

## ARTISTIC EXPRESSIONS



LINDA ANN CHOMIN

## Draw on your creativity, take a class

After the holidays it's hard to find the energy to do more than just click on the TV. But instead of sitting there uninspired, why not expand your mind with art classes? There's no doubt cold, snowy days bring on the urge to hibernate during the first three months of the year. That's why it's a perfect time to cultivate your creativity. And you don't have to be artistic to enjoy drawing or dancing. It's not as difficult as you might think. Just ask Cathy Dyer. She hadn't taken an art class since junior high but was determined to make a gift for her mother. Now she's teaching the art of drawing mandalas at the Plymouth Community Arts Council.

Many arts organizations and businesses around town are offering the opportunity to learn how to salsa dance, take better photographs, or paint wintry white scenes. Dyer's class gives students a way to express themselves.

### Expression

"I wanted to trace my son's and my own hand as a gift for my mother, so I went to a book store and found Judith Cornell's *Mandala*," said Dyer, a Plymouth resident who formerly taught at Northville High School. "I bought the book and began drawing. Mandalas is the Sanskrit word for circle. It's used in Tibetan culture for integrating parts of yourself for healing. Tibetans make their mandalas out of sand similar to the way the Navajos do." Carl Jung, the psychologist, used them with his patients.

"For me it's getting to other parts of myself instead of writing in a journal to find what creative message I have for myself. You put down whatever image you're thinking about."

After learning the basics of creating mandalas, Dyer put her knowledge to work to teach a class at her church. The drawings begin on black paper with a white pencil to bring out the light while working within a circle.

"People came up to me saying they didn't think they could create anything and had pulled creative messages out of themselves." Dyer's mandala class is one of several offered by the Plymouth Community Arts Council. Ivan Kende will show students how to draw by observing a live model. Connie Randall, co-owner of ConLen Productions in Plymouth, will teach an eight-week vocal/drama workshop for grades three-eight that culminates in a performance April 3. ConLen Productions put on the opera *Hansel and Gretel* before the holidays.

"We're always happy to have teachers return like Pam Grossmann for drawing (ages 6-14) and Amy Alley for beginning drawing for teens and adults," said Jennifer Tobin, arts council executive director. "Todd Marsee's class is new. He'll teach students how to use bubble wrap and old nylons in experimental watercolor techniques."

### Photography

Paul Hurschmann teaches a photography class on basic lighting. Students will learn how to use studio lighting and natural light on location. Hurschmann joined the photography staff of the *Observer-News* papers 12 years ago. He previously worked as a photo editor and photographer for the Associated Press in New York City and Detroit.

"I'm excited about Paul Hurschmann's class," said Tobin. "He's taught for us before, but this time the class will be student driven. He'll focus on what they want to learn whether it's portraiture in a studio setting or outdoors. He's designing it to what they want to do."

Dimas and Maria Carraballo teach students how to move to Latin salsa for eight weeks instead of four because the class has proven so popular with dancers.

"A lot of the students said to me it was over too soon," said Tobin. "We were just getting hot." Courses run four to eight weeks and range in price from \$50 to \$120.

Please see LISTENING, C2



Exhibit provokes powerful emotions

Damaged Child: A broken image of a child lies on the floor in Patricia Izzo's photograph. Children are the innocent victims of domestic violence.

BY LINDA ANN CHOMIN  
STAFF WRITER  
lchomin@oe.homecomm.net

Patricia Izzo's photograph of a shattered doll's head moves the viewer to look deeper into the image for meaning. Izzo's powerful portrayal of domestic violence reminds viewers that children are the innocent victims.

Cathy Dyer draws on her inner self to explore the process a woman goes through to find herself after suffering abuse in a marriage—but then she's been there. Her colorful drawings show there is hope even if the journey to reach the light is fraught with obstacles.

Art is a great communicator of experience and emotion. That's why Nancy Paton chose to exhibit more than 40 paintings, drawings and sculptures in the gallery at Madonna University. The exhibit is her personal response to a news broadcast, which showed graphic images of abuse including female genital mutilation, after UNICEF issued a report to the United Nations indicating "Violence against women and girls continues to be a global epidemic that kills, tortures and maims—physically, psychologically, sexually and economically." Art in Response to Universal Violence Against Women speaks to the crimes perpetrated on women around the world.



100 ways: Amy Alley mirrors the fragmented feelings women go through in this mixed media work titled "A Difficult Issue."

### Big need

"It took a lot of time to put the exhibit together but there's a big need for this," said Paton, exhibit project director and supervisor of supplemental instruction at Madonna University. "That's what surprised me. I've had people coming up to me to tell about people they know in abusive relationships."

Dyer is one of the women who suffered emotional and physical abuse in a marriage and needed to express her feelings about the devastating experience. But a journal wouldn't do, so she turned to art.

Paton gave amateur as well as professional artists the opportunity to exhibit their work. Dyer hadn't drawn since Junior High but that didn't stop her from creating *Without Voice* and *Voices Awakening*, kind of a before-and-after of women suffering and then escaping abuse.

"It creates shame and shuts down self," said Dyer, a Plymouth resident and former Northville High School teacher. "My salvation was when I started talking to someone. It's important for people to talk about it and not be hidden away. This is something we have to talk about. And it's a universal problem. When I was in Mexico recently I saw a commercial where three Mexican women are tied together and the voice-over says, 'you need to talk to someone.' I hope that women who might be experiencing abuse might see there's a way to express what they're going through and there is hope. Eventually I went to First Step."

First Step, a nonprofit organization with offices in Plymouth, helps women, children and men rebuild their lives after suffering domestic violence or rape. A shelter for women and children provides a temporary safe place while one-on-one and group therapy sessions build self confidence and help victims regain control of their future. For more information or help, call First Step at (734) 416-1111.

"People need to be aware that there are places they can call," said Dyer.

finding your way  
Amy Alley believes victims do need help in finding their way back to becoming a victim of abuse. She watched a friend "make her way out of a violent domestic situation." Alley, a Livonia resident and student in the fine arts program at Madonna University, mixed mediums to relay her feelings about

Please see VIOLENCE, C2

### CONCERT

## Young pianist grows note by note into maturity

BY LINDA ANN CHOMIN  
STAFF WRITER  
lchomin@oe.homecomm.net

Joshua Cullen has traveled far in the last eight years. Not just to Japan and the Czech Republic to concertize with orchestras, but in becoming a young man.

He's grown from an 8-year-old piano prodigy debuting with the Livonia Symphony Orchestra and performing with the Moscow Philharmonic at 9, to graduating in late April from the University of Michigan School of Music at 16. Quite a journey for one so young but he's handling it with grace.

When The Livonia Symphony Orchestra presents the 16-year-old pianist Joshua Cullen:  
When: 7:30 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 20  
Where: Church Hill High School, 4900 Westborough, north of Jay Road, Livonia.  
Tickets: \$15, \$10 students, call (734) 432-8855 or Ticketmaster (248) 645-0800.  
Note: Front parking lot space is limited due to university event. Additional parking at rear of school.

The death of his father, Calvin, from cancer in June caused him to question his ability to become a performing artist only briefly. Calvin and his wife, Mona, instilled a love of music in the young pianist that's unshakable. By early December, Cullen was back in Prague recording Beethoven's third concerto with the Czech National Symphony conducted by Paul Freeman. Four weeks later he performed at the White House.

### Homecoming

On Jan. 20, he'll be playing a homecoming concert with the Livonia Symphony Orchestra.

"My dad traveled with me everywhere," said Cullen. "It's been difficult adjusting to the change and doing most of the traveling on my own."

Mona's faith in Cullen will surely see him through to fulfilling his destiny to become a well-known classical pianist.

"I was worried how was he

going to handle his father's death," said Mona Cullen. "He said, 'I don't know how to do this. I'm so used to Dad telling me how to play the music. I said, you're 16 now and you're a professional.'"

Calvin Cullen instilled that sense of professionalism in his son. In 1998, he told the *Observer* it was a challenge to maintain a normal childhood while nurturing the talent that would eventually end up on world stages.

"You want to try to keep him as normal as possible and do as much as you can to make sure he enjoys doing the same things as other kids his age," said Calvin Cullen. "On the other hand, you have to encourage his talent. Sometimes that balance can be difficult to handle. It's like having a child with Olympic potential. You have to provide the opportunities, training, to expose them to different experiences and that can be expensive. I don't want to

Please see PROMISE, C2



Piano prodigy: Joshua Cullen returns for a fourth performance with the Livonia Symphony Orchestra. Cullen debuted with the orchestra at age 8.