

## City Life event brings out local residents' artistic side

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*Aaliyah Reece adds her handprint to the Word Wall with help from dad, Ron, on Saturday at City Life at Richmond's Glen Miller Park.*

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*Kids try painting on canvas Saturday at City Life at Glen Miller Park in Richmond.*

A large crowd gathered Saturday at Glen Miller Park's band shell to take part in the second City Life event of the summer.

Activities included canvas painting, paint-throwing walls, stone carving, sidewalk chalk art, clay sculpting, an electronic petting zoo and creation of a community City Life mosaic.

Also included were displays of farm sculpture, photography and an appearance by Disney Imagineer Terri Hardin.

"City Life is a unique way to introduce our community to arts in the community in a fun, interactive way," said City Life creator and director Dave Snow. The program is a four-part annual series designed to highlight different aspects and venues of Richmond's cultural life. Saturday's event focused attention on the Richmond Art Museum.

"It's a fun way to not only learn about art, and see art, but to get your hands on it and make art," said Snow.

"The whole idea is to get people involved in the arts in a fun, pressure-free way," said Lance Crow, Richmond Art Museum's educational director. "Artists are very important to a community. They can make something beautiful out of what's basically nothing."

Perhaps the biggest draw of the event was Hardin, who helped excited kids, young and old, to sculpt their own creations, sharing tips and techniques she uses in her work.

Hardin has worked for Disney for 25 years, designing characters and rides, including the Stay-Puft Marshmallow Man from "Ghostbusters," the Dragon's Lair ride at EuroDisney and limited-edition sculptures of Maleficent, Tinkerbell and Dumbo, among others. She also has worked as a puppeteer and costume designer on "Ghostbusters" and numerous other films.

She now travels the country, promoting creativity at public events, schools and universities as well as conducting corporate seminars.

The Electronic Petting Zoo put on by Doug Babb also was a big hit. It consisted of electronic instruments that require no training, physical ability or experience to have fun with music.

"I work with a lot of special-needs kids," said Babb. "This kind of levels the playing field." The petting zoo was a big hit with the kids, and the adults as well. Dave Snow had to pry himself away from it to attend to

other duties.

Helping to create the City Life mosaic was popular with young and old alike. Participants helped to glue broken pieces of tile to a board, creating a truly “community” piece of art. The mosaic will be put on public display at an as-yet-undisclosed location, as will the paint-throwing walls and the word wall, on which kids traced their hands and feet or pressed their paint-covered hands. They were then encouraged to sign their name or write a one-word description of the day or themselves on the wall.

J.D. Wayne, a certified Bob Ross Instructor, gave a display of the Bob Ross school of painting, and demonstrations of the techniques, as well as an exhibition of “The Rock ‘N’ Roll Artist,” in which he paints an entire picture within the duration of one song.

Wayne, who also hosts “JD’s World of Art” on public access TV, stressed you’re never too old to find your artistic side.

“I discovered I could paint by accident,” said Wayne. “I took a Bob Ross painting class at Hobby Lobby on impulse after a cancer scare, when I was almost 50. Now, it’s my life. I work to pay the bills, but I paint to feed my soul.”

The free event was manned by many first-time volunteers as well as old hands.

“If City Life has something going on, we’re there,” said Virginia Hapner and Wilbur Clark. “It’s a wonderful program for kids.” Hapner retired from the Richmond Art Museum in February but plans to stay involved.

Many parents were just as excited about the event as the kids and volunteers.

“I think it’s a beautiful thing that they’re doing,” said Angela Britto. “It’s really good for the kids.”

Lori Johnson agreed, “It’s pretty cool so far. The kids really seem to like it,” as her beaming kids, Madison and Gavin, showed off the characters they had just created with Hardin.

“I had a woman come up to me who didn’t know I was connected to City Life,” said Snow. “She told me it’s great to see Richmond becoming cool again. It’s awesome to hear that. That, to me, makes this a success.”

A previous City Life event highlighted the Richmond Civic Theater. The next event, on July 26, will revolve around the Richmond Symphony Orchestra and will feature Richmond’s first “Pond Fire.”

In August, City Life will host Veach’s Lego Day, featuring a certified Lego architect. During the event, a Lego skyscraper will be constructed that will then be put on display at Veach’s Toy Store, 715 E. Main St.

Those interested in more details concerning the City Life program can find it online at [cityliferichmond.com](http://cityliferichmond.com)

Funding for the City Life program and events comes from grants from the **Wayne County Foundation**, The Stamm Koechlein Family Foundation and the Indiana Arts Commission, as well as local support from Veach’s Toy Store and the Richmond Baking Company.

“We couldn’t do it without them,” said Snow. “I can’t thank them enough for their support.”