

AGENT SUCCESS

Whitley County Arts Engaging Community One Pottery Piece at a Time

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Whitley County Cooperative Extension Service



Residents in Whitley County voiced a desire to experience pottery making in some form or fashion. Whitley County Arts Extension Community Arts Center opened its doors in 2012 in Downtown Williamsburg. The Arts Center is an excellent addition to the Southern Kentucky artistic resources available to both residents and artists.

In 2013, sensing a need in their community, artist's donation of two kilns and a potter's wheel spurred on community support for exploring an open pottery program. Two well-known local, professional potters support the Extension organization and clientele by providing hands on instruction. All ages and experience levels were welcomed to the Open Pottery Program.

The mission of the Extension Arts Program is to create and support opportunities for Kentucky residents to stimulate creativity, promote participation, and to nourish relationships with artists, arts educators, and arts supporters at all levels and mediums. Cortney Moses, Arts Agent, establishes a safe place for community residents to gain positive community building experiences and increase personal quality of life by expressing and exploring their own art creativity.

Evaluations of the Open Pottery Program showed 95% of the participants enjoyed attending the program, thought the program was inviting to all ages, allowed the participants to interact and learn from others, and allowed the participants to share art with family and friends as gifts. The strength of art programming enriching people's lives was evident by the 75% of participants recognizing they would travel out of the county to find a comparable experience. In addition, participants understand the time and work that goes into a handmade piece of artwork and appreciate the prices of these items.

Building relationships, respect, and personal empowerment comes together with the right environment and organizational leadership. The Community Arts Center in Downtown Williamsburg and Extension staff provide positive social, increased exposure and economic encounters for Southern Kentucky residents and artists. Extension looks forward to building more ties between artists and residents through their county programming.



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