

Lauren Forcella
Straight Talk
for Teens by Teens



Monterey County Life & Times

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C

IS IT DRUGS OR MENTAL ILLNESS?

Dear Straight Talk:
My brother is 25. He's always been moody and used to have a bad temper. Now he's sometimes manic, sometimes drowsy. He started smoking pot at 12. Later came Oxycontin, Xanax, Vicodin, Methadone, anything pharmaceutical to get high. As far as I know he doesn't do drugs anymore (save his prescriptions), but he's still whacked-out. I don't understand if his behavior is from leftover effects of long-term drug use, or he is lying to us and still abusing. Or was he simply born with a mental disorder? His psychiatrist just gives him more drugs that seem to make things worse. My parents can't bear to turn him out and see him fail. What do you think is wrong with him and how can we help? — *Concerned brother, Sacramento*

Katelyn, 15, Huntington Beach: It's probably everything. Depression could've led to drug abuse which could've led to schizophrenia (or something), which could lead who-knows-where. If his psychiatrist isn't helping, try a new one.

Ashley, 23, Auburn: My fiancé's brother was a perfectly normal kid until he started doing drugs and one day snapped. It's sad because his friends kept giving him drugs. He hasn't been the same since. He lives with his parents and is off drugs now. He's a little better but it has taken a long time and lots of medications.

Brie, 18, Ashland, Ore.: I read that long-term marijuana smokers are more prone to developing psychotic disorders such as manic depression and hallucinations — and the younger they start, the more prone they are.

Scot, 23, San Luis Obispo: You could help by being his medical advocate. This means keeping his medical records, charting how he feels day to day, and attending appointments with him.

Maureen, 18, Redding: He needs a 30-day detox followed by a psych evaluation. If he refuses, there's tough love: get help or get out. Some drug-users return to themselves, others do not. It depends on the drugs taken, at what age and for how long.

Lennon, 23, Fair Oaks: Optimal cure: take him out in the woods for six months.

Liva, 20, Santa Barbara: A friend's younger brother abused pot and prescription drugs for a long time. He was recently diagnosed with schizophrenia. It's hard to tell where the mental disorder ends and the drug use begins. I suggest your parents regularly drug-test him as a condition of living there.

Dear Concerned: Which came first, the chicken or the egg? With drug use, especially starting young, things get scrambled. Scientists now know that environment plays a huge role in determining which genetic traits "show up." Take the environment of the developing brain for instance. Feed it today's strong pot — or pills. Presto chango. Negative traits that otherwise would have lain dormant can become active. Not a pretty outcome.

Each panelist hit a bull's eye. Tell your parents I recommend every suggested thing. I would snoop. I would randomly drug test him, become his medical advocate, and require him to attend outpatient rehab, all as a condition of my support. I would change psychiatrists. With more money, I would send him to a wilderness rehab program.

More discussion is on our Web site. To ask a question or inquire about being a youth panelist, go to www.straighttalkforteens.com or write P.O. Box 963 Fair Oaks, CA 95628.

"It gives them confidence and skills and helps them fight the stigma of mental illness."

— Alan Bilinsky, Interim



BOB FITCH/Special to The Herald

Many hands go into creating mosaics for the Sunflower Gardens affordable housing complex, which will provide homes for 23 adults with mental disabilities who are homeless or at risk of homelessness in Monterey County.

PIECE BY PIECE

ARTISTS, AGENCIES COME TOGETHER TO CREATE MOSAICS FOR THE SUNFLOWER GARDENS HOUSING COMPLEX

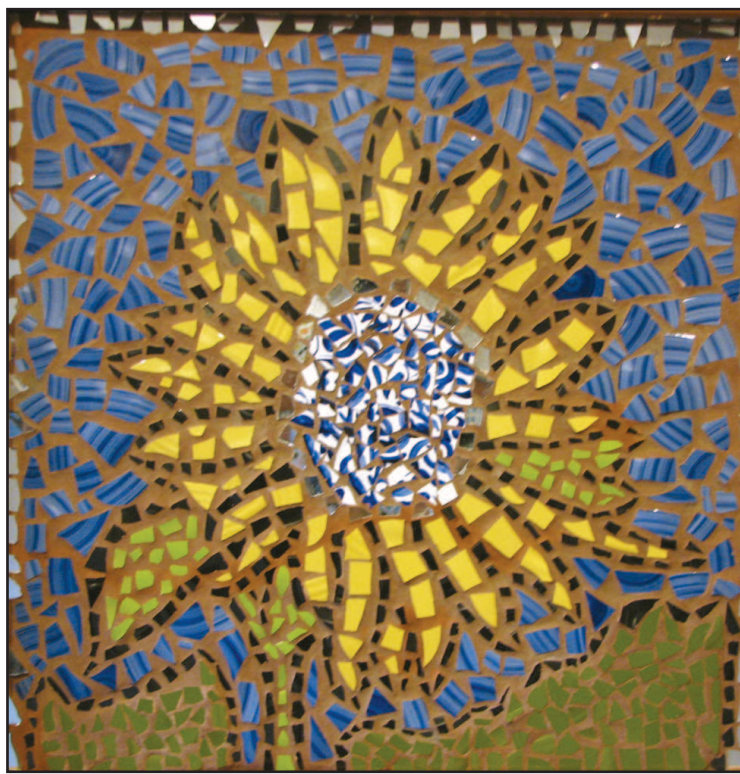
By LILY DAYTON
Herald Correspondent

It's about picking up broken pieces and putting them together in a new way to create something beautiful. It's also about working collaboratively on a group project whose whole is far greater than the sum of its parts.

For the past year, a group of artists has met every Wednesday afternoon in the @Risk Gallery in China Town, Salinas, to glue tile pieces together to create giant mosaics of sunflowers. But if you had asked these people a year ago if they considered themselves artists, few of them would have said yes.

The project is a collaboration between Dorothy's Place, a soup kitchen and homeless shelter in Salinas that is run by the Franciscan Workers of Junipero Serra, and Breakthrough H'Art, a client-run artists' group funded by Interim, a Monterey County organization that provides housing and services for people with mental disabilities.

Once complete, the mosaics will be displayed throughout Interim's new housing project, Sunflower Gardens, scheduled to open next month. Located near China Town, the gated community will provide affordable housing for 23 low-income adults with mental disabilities who are



MICHAEL MCDONALD/Special to The Herald

homeless or at risk of homelessness in Monterey County.

Sunflower Gardens is a "green" building, with features such as photovoltaic panels to generate electricity and photo-thermal panels for hot water and heating. Interim is applying for green

certification from the U.S. Green Building Council. If certified, it will be the first affordable housing for persons with disabilities to get a LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Platinum rating. And its walls will be adorned by public art.

"I think the biggest positive (of

the mosaic project) is the effect it has had on the artists: being able to create and display their work in a public place," said Alan Bilinsky, housing development director for Interim. "It gives them confidence and skills and helps them fight the stigma of mental illness."

Mosaic artists include facilitators from these two social service organizations, volunteers, guests of Dorothy's place, clients from Interim and homeless people off the streets. If you walked into the gallery, you'd be hard-pressed to tell who is a facilitator and who is a client. And if you ask any of them today if they consider themselves artists, the answer will be a resounding "yes."

"I did this!" said Pamela Patterson, sweeping her hand over the blue and yellow tiles beginning to form a picture of sunflowers in the fields of Salinas. Patterson found her way into the project through Dorothy's Place. When she began the project 10 months ago, she was addicted to crack cocaine and had seen several of her friends die of drug overdose on the street. Now, clean and sober for nine months, she has found new purpose in her life through creating mosaic art and teaching others the technique. As a regular volunteer

Please see Mosaic page C3

Conan finds new TV home

TBS SIGNS WITH COMIC FOR 11 P.M. SLOT

By FRAZIER MOORE
The Associated Press

ate-night mainstay Conan O'Brien is headed to TBS to resume his comedic duties with a talk show expected to debut in November, the network said Monday.

The program will air Mondays through Thursdays at 11 p.m., shifting TBS' "Lopez Tonight," starring George Lopez, to midnight.

O'Brien quickly fired out a celebratory tweet.

"The good news: I will be doing a show on TBS



Conan O'Brien
New show airs in November

starting in November! The bad news: I'll be playing Rudy on the all-new Cosby Show," he posted Monday on Twitter.

The surprise announcement hit the same day O'Brien starts a two-month, nationwide comedy tour in Eugene, Ore., amid persistent reports that he was likely to

claim Fox as his new late-night home.

Barring Fox, syndication was widely considered O'Brien's most likely option. Few if anyone mentioned TBS as a plausible destination.

O'Brien began serious talks with TBS just last week, the network said.

"In three months, I've gone from network television to Twitter to performing live in theaters, and now I'm headed to basic cable," O'Brien said in a tongue-in-cheek-toned statement. "My plan is working perfectly."

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**SQUIRREL
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BARBECUE
CAPER**

Dear Gary: Last night my husband went out to barbecue and his 12-inch long wooden handle barbecue brush had disappeared. All that remained was the leather cord that was attached to the barbecue brush handle.

My husband, says my squirrel, Fred, is the thief. I don't think the squirrel is barbecuing up in the trees. Can you please shed some light on this backyard mystery and get my squirrel, Fred, out of trouble?

— *Kathy in cyberspace*
Dear Kathy: It could have been Fred the Squirrel, I suppose, but it's not the nature of a squirrel to drag off

objects like a barbecue brush. The head of a sunflower or some other plant, or fruit, yes, but although it's possible, I doubt Fred took that brush.

It's also pretty hard to haul a barbecue up in a tree!

More likely it was a raccoon. The smell of barbecue meat on that brush would really ring a raccoon's chimes.

Have your husband check around the yard area near the barbecue. Look in the plants, etc. He may find the brush. I don't think a raccoon would drag it too far.

Dear Gary: I had a funny run-in with a male wild turkey last week. After parking my car in my condo complex, I noticed our one lone male turkey pecking on the grassy hill across the way (we have a group of one male and three females). As I usually do, I greeted him verbally, saying "Hello, Mr. Turkey! How are you today?"

Generally, they don't respond other than with a glance. However, on this day, the male turkey makes his way down the hill and walks over to me. He looks me up and down and then finally puffs and plumps up.

At first I thought he was being aggressive, so I backed away to avoid a confrontation. As soon as I did, however, he

started to slowly walk in circles around me all plumped up. He literally tried to stop me from getting away!

He followed me all the way to my stairwell before he gave up.

Honestly, I think he was trying to "court" me as he didn't seem deliberately aggressive, but I could be wrong. As this was happening, another neighbor took notice and asked what was going on. I told him that I think I had actually attracted a real turkey!

— *Bridget, cyberspace*

Dear Bridget: Male turkeys definitely gobble to the beat of that different drum everyone's always talking about.

I've seen tom turkeys march into the middle of the street to challenge a car, so it doesn't seem out of line to assume that one might strut down and try

to invite a human to join his flock. I mean, you did start the conversation.

I once saw one do that puffed-up dance around a fancy water fountain, but the fountain just ignored him.

As you said above, looks like you attracted a real turkey.

Gary Bogue writes for the Contra Costa Times.

Calendar

From page C2

David Mamet's "November." Continues at 7:30 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays and 2 p.m. Sundays through April 18 at the Magic Circle Theatre, 8 El Caminito, Carmel Valley Village. Mamet's new scathingly hilarious political satire depicts one day in the life of a beleaguered commander in chief. Directed by Elsa Con. \$22 general, \$20 for seniors and students, available by calling 659-7500.

THROUGH MAY 2
Pacific Repertory Theatre presents Fyodor Dostoevsky's "Crime and Punishment." Continues at 7:30 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays through May 1, with Sunday matinees at 2 p.m. through May 2 at the Circle Theatre of the Golden Bough Playhouse, Casanova Street between Eighth and Ninth avenues, Carmel. Features Equity actors Remi Sandri and Emily Jordan and guest artist Jeffrey T. Heyer. Directed by Kenneth Kelleher. 2010 Season FlexPasses, \$196 general, \$146 for 65 and older and \$92 for student/teacher/military; subscription plans for 4-10 plays from \$94-\$196 general, \$71-\$146 for seniors and \$51-\$92 for student/teacher/military; single tickets \$16 to \$38 with discounts

available for seniors over 65, students, children, teachers and active military. Tickets available at the box office from 11 a.m. -4 p.m. Tuesdays through Saturdays at the Golden Bough, Monte Verde Street between Eighth and Ninth avenues, Carmel, at 622-0100 or online at www.pacrep.org.

TALKS & LECTURES

APRIL 14, 21
"Senior Health Awareness" speaker's seminar. 5:30-7 p.m. Wednesday, April 14 and 21, at Sunrise of Monterey, 1110 Cass St., Monterey. Two parts remaining in a three-part seminar. Topics: April 14 — Physical therapy and exercises to slow down the aging process; April 21 — Mind and brain tactics to keep your mind sharp. Free. 643-2400.

APRIL 15
"The Japanese in Monterey." 7 p.m. Thursday, April 15, at the Monterey Maritime & History Museum, 5 Custom House Plaza, Monterey. Speaker: Larry Oca. Free for members of the Monterey History & Art Association members, \$10 all others. For reservations, call 372-2608 ext. 813.

APRIL 19
Take-Me-Out-To-The-Ball-Game party. 2 p.m. Monday, April 19, at Carmel Woman's club, Ninth

and San Carlos, Carmel. Featuring author Flo Snyder and a presentation of rare photos and memorabilia from the early days of major league baseball in the West. \$3. 626-0577.

APRIL 20
"Poles for Hiking, Walking and Fitness." 7-8:30 p.m. Tuesday, April 20, at REI, Imjin Parkway and Second Avenue, Marina. Jayah Faye Paley will demonstrate how optimal use of poles can expand hiking horizons. Free. 883-8048.

TOURS & OUTDOORS

ONGOING SUNDAYS
Tours of The Steinbeck House. 1-3 p.m. Sundays through Aug. 30 (except Father's Day, June 14), at The Steinbeck House, 132 Central Ave., Salinas. Adults \$5, seniors/students (with ID) \$3, children under 6 free when accompanied by a parent. 424-2735.

ONGOING
Garland Ranch Regional Park. For a schedule of hikes on Saturdays and Sundays, see www.mprpd.org. The park is at 700 W. Carmel Valley Road, Carmel Valley. The Web site also includes hikes at other Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District parks. Free.

ONGOING
Sierra Club hikes. Schedule of hikes at www.ventana.sierraclub.org. Free.

when she smiles. She's thriving."

"What excites me is that it is a kind of outreach on the street," said Michael McDonald, co-coordinator of the project from MCHOME, an outreach component of Interim. "It becomes a porthole for guests at Dorothy's Place to come into contact with us. They have been collaborating (with us) all along, but this project puts it in a positive realm. It has that creative energy because it focuses on wellness rather than illness.

"There's great stigma around mental illness. One of the great things about the mosaic project is that it transcends categories. It has made a statement to soften the categories that can keep people from getting the help they need."

Not only is this a collaboration between service agencies, but the artistic process is also collaborative. In designing the large mosaics that will be displayed on the exterior walls of Sunflower Gardens, McDonald collaborated with artist Michael Ball.

Ball initially got the idea for the design when he grew sunflowers while living in a garage in Salinas.

"They grew up to be 12 feet tall," said Ball. "My idea of Salinas is, of course, the fields and rows and the blooming flowers and all of us in it. It's very powerful. To share an idea with others and have that come to life and see how people respond is really positive. I've never been involved in something like this before."

For Ball, like many of the other artists, one of the challenges of this project has been learning to work cooperatively with others. "Some of the really

important things that we see here are people learning job skills," said Emma Ohlund, an Americorps Vista volunteer for Breakthrough H'Art. "How to take direction, how to give direction and work together to do something. We've got all the different processes going on — cutting tiles, laying tiles, and we've got the designers in on the process, making sure that things are going in the way they want them to. Just the breakdown of different people playing different roles gives them really good interpersonal communication skills."

Working alongside volunteers such as Ohlund and students from CSUMB has made an impact on artists such as Kalei Hui, who is currently a guest in Men in Transition housing, which is affiliated with Dorothy's Place.

"I get to network with other people that took a different path," said Hui. "You can see them moving ahead in life without doing the same thing over and over again, making the same mistakes. I'm comfortable working here — you feel safe, you know? You don't have to always turn your back and see who's coming down the street. It's totally different now. My addiction used to be selling drugs. My addiction now is making art like this, focusing my energy out in a positive way, giving back to the community."

"It's a beautiful experience," said Ball. "In the process of gluing and piecing, you're sharing your stories and your life. There is a lot of interaction going on. It's a mosaic, but it's also a journey. During the mosaic building, you start expanding your life."

Lily Dayton can be reached at montereybaylily@gmail.com.

Mosaic

From page C1

for the project, she receives a small weekly stipend.

"Now I get high on art," she said. "It feels good to leave something you put your time into. It's going to be on a building — it's exciting. I'm really proud to be a part of this."

"One of the biggest successes is that the folks involved really feel valued, like they have something to contribute," said Mia Ferreira, programs director for the Franciscan Workers. "There's been a lot of community support and praise. We are getting the community to value people who are often times viewed as 'throwaway people.' This says that these people can produce great art, that they have value to our society."

One benefit of the collaboration between the two social service organizations has been the opportunity to connect with people on the streets to give them services they need. Some people who came into the mosaic project from the street have ended up with housing.

For example, Ferreira invited a woman who had been staying in the emergency shelter into the mosaic project.

"She had lost her teeth and really wanted to get her smile back," said Ferreira "She got to know the people involved in the program and social service workers and people from Interim. She moved into (Interim's) housing and is currently one of the residents. We connected her with a dentist and she finally got her smile back — she doesn't cover her mouth anymore

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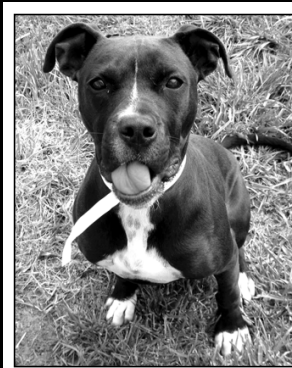
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