

## **UWO art students kindle talents in Evergreen residents**

**by Alex Hummel - Wednesday, May 09, 2012**

<http://www.uwosh.edu/today/18843/uwo-art-students-kindle-talents-in-evergreen-residents/>

Grace Luhman was a kindergarten teacher who, decades after retirement, vividly recalls using clay and paints to kindle the talents of her students. But Luhman, a senior citizen, admits as fond as she is of visual art, she “never had an art class in my life.”

“But as a kid, I loved it,” she said, a grin spreading across her face as she sat at a breakfast table May 8 inside Evergreen Retirement Community of Oshkosh, a senior-living community that has earned a national reputation for its innovative enrichment programs.

“Growing up in a small town in the 1930s, you didn’t have art classes,” Luhman said.

No time like the present. And no better partner than the visual arts and art education students just across the river from Evergreen attending the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh.

In a unique collaboration, eight art education majors from UW Oshkosh – students of Professor Wendy Strauch-Nelson and Assistant Professor Michael Beitz – led Evergreen residents in an immersive art workshop during the spring 2012 semester. The University’s Business Success Center, a unique consulting firm charged with pairing UW Oshkosh student and faculty expertise with the strategic needs of local, regional and state businesses and organizations, helped make the match.

With UW Oshkosh students as teachers, the residents dabbled in “clay postcards.” They experimented with fused glass. Some Evergreen men, for whom art may have been downplayed as a frivolity a few generations ago, enthusiastically constructed “dashboard confessionals,” or richly illustrated and designed memory books.

The workshop serves as just one more example of the way UW Oshkosh students and faculty are more deeply embedding their expertise into the fabric of the greater Oshkosh community, region and state.

For art education students, the Evergreen collaboration was a tremendous professional portfolio experience and outreach opportunity.

For their dozen or so Evergreen pupils, the program provided an opportunity to awaken memories, stories and hidden or unlocked talents.

Teachers and students came together for a final spotlight on their art at the May 8 breakfast at Evergreen. The proud show-and-tell that followed the unveiling of kiln-fired pottery pieces and the elaborate glassworks was telltale.

“We’re really anxious to see our work,” said Sandy Challoner, an Evergreen resident who eagerly awaited the chance to see her finished clay postcards and colorful fused glass pieces.

Evergreen President and CEO Ken Arneson said his organization has jumped at any chance to collaborate with its UW Oshkosh neighbor, now the third-largest institution in the UW System with 13,500 students.

Arneson cited Evergreen's partnership with UW Oshkosh's "Enrich" program, its welcoming of UW Oshkosh-connected Living in Retirement group forums, its role as a community-based clinical site for nursing students and the leadership roles University staff and faculty have served on its board of directors. Additionally, for years, UW Oshkosh retired staff and faculty have opted to make Evergreen a home, he said.

"If you look at where the richest part of our culture lies, it's with our elders," Arneson said, applauding the art education collaboration.

The UW Oshkosh art-student collaboration was also evidence that those elders have plenty to offer younger generations, too.

"It was really a good learning opportunity," said Tina Johnson, an art education major from Sun Prairie. "I'd never taught a workshop before this."

Learn more:

- [UW Oshkosh Department of Art](#)
- [UW Oshkosh Business Success Center](#)
- [UWO students help Oshkosh warming shelter thrive](#)
- [BSC, Political Science team up for New North issues survey](#)
- [UWO survey collaboration shows manufacturing growth expected in region \(February 2011\)](#)