

LOCAL & STATE



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Suzanne Demech helps her daughters Jacqueline, 3, and Lila Grace, 8, decorate the "fins" of a fish for a community art project.



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Suzanne Demech helps her daughters Lila Grace, 8, and Jacqueline, 3, (foreground) with a community art project as part of Kids Can, a program by the Rainforest Art Foundation.



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The finished paper-and-plastic fish will be displayed at the Rainforest Art Foundation in the fall.

COMMUNITY MEMBERS *contribute* TO ART PROJECT

By Maya Lau | maya.lau@shreveporttimes.com

An environmentalist art project in Shreveport needs hand-crafted elements for an upcoming museum display, and several children and adults Saturday helped in that mission.

As part of Kids Can, a program by the Rainforest Art Foundation, youngsters gathered at art-space on Texas Street to color and glue tissue paper to what would become the "fins" of a few different types of fish. The appendages were then attached to discarded plastic water bottles to resemble surgeonfish, anglerfish, mackerel and sailfish — four species chosen to represent various ways animals have adapted to their environments over thousands of years.

The plastic-and-paper fish will be displayed at RAF on Travis Street in front of a painting depicting four oceanic scenes. That's also the site of the newly-opened Marlene Yu Museum which showcases nature-inspired works by the eponymous New York-based artist.

"We believe connecting with nature is often the first step toward conservation, whether that's through art, or a museum," said Stephanie Yu Lusk, director of the Marlene Yu Museum and RAF, and daughter of Marlene Yu.

"It's realizing, 'Oh, there's stuff around us that we can protect and we can value,'" she said.

The project wasn't merely for children. Several grownups populated special tables labeled "Adults Only" and contributed to the craft-making.

Michele Hardtner brought her 8-year-old son William to the event because he loves art, and because the project will serve a larger purpose.

"I thought it was neat that they can go back and see it and see the fish they created," she said.

The fish are due to be displayed in the fall.

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