



PHOTOGRAPH BY QUOC CONG

Susan Perkins creates *Dream Weaver* with adolescents enrolled in Nexus Recovery Center.

COMPOSED

TEEN GIRLS CREATE AN ART PROJECT WITH PAPER AND FIBER ARTIST SUSAN PERKINS FOR THE NEW CAROLYN JONES WAGHORNE YOUTH HALL AT NEXUS RECOVERY CENTER.



COCO oil and mixed media on panel 48" x 48" artist Tom Ortega



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Following a successful group show at Cohn Drennan Contemporary Susan Perkins, a Dallas paper and fiber artist, shared her unique art form with female adolescents to titivate the newly built Carolyn Jones Waghorne Youth Hall on the La Prada Campus at Nexus Recovery Center. The Youth Hall was constructed when Rick Waghorne honored his wife Carolyn with a \$1 million gift to the Nexus Recovery Center Capital Campaign. Perkins, a spiritual director who leads contemplative prayer groups, is on the board of the Nexus mentoring program for children and adolescents.

On an expectant day in March Perkins guided current residents of the Youth Hall to a large loom prepped and woven with fiber. Each apprentice was given three strips of narrow paper to write aspiring missives on. Taking their turns at the loom, all had a chance to weave their dreams through the willowy fiber, communicating unity and harmony through art. Susan then wove in very thin gold fiber so the girls' handwriting would stand out.

"Each strip of paper was the same to represent sameness while their varied handwriting represents our personal uniqueness. Amazingly we are uniquely the same!" effuses Perkins.

Based on the 12 step program, the Adolescent Recovery Program at Nexus tackles issues such as anger management, decision-making, healthy relationships and socialization, relapse prevention, physical fitness, and life skills training.

"While making the piece of art and reading each of the clients' dreams I sensed a heartfelt connection with each of them. Simply put, my dreams are the same as their dreams. We are similar to others throughout history and culture despite our different appearance, social, economic, race, or personal story," observes Perkins, who has titled the artwork *Dream Weaver*.

The Dallas ISD provides two accredited teachers for the Nexus classroom. The girls attend school on campus five days a week six hours per day, with enrichment activities during the summer months.

"We have all been through the teen years," Perkins notes. "These transitional years can be difficult when one is working through independence and self-identity. Teens need someone to help them know their own personal value, reach their unique potential, create positive change in their lives. Many teens do not have anyone guiding them through this difficult time, especially teens that are addicted and come from addiction or other troubling situations often with many pressures outside themselves."

Dream Weaver installs at the Carolyn Jones Waghorne Youth Hall in May. "Viewing this art creates a legacy for future clients to empower self and to use recovery to reach one's unique potential," Perkins expresses. **P**



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