

## Gallery Walk expanded to two weeks



By John Cox

Brookfield artist Noah Phipps works on the pieces Monday that will be a part of the Gallery Walk in his basement studio. Area businesses will each showcase the work of two or three local artists, and each artist will show five or 10 different pieces of artwork

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Brookfield, IL -

One week worked, but this year organizers of Brookfield's Gallery Walk are hoping twice the time will bring in twice the interest.

Abby Brennan, a former Chicago Public Schools art teacher and now the owner of Brennan Massage and Spa organized the event, which is sponsored by the Grand Prairie Crossing Business District. Brennan said that last year's participants felt one week just was not long enough.

"Two weeks will give people more time to look at the art works and get involved in the community—going into the different businesses," Brennan said.

Two weeks also gives artist the opportunity to create more pieces to sell. At the gallery walk, area businesses will each showcase the work of two or three local artists, and each artist will show five or 10 different pieces of artwork. A silent auction will be held for the duration of the event, and interested patrons can bid on their favorite pieces of art.

"When I came to Brookfield, I wanted to carry the arts wherever I went," Brennan said.

Artists will show their works within each business — in the store fronts, the windows and the reception areas.

"It's a collaboration of the businesses on Grand Avenue," Brennan said. "It is a way for us to highlight the businesses, gather the community, bring people into the business district — which is a

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big deal with the way the economy is, and bring an artistic touch to the district.”

Brennan is collecting application forms from the different businesses until the end of July. She already has nine businesses who have agreed to participate.

Each business will be putting its own artistic twist on its products during the gallery walk, and discounts will be offered. Brennan Spa will have an artistic facial, and other businesses will have special artistic desserts or flower arrangements to celebrate the gallery walk.

Noah Phipps, a Brookfield resident and artist, will be participating as an artist in the gallery walk for the first time. He said he finds a lot of inspiration in Brookfield. Phipps’ pieces will stem from his regular line of work, as he is a children’s textbook illustrator.

“I’m going to take locations in Brookfield and give them a storybook feel,” Phipps said. “I want to bring out the working class side of Brookfield. I want to look at the old signs — like the (now closed) Cock Robin Ice Cream store across from the train station, they have this old sign that says, ‘Since 1931.’ They came out two years into the Great Depression. I think there are a lot of parallels compared historically and where we are now.”

He is also interested in studying current buildings in Brookfield.

“The Salt Creek Wine Bar, the angles there are beautiful,” he said.

Phipps said he will create 40 to 50 pieces for the show and then choose the best 10 to display and sell.

Throughout the two weeks, people can visit the area businesses during regular business hours to bid on works of art. The event did not require that each artist sell all their works of art, but each artist will have some works of art for sale.

Last year, the week-long event had about 80 patrons, and Brennan expects about the same or double that number this year, since the event is running for a longer period of time.

“It is good for the artists, too,” Brennan said. “Last year, each artist sold three works of art, on average.”

The end of the event will be a silent auction held Sept. 12.

Each participating business will hold a closing reception from 6 to 9 p.m.

At the reception, potential buyers will be able to place their final bids and meet the artists.