

Mauldin High senior to paint mural at Cultural Center

Mauldin student to paint artwork in Mauldin.



Scott Keeler, dskeeler@greenvillenews.com 11:08 a.m. EST December 2, 2015



(Photo: BART BOATWRIGHT/Staff)

No painting has influenced Celine Crum's passion for art more than Vincent Van Gogh's "Starry Night." A rendition of it was her first ever submission that was accepted to an art show when she was in the third grade.

The Mauldin High School senior hopes her latest model of the famous piece will help inspire others to embrace their artistic side. Soon, anyone going near the Mauldin Cultural Center will have the chance to get that inspiration.

Crum, who's also a student at the Fine Arts Center, is scheduled to paint a large mural on an exterior wall of the Cultural Center on Dec. 5. It will go on the side of the building facing Murray Drive.

As a member of Furman University's Emerging Public Leaders program this past summer, Crum was tasked with completing a service project that addresses a certain need in her community. She knew exactly what she wanted to do.

"I noticed that Mauldin is kind of lacking in the arts, especially student artwork," Crum said. "So I went to the Cultural Center to ask where I could be able to maybe paint a mural, and they said 'you can paint one right on the building.'"

"I was surprised they were so open to it. I thought I would have trouble finding a location. They've been really helpful."

Crum's meeting with George McLeer, administrator for Mauldin's Office of Cultural Affairs, took place earlier this fall. McLeer was wowed by Crum's idea.

"When someone takes the initiative, especially when it's a student, to engage in their community and offer a creative solution, we are all ears," McLeer said. "The Mauldin Cultural Center is a place where the community can express themselves and this mural project was a perfect fit."

With McLeer on board, Crum presented her idea to Mauldin City Council. All she asked of the city was for the wall to be washed and to provide ladders or scaffolding.

City Council unanimously approved for the project to go on as planned and offered Crum encouragement.

"I want to say 'thank you,'" Councilman Taft Matney told Crum. "You're stepping up and making things happen in your hometown to try to make it better.

"It takes a lot of guts to do what you're doing, so thank you."

With the city's approval, Crum moved on with her plan. While the EPL program provided a lump sum of funds for the project, Crum still needed \$200 for the remaining supplies. She created a gofundme online fundraiser and just eight hours later had the necessary funds.

While she had multiple designs for the mural early on, she wasn't really in love with any of them. So she turned back to that early childhood inspiration that Van Gogh provided.

The final design features a child blowing bubbles with a star-filled sky in the background. It also includes Mauldin's logo in the bottom right corner. While the bubbles, stars and sky are all colorful, the child purposely appears like a shadow. The shadow effect doesn't give the child the appearance of any particular gender or race.

"I didn't want it to be one specific kid, because I want all kids to be involved in the arts," Crum said. "It's kind of a chance for me to inspire Mauldin and I think that's really important."

The fact that a Mauldin High student will be painting the mural at the Cultural Center means a lot to McLeer. When the facility was built in 1937, it was the original Mauldin High School. It later served as Mauldin Elementary School until 2002.

"Having a current MHS student return back to the roots of our community to make it better, means a lot not only to us here at the Cultural Center, but for all of those who walked these hallways when the facility was Mauldin High School and then Mauldin Elementary School," McLeer said.

"There's nothing better than having someone in your community who wants to be the change they want to see."

The mural will be painted by Crum and volunteers. She has two 10-person teams ready to work four-hour shifts beginning about 10 a.m. on Dec. 5. It should be a festive day in Mauldin as the group will be painting the wall while the city's annual Christmas Parade is going on behind them along Murray Drive that afternoon.

"I'm really excited and really nervous," Crum said of what will be her first mural. "I'm just excited to see how it all turns out.

"I would like the mural to serve as a statement that creativity should be fostered during childhood, the most impressionable time of one's life."

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