

 Print this article

## KidzArt brings the joy of art to kidz

**Beth Allen**

Published 09/29/2006 - 2:48 p.m.

Madelyn Price, 7, is proud of a dragonfly illustration she created in a KidzArt class.

"It is fun to do the eyes because they are like ovals," she said while pointing to the face. The long-bodied insect was drawn using vibrant pastel colors with pink fish swimming in bright blue water below. The bug rests on tall blades of green grass.

Art instructor Michelle Garcia gestures to the long wings outlined in black. "I see you drew the wings translucent like we learned in class," she said then looked to Jill, Madelyn's mother. "They catch on so fast."

"An hour-long class is really long for a 7-year-old, but Madelyn said it was too short," said Jill. "When she got home she went on and on about the techniques she learned. It was real fun for her to teach us things we didn't know about art."

"This is more than refrigerator art," said Karin Yearman, executive director of KidzArt in Contra Costa County. "We want to bring the joy of art to everyone."

KidzArt was founded by Shell Herman and Chris Cruikshank to create a confidence-building art program for all ages. The enrichment course focuses on teaching children general art skills and it caters to more than just aspiring artists. The lessons learned can be applied to assignments in the classroom. Yearman said the curriculum will help a student focus and concentrate by constantly keeping children engaged in activities.

KidzArt students study a variety of art styles, including collage, painting, drawing, coloring and sculpting.

"There is a format we follow and it works. It is amazing to watch," said Yearman. "We want to bring art into a kid's life to show them that they can draw and use various mediums. We like kids to be with us for a while so that they can really develop techniques. They will start building on basic concepts right away."

The classes started this month shortly after Yearman purchased the business this past July. The team is busier than expected.

"Already we are in high demand," said Yearman, adding that many parents, organizations and schools have signed up for the company's services.

"I am impressed with the program," said Principal Essence Phillips at Lone Tree Elementary School. She and Vice-Principal Melanie Jones are currently organizing an after-school program and hope to include KidzArt in the plans.

"Sometimes I can't believe it is a job," said Garcia. "It is a positive experience for us all."

"We have a no-mistakes philosophy," said Yearman adding that all instructors teach children to build from their mistakes rather than starting over. "The kids feel so good about themselves, and their smiles are all worth it."

Beginning Oct. 3, classes will be held at the Pizzazz Entertainment Center in downtown Antioch every Tuesday or Thursday from 10:15 to 11 a.m. for ages 2 to 4. For more information, visit [www.kidzartcc.com](http://www.kidzartcc.com) or call 240-6087.

