

Art reflects desire for peace

Guns spelled backward is Snug, and the group seeks end to violence

By DAYELIN ROMAN Staff writer

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ALBANY -- Lisa Good said it started with an idea for a contest.

She and other members of the anti-violence group Snug -- that's guns spelled backwards -- were working with a group of public health students to find ways to spread their peaceful message when the idea of an art contest where people expressed how they have been affected by violence came up.

After more than 60 entries came in this past spring, she said the group couldn't pick just one winner.

"When you see the handwriting of small children or stick figure drawings with colors talking about how they've been impacted by violence or how a family member has been shot," she said, she found it difficult to judge one person's personal artwork over another's.

Instead, the group decided to display every single entry, and the resulting exhibit, called Peace in the Streets -- Creative Expressions, opened Friday night at Stage 1, Albany Barn's community art space on North Swan Street. The exhibit will be on display until the end of July. "People submitted writings, drawings, expressing how they feel about the gun violence and so they're very simple but expressive," Good said.

The entries came mostly from students in the city, ages 7 to 18. Some adults also entered.

Snug leaders decided to specially recognize 37 of the more than 60 submissions during an opening reception on Friday night. The reception was held in conjunction with the monthly First Friday arts walk in the city.

Organizers hope the exhibit will engage the community and demonstrate the dark effects of gun violence in an artistic and inspiring way.

Jeffrey Mirel, the president of Albany Barn's board of directors, said it was a "no-brainer" to play host to the exhibit. Stage 1 is in the Arbor Hill neighborhood, the setting for much of the violence the exhibit seeks to curb.

Mirel said Stage 1 is dedicated to providing opportunities for the surrounding community to



enjoy itself, and the exhibit dovetails with the display of a moveable mural at Stage 1 painted by a group of at-risk girls ages 13 to 17 entitled "We heART our city."

In the mural, the girls painted their vision of what they'd like to see in Albany and the community.

"It's amazing, their imagination," Mirel said.

Exhibit

Peace in the Streets -- Creative Expressions

Where: Stage 1, Albany Barn, 46-48 North Swan St., Albany

When: Through July 31

Gallery hours: 5-8 p.m. Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday; 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Sunday

Info: 935-4858; albanybarn.org

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