

The Meadian



A newsletter published periodically for families, friends and residents of St. Anne's Mead

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Jewelry Maker Mary Muresan Takes Title of Artist By a Neck

Denial is often the first response of those who are self-taught when someone asks "Are you an artist?" Apparently, if you enjoy the creative process, you can't be a self-proclaimed club member: No angst or pain, no art.

But as Mary Muresan, a resident of St. Anne's Mead and former Lincoln Park school teacher, has learned, she can thoroughly enjoy making beautiful jewelry, even though she has never had formal training. The end product is valued and admired, and in the opinion of those who see and buy her necklaces, that qualifies her as an artist.

As far as pain goes, the only suffering she says comes from some arthritis in her fingers.

"I make the necklaces for friends and family, especially during the holidays," says Mary who taught middle school for 44 years. She says she taught "whatever the administration gave me... but they never gave me art." It wasn't until she moved into St. Anne's Mead six years ago that Mary began cutting scrap paper and rolling the strips into inch-long tubes, applying a clear coating, then stringing them together with beads to make necklaces.

"I've always loved art and music and spent many



hours in the galleries of the DIA (Detroit Institute of Arts) but it took nearly 70 years and a move here (to St. Anne's Mead) before I even thought about making anything," says Mary.

Her development as a jewelry maker was encouraged by the art therapists who visit weekly and conduct sessions with the residents. "I just got into it during class. Since then, people have been leaving off magazines, beads, gift wrappings ...anything with nice colors." says Mary who, at 93, claims she is a late starter.

Making bead necklaces takes time, says Mary, mostly because "it's a drying process. You cut and roll the paper - that's good for my fingers - then

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coat them with Mod Podge, an adhesive medium that hardens like glass after a day or two. Then I run an elastic string through them which makes putting them on or taking them off pretty easy.”

The results are eye-catching wearable art which very definitely makes Mary an artist. After all, art runs in her family. Her two sons, Lance and Jon, now in their sixties, attended the former arts and crafts school now today known as the College for Creative Studies in Detroit. Her husband Lawrence, “a soft spoken gentleman,” was an automotive manufacturers rep which brought him close to design but never to the point where making art seemed natural, as it was for Mary who proudly points out that she is a graduate of Marygrove College and the University of Michigan.

Fashion Statement Still Possible Despite Dementia



For dementia patients or for those who simply are advanced in years, looking good and staying in fashion may still be important. Having a say in what is worn and in how they present themselves helps maintain dignity, confidence, and a sense of worth and pride, especially as their bodies change in structure and in function.

In early stages of memory loss, patients may not be attuned to the time of year and may pick out seasonal items that offer too little protection from inclement weather. In later stages of the disease process, they may not want to change clothes at all.

In other cases, patients may not recall how long they've worn a particular item. They may believe they are wearing freshly laundered clothes when in reality they may have worn the same outfit for many days.

In any case, it is typical that pride and dignity are at risk when caregivers lose their patience and override decisions about what to wear.

Caregivers can help by complimenting patients on their selections, accessories and the way they fix their hair. This is especially important when such things as colostomies, oxygen tubing or incontinence products must be taken into account.

“When it's time to buy new clothes, or pick something from the closet or drawers, caregivers can guide patients to selections that are clean, warm and comfortable yet accommodate personal tastes and style, as well as medical conditions,” says Michelle Mitchell, social worker at St. Anne's Mead.

“Asking the dementia patient what he or she would like to wear, helps preserve dignity and it keeps their minds active. But giving too many options can be confusing and frustrating, so present the clothing items one at a time and limit choices to just two or three,” says Michelle.

In helping them dress, Michelle suggests that you lay out the selected clothing in the order in which they will be put on: underwear first, then the outer wear. “Check to be sure that the clothing is right-side out and that buttons, zippers and fasteners are undone.”

“If you need to give instructions, do so with gestures and be tactful when an article is put on incorrectly,” says Michelle. “And, adjust your expectations beforehand as dressing may take longer than it used to. You can always use the time to chat,” says Michelle.

She also recommends that, as long as the selections present no risk, it is better to accept them - even when colors clash or are out of season - than have a confrontation. Avoid problems by putting away inappropriate items such as long coats that may catch on heels, or sleeveless blouses that offer no protection from the cold.

Here are some other helpful suggestions on clothing:

- Look for clothes that are easy to put on and take off and won't aggravate arthritic joints. Choose clothes with larger neck openings, zipper fronts and few or no buttons.
- Boxer shorts are easier to manage than briefs.
- Consider a change to front-opening bra's.
- Buy shoes that fit well but are tightened by Velcro or elastic laces.
- Avoid slippers that do not support the feet.
- Use slipper socks with grips like those used in hospitals and nursing homes.
- Replace socks or stockings that are so tight they cause circulation problems.
- Take photographs of full outfits, hair-dos, make-up and accessories to remind patients what they've liked.

Also, check out the speciality clothing that retailers offer for difficult cases. Solutions could include dome closures, elasticized back waists, or non-revealing open flies. Use a favorite search engine to locate retailers who can provide specialty clothing or be sufficiently knowledgeable on Alzheimers or dementia to answer your wardrobe questions.

Worth Repeating

Here's what they're saying about St. Anne's Mead

"Just wanted to let you know how much I look forward to and enjoy your newsletter. My sister is one of your residents. I live out of town, but it eases my mind to know that the staff are engaged and watchful in my sister's life. I have worked in and visited many other nursing homes. None have shown the interest and caring that you do. You are doing it right!"

--Meg Widmer, sister of Alice Davies

PHASE 2 RENEWAL NOW UNDER WAY

Phase 2 of the Refreshment of St. Anne's Mead's interior began June 30. The work will continue with minor restoration work, re-painting in remaining hallways, border replacement, refinishing of handrails to match those installed in Phase 1, and new carpeting. In addition, new cost-effective LED lighting will be installed in hallways. Lastly, a custom model suite will be added to show how existing rooms can be designed to order. All materials used in the project come from U.S. manufacturers and Michigan-based fabricators.

Be sure to check our Facebook page for photos, videos and comments.

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Our Mission

St. Anne's Mead mission is to provide compassionate and professional health care and supportive services to seniors in a safe, secure, and loving home.

In keeping with our faith-based traditions, we endeavor to serve the unique needs of individuals and their families while preserving dignity and enriching lives.

