

'A lot of love'

Gretchen Everhart students pour hearts into art for National Cemetery

Amanda Karioth Thompson Council on Culture & Arts

Standing in front of his artwork, Marcus McCullough, 21, is eager to share his feelings on the subject. "I draw pictures and I do everything. I love painting best because it's hard. I'm happy to make art." He attends Gretchen Everhart School which serves students with intellectual disabilities ages 3 to 22.

This particular project showcased Marcus' skill with a brush. He chose a patriotic palette of red, white and blue to render a stylized American flag, paying tribute to those who served in the military.

The concept was a collaboration between the GFWC Capital City Woman's Club, Tallahassee National Cemetery, Everhart, and Franklin County School with substantial support from Everhart's art teacher Judy Jecko.



The project holds personal significance for Rose O'Leary, right. CAPITAL CITY WOMAN'S CLUB



Rose O'Leary is the co-chair of the Woman's Club arts committee and she explained how the project came to be. "We contacted Judy and she's wonderful. In the past, our committee has worked with people with special needs to make art and this year it evolved into a patriotic project that honors veterans."

Numerous volunteers and students worked together to create artworks for display at the Tallahassee National Cemetery. O'Leary shared that the project holds personal significance as her husband is buried there. Through her tears, she said "our goal was to create art that's meaningful and brings joy to other people too."

Upon its opening in 2015, the cemetery became Florida's ninth national cemetery and one of more than 130 nationwide. They have dedicated a display case in the main lobby for the rotating exhibition of student artwork.

Raymond Miller, Director of the Tallahassee National Cemetery was enthusiastic about the most recent project. "From the inception, to the plan, to the creation of the artwork, we're thankful for all

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Everhart student Marcus McCullough was proud to use his painting skills in honor of veterans. AMANDA THOMPSON



Students created patriotic artworks in tribute to those who served in the military.

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the efforts. It's beautiful, it's really something."

Jane Floyd Bullen, Everhart's principal echoed those sentiments and said "it's a very unique display that has a lot of love put into it. This project allows the community to learn a little more about us and allows the students to learn about the veterans and how they're

honored here in this very special cemetery."

The GFWC Capital City Woman's Club is an organization dedicated to community improvement by enhancing the lives of others through volunteer service. To learn more, visit www.gfwcwomanscluboftallahassee.org.

Amanda Karioth Thompson is the Assistant Director for the Council on Culture & Arts. COCA is the capital area's umbrella agency for arts and culture (www.tallahasseearts.org).