells Award website.

ERHS band teacher Rachel Zephir led a jazz combo, flute choir, woodwind/brass quintet and percussion ensemble that made use of buckets and trashcans, obtained from Bowie High School, to perform lively percussion pieces in the style of Stomp. Singers Alyssa Stanford and Gabriela Holzer performed Broadway show tunes using backing tracks. Alison Graham and Abby Wester performed as a string duet. Other musical acts included Talon Hall, Kierra Mayo and Adrian, Bolu and Sabrina. "If there's a performance opportunity they'll find a way to be there," said Zephir. Theater students offered one act plays, along with the group ALONIZ doing improv games and comedy sports. The afternoon closed with a fashion show. Kevin Hawk provided an excellent sound system for the outdoor event, while drama teacher Julie Hawk cheered on her students.

### Art Display

Art teachers Wilkin, Adeline Vanik and Monique Connealy were excited about the high quality of the art on display from 40 ERHS art students, representing a variety of classes. Erin Delaney's geometrical mandala, Phases of the Moon, was the first piece to sell. Pieces that



The ERHS percussion ensemble from left: band director Rachel Zephir, Raina Dirksen, Tayquan Freeland, Illijah McCoullough and Evan Krieger play on trash cans and buckets.

PHOTO BY AMY HANSEN



Abby Wester, left, and Alison Graham play cello and violin duets at the ERHS Music & Art Festival.

PHOTO BY ANNE GARDNER

are purchased will be available on May 7, with an extra fee for the frame. Another standout piece is the blue dog, Nimbus, by Lily Thomas. This work consolidates light and dark areas in a portrait of the family dog, to surreal effect. ERHS art classes, all represented in the show, include Art 1, Basic Design, Basic Sculpture, Computer Graphics, Art 2 (intermediate) and AP Studio Art 2D (advanced). In Last Flower, by Johnny Truong, a bright pink blossom glows against a gritty monochromatic background. A bystander noted of a surreal piece, The Koi by Michelle Juarez-Sanchez, "I really like how she put the koi fish on the steps." The Koi also features a self portrait of the artist.

At the Sunday afternoon reception, onlookers enjoyed a display of folded, juxtaposed pictures. Connealy described how her students created digital collages representing two contrasting ideas, such as spring-fall,

technology-nature, city-country, digitally cut and pasted into alternating one-inch strips, and then folded the juxtaposed images like a fan, which was then matted and framed.

Connealy pointed out that the festival represented the "ongoing artification" of ERHS, in which the music, art and drama departments work together with the wider community to make the arts a part of everyday life to enhance and enrich the educational experience.

# Greenbriar Outreach Group Tackles Community Issues

by Angeline Butler

Over the past several months, Greenbriar residents have been busy meeting, researching and learning about the many wonderful free and low-cost services and programs offered to Greenbelt residents. The next Outreach Group meeting will be on Saturday, April 28 from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., on the second floor of the Greenbriar Community Building.

### Dynamic Community Governance

Organized by the Center for Dynamic Community Governance (with support from the city), Greenbriar's newly-formed resident Outreach Group is getting results. It operates with the principles of dynamic community governance. This approach uses a two-step process: a general meeting where concerns and ideas are gathered and then work sessions on the individual topics.

At the general meeting each participant is asked, in a round-table process, what they would like to see that would make life in the Greenbriar community better. The excitement generated as the round-table progresses is based on the new ideas that each person brings to the discussion. The large group then breaks down into smaller circles, each of which investigates one of the agreed-upon subjects. Discussion of where to find information and other things necessary to the task is followed by each person taking on a specific assignment toward completion of the task.

The idea is to bring together bits and pieces of information about a certain subject, which gives people a variety of options to choose from for the solution that best suits their needs. Information put together like this can be transformative when a previously bothersome issue, such as "how can I affordably get around in this immediate area without a car," can now be resolved. This idea, to find out about local transportation options that don't depend on Metro, has resulted in information about The Bus and ShuttleUM being posted on the Marketplace tab of the Greenbriar website, greenbriarcondos.com.

### From Talk to Tasks

Subjects that other work groups are exploring include help, support and resources for caregivers; legal and financial needs

for older adults; low-cost or no-cost food and clothing options; introducing newcomers – and oldcomers – to Old Greenbelt, especially Roosevelt Center and bridging language and cultural divides.

The group is open to all Greenbriar and Glen Oaks residents. New ideas are warmly received and feedback is actively encouraged.

"One exciting development has been to move from information-only to actively taking on a task such as developing a tour of Greenbelt for Greenbriar residents," said Angeline Butler, the newly elected circle administrator. "This will require coordination and cooperation from a number of people, but working together with other people gives a wonderful sense of accomplishment and satisfaction."

The fun part of this, Butler asserts, is when an investigation blossoms in an unexpected direction. When researching the University of Maryland shuttle bus, the group found out that seniors (age 60 and over) are eligible to take classes at any state school, including the University of Maryland, tuition-free (there is a registration fee, however). Since students ride the shuttle bus for free, an enrolled senior gets both the class and transportation free of charge.

Jane Mullaney, newly elected circle facilitator, states that the Community Governance approach has far-reaching consequences. "Through the Outreach Group we have discovered that when people learn how to work together, within a structure focused on dignity and respect, strong connections are made and community goals become achievable," says Mullaney. In the facilitated gatherings, Greenbriar residents, once strangers, get to know each other over a wide spectrum of experience and start to make connections with one another as neighbors. People get to see their neighbors, whom they may pass by each day, as people from different backgrounds and experiences from whom there is much to learn. Through this process, true neighborhoods are born.

For more information, contact Jane Mullaney, janemullaney@yahoo.com.



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