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DANA GREEN

Lafayette artist donates time and talent; paints mural at Rec Center



Photo Pippa Fisher

Artist Mandy Tardif puts the finishing touches on the mural she is donating to the Lafayette Recreation Center's Kindergym room.

By Pippa Fisher

The Kindergym room at the Lafayette Community Center has a new look in the entrance area – a local artist

has donated time and talent to create a beautiful butterfly mural that is designed to suggest freedom and movement as the children come in.

It all started as a contest. Former Lafayette resident and artist Mandy Tardif decided to donate her artistic skills to a randomly selected winner. Through social media

and word of mouth, Tardif invited parents to email her a photo of their space that they wanted decorated. She asked for the age of the child and an idea of what they envision for the space. On July 31 Tardif put the names in a hat and pulled out the winner ... and it was none other than the community center whose request was submitted by the city's recreation coordinator, Tricia Young.

The mural is designed to stimulate childhood imagination. With the butterfly deliberately at child-height, kids stand against it, stretching their arms out.

"We are so excited that Mandy chose our program to donate a mural to," says Young. "The butterfly is so welcoming and bright and children have loved to stand next to it and pretend to be a butterfly. It fits so perfectly and will prompt children's imaginations."

Tardif, who has a degree in graphic design, says she has been painting since she was 3 years old. Born in Alaska, she grew up in New Hampshire and moved to California in 2001.

It is through painting, she says, that she has found her

voice. Tardif is open about her struggles with an eating disorder and with alcohol and drugs. She says art has been transformative for her.

"Art was my therapy," she says. It was through a process of 12 paintings – a series she calls "Divine Liberations" – that she found expression. "It was a journey for me," she says.

Although Tardif has suffered from chronic pain for the past 14 years caused by nerve damage to the spine, she also works as a personal trainer.

Tardif says she likes to work on her paintings in local coffee shops, especially Philz in Lafayette, where she is known simply as "the painter." She says she loves that people come up to her and get talking. In fact she has undertaken several commissioned paintings that way.

Tardif has done many portraits including pet portraits in addition to murals.

"I want my butterfly mural to suggest movement, play and freedom," she says.

To learn more about the artist or to see examples of her work, visit her website: /www.mandytardif.com/

Jennifer Perlmutter pop-up extends to end of year

By Pippa Fisher

Jennifer Perlmutter will be reopening her pop-up art gallery and event space in September with new programming scheduled through the end of the year. And she couldn't be more delighted.

"JPG@The Bank was a huge hit in Lamorinda earlier this year," says Perlmutter. "With packed houses for openings and receptions, lines at the door, and over 3,000 people attending, the community's thirst for art and culture was clearly served."

But Perlmutter says the decision to extend her temporary lease was one she agonized over. "I was given three weeks to make the decision in May," she explains. Struggling with the conflicts and demands on her time of family versus career, it ultimately took the advice



Photo Pippa Fisher

The pop-up art gallery opened in February and has been extended until the end of the year.

of her teenage son to persuade her. "You have to do it," he told her. "It's just the coolest place."

The idea to open a quality pop-up in an otherwise empty storefront (in this case a bank) was borne of a discussion at a city council meeting last year centered on revitalizing the downtown area.

In February the gallery, an extension of Perlmutter's flagship Jennifer Perlmutter Gallery – in business in Lafayette since 2014 – opened its doors in a converted bank building owned by Cortese Development Company on the corner of Mt. Diablo

Boulevard and Moraga Road. Perlmutter describes her exhibits as mid- to high-end contemporary art, primarily from Bay Area artists. "The vault has been updated to exhibit small paintings and sculpture, as well as a 'selfie station' for photos," she says.

Perlmutter acknowledges that running this second gallery requires a lot of work and has taken on Yvonne Banis as director of client relations. Although the flagship gallery has been open as usual, over the summer the hours in the pop-up have been by appointment only.

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Lafayette Public Meetings

City Council
Monday, Sept. 9, 7 p.m.
Lafayette Library & Learning Center, Community Hall, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

School Board Meetings
Acalanes Union High School District
 Wednesday, Sept. 4, 7 p.m.
 AUHSD Board Room
 1212 Pleasant Hill Road, Lafayette
 www.acalanes.k12.ca.us

Planning Commission
 Monday, Sept. 16, 7 p.m.
 Lafayette Library & Learning Center, Community Hall, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Design Review
 Monday, Sept. 9, 7 p.m.
 Lafayette Library & Learning Center, Arts & Science Discovery Center, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Lafayette School District
 Wednesday, Sept. 11, 7 p.m.
 Regular Board Meeting
 Stanley M.S. Library
 3477 School St., Lafayette
 www.lafsd.k12.ca.us