The six students sat on the grass in front of the large outdoor kiln, waiting for the intense heat to show fire and melt the colors on their clay pots. The advanced clay students from the Neighborhood Art House took part in a three-day raku workshop at Mercyhurst College by Tom Hubert, art department director and a well-known potter. The children made pots during the first two sessions and added color and glaze on the last day, then watched and waited while Hubert fired up his kiln to 1,800 degrees. During the process, the greens, reds, blues and browns melted together to create interesting colors and designs. "I like this because you really don't know how it will work out," said Sister Margaret Ann Pilewski, NAH ceramics teacher. "It's going to be magic," Hubert said. Siblings Maria, Peter and Jacob Samusenko were participants, as well as Jeremiah Richardson, Erika Thomas and Nguyen Nguyen. The children watched intently as Hubert lit the gas to fire the kiln and explained the process. "How many of you have been to a barbecue with a grill? That's the same thing we're doing right now as you do with a barbecue," Hubert said. The process would take 45 minutes, he said. "The colors will melt. There's a special burner that makes it real, real hot." Raku originated in Japan 600 years ago, but Hubert said, "Masterpieces." (Tom Hubert was the first guest artist to lead an annual pottery workshop as part of the Brother Thomas Bezanson Pottery Fund established in 2006 by Friends of Brother Thomas through his gallery, Pucker Gallery, Boston.)

The children exclaimed in wonder as each pot was revealed. "There's mine," Erika said excitedly. After marveling over each bowl, the children scrubbed the children from throughout the building asked Ferrare, who will be a Strong Vincent High School senior, to sign their cardboard umbrellas. "If you've ever wanted to hi-step and dance in the Second Line at a Mardi Gras parade, twirling a fancy umbrella, now's your chance," said Barbara Pollock. All the umbrellas, which can be used in Mardi Gras parades and on rainy days, will be unfurled in a special way at the Annual fundraiser to benefit the Neighborhood Art House.

**RAKU MAGIC**

The children ex-claimed in wonder as each pot was revealed. "There's mine," Erika said excitedly. After marveling over each bowl, the children scrubbed the colors, Hubert explained. The children exclaimed in wonder as each pot was revealed. "There's mine," Erika said excitedly. After marveling over each bowl, the children scrubbed them in sinks and pre pared to take them home. "Oh, that's cool," Nguyen said about his finished product. "Wow, they really changed," Pilewski said. "They came up with some beauties," Hubert said. "Masterpieces." (Tom Hubert was the first guest artist to lead an annual pottery workshop as part of the Brother Thomas Bezanson Pottery Fund established in 2006 by Friends of Brother Thomas through his gallery, Pucker Gallery, Boston.)

Guest artist Tom Hubert

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Jennifer Grant became a successful doctor, but medical school was not her first choice. In medical school I went there because I want to intern at the Neighborhood Art House in my future. It is a very special place and I hope that I can continue to stay connected to the NAH, reading to the children every Friday in the Hooked on Books program; accompanying the children on field trips to Youth theatre productions at the Erie Playhouse; coordinating holiday gifts for NAH families through the Kiwanis Club. He will be greatly missed. We are grateful to his family for designing memorials to the Inner-City Neighborhood Art House.

Jennifer offered the following reflection on her experience:

"At the art house I understand people; it's wonderful. I love spending my summers at the Art House. It renews your soul. Unfortunately there is nothing like it where I'm going."

Jennifer Grant was a scholar: an administrative assistant intern, received the Bucknell Public Interest Program scholarship after Sister Anne Wambach, executive director of the NAH, wrote a letter on her behalf outlining her internship responsibilities. Jennifer offered the following reflection on her experience:

"I am inspired by how many great people from the Erie community come to center their time at the program, either through Hooked on Books or in the Art House. I think people are initially attracted to the program's mission, and then continue to come back because they are awed by the daily success seen on the smiling faces of the children as they create beautiful art using their own imagination and gifts. It is a very special place and I hope that I can continue to stay connected to the Neighborhood Art House in my future."

The classes are the last for Miller, who will be moving out of the Erie area.

"I love spending my summers at the Art House. It renews by soul. Unfortunately there is nothing like it where I'm going."

The COLORS of Industry: Art Piece Commissioned

The colors conveyed what the students saw the day of their visit: the tremendous heat generated in creating the industrial rolled rings manufactured by the Erie firm. "We have lots of color photographs of machinery around here, but this is a much more interesting, artistic view of what we do," said Kevin O'Connell, vice president of sales and marketing for McInnes Rolled Rings company.

"I think this painting really captures what we do here," said O'Connell. The painting will be hung on a 5' by 7' foot wall just inside the front lobby of the corporate office, according to O'Connell. A bronze plaque below the painting will list the Art House students who created the work of art: Chris Rust, Nick Daurnick, Michael Alvarez and Shane McClelland.

O'Connell also invited the artists to bring their parents to see their painting.

The official presentation was made in Spring to O'Connell and Elizabeth Mayoglio, the firm's director of media development, by the students and Paul DeNiro.

The easels are a big deal for the young people, according to their teacher, Dr. Penny Miller. For two weeks in June and July, more than 60 students have taken their easels outside, on the grounds of the Art House to paint street scenes in water color and acrylic.

"The easels allowed the children to feel salt and sand like artists," said Miller, a professional artist, teacher and a summer faculty member at the Art House for the past four years. Like all artists, the students became keen observers of the sights and sounds of their environments. The Art House students observed the men at work at the tire store; two big dogs across the street; the clatter of traffic; the baseball park; and the flowers and butterflies in the garden.

"I love art and I love using an easel," said 13-year-old Soni McCluskey, who was working on a watercolor of roses in the Art House garden.

"Who would have thought easels would make such a big difference," said Miller. "Look at how serious they are. It's wonderful."

The classes are the last for Miller, who will be moving out of the Erie area.

We believe the human soul is shaped by beauty and the arts.

Inner-City Neighborhood Art House Mission Statement

GRANTS

In June the Neighborhood Art House received approval of a $5,000 grant for general operations from the Department of Community Economic Development. We are grateful for the assistance of Rep. Pat Harkins in submitting the application.

The John Nesbit Rees and Sarah Henne Rees Charitable Foundation gave a $5,000 grant to the NAH in support of art education programs. (This is the twelfth annual donation from this foundation.)