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INSIDE

Great grilling with lean beef

Beef is one of America's favorite foods to grill. It not only serves up great taste for grilling — it's also lean and full of nutrients. Today's beef is leaner than ever before, with 29 cuts now meeting government guidelines for leanness, and beef provides nine essential nutrients we need each day.

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It's official: We have met the enemy

Scientists are concerned over what is proving to be the greatest mass extinction in the history of Earth. It is taking place right now, all around us, in virtually every environmental niche there is.

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Photo for the Journal by BOB RAINES

With the help of several Plymouth Whitmarsh High School students, residents of the Meadow Springs Center for Post Acute Care recently finished a mural, titled "Bridging the Gap," which is located in the facility's first-floor lounge. Pictured in front of the mural are several of the painters. Top row, from left, Edele Kloss, recreation therapist; National Art Honor Society students from Plymouth Whitmarsh High School Ana Thomas, Roseanna Dillman and Dana Orangers; and teacher Candy Maggioncalda.

Meadow Springs residents are seeing the bigger picture

By M. English
Correspondent

Pick a culture. People have been painting pictures on walls — to tell stories, to protest, to honor heroes, to display community pride — for about as long as there have been ... well, people.

Mexican artists Diego Rivera, Jose Clemente Orozco and David Alfaro Siqueiros — called the Three Muralists or Los Tres Grandes — were known for their brilliant political murals during the Mexican Revolution and inspired some of the artists President Franklin D. Roosevelt hired to paint murals on U.S. public buildings during the Depression.

These days, the Philadelphia landscape is full of public art sponsored by the city's Mural Arts Program.

Locally, residents of Meadow Springs Center for Post Acute Care dedicated a bright new wallscape of their own — "Bridging the Gap" — in the Plymouth Meeting health-care facility's first-floor lounge. Meadow Springs residents finished the colorful painting with an assist from Plymouth Whitmarsh High School art students like Nancy Sy, Ana Thomas and Dana Orangers

and Philadelphia artist Ronda Greene.

Work on the project began last spring and wrapped up as the students — members of PW's National Art Honor Society — completed their 2005-2006 school year. "Bridging the Gap" represents countless hours of brainstorming and attention to detail. But there's no mistaking the joy that infuses the final product and propels its subjects across the lounge wall amid a bounty of flowers, trees and blue skies.

"The mural basically represents the generations ... how they're different, but the same," explains Edele Kloss, Meadow Springs' director of art and music therapy. "I definitely see a whole different side of our residents when they get involved with one of our intergenerational programs. Their parenting and grandparenting sides come out.

"It was great, too, to see everybody work together. There were some different ideas about how things should be done, but people were given a chance to explain their reasons. Then, you had some back and forth about the various ideas, but the group was able to resolve their differences so they were all happy.

"A couple of our residents were so into it that they'd stay after the

kids left ... or come in when the kids weren't there ... and work, sometimes, 'til 9 or 9:30 at night. Then, the next morning, they couldn't wait to get back to it."

Meadow Springs resident Frances Smith was one of the project's most avid participants.

"It's very relaxing ... doing art," Smith says. "The thing that made this so nice was a combination of that ... being relaxing ... and everybody's enthusiasm. And ... painting is really very soothing ... almost like you're praying ... or meditating."

Kloss agrees.

"It's very calming," she says. "Think about all the people who doodle. Those kinds of things are great stress relievers. Working on something like our mural is especially nice because you end up with something that other people can enjoy, too."

Greene, a former elementary teacher, is considering a return to school to study art therapy. But she had "a special place in my heart for seniors" even before her experience at Meadow Springs.

"This was very rewarding for me because I have a love for seniors, especially when I'm able to help them discover talents they might not even know they have," says Greene, who began making volunteer visits to "some of the

community's elders" as a student at Brooklyn's Edward R. Murrow High School and currently does the same with fellow members of North Philadelphia's Hope Christian Tabernacle Church.

"The way I see it, it could be me ... shut in ... some day," she says. "It could be any one of us. I just think it's our responsibility to look out for our elders. And it's very fulfilling. You think you're going in there to encourage them, but, then, they end up encouraging you with their determination and their spirit.

"Doing this kind of project also unifies the community. Seniors and shut-ins can be so isolated. With this, I've seen them gain confidence in themselves and, then, teach one another ... share their ideas with each other. I love seeing that transition from 'Oh, no, I'm not an artist' to having that confidence. That's extremely rewarding."

PW art teacher Candy Maggioncalda, sponsor of the school's Art Honor Society, couldn't be happier about her students' role in "Bridging the Gap."

"This is a perfect example of what the art honor society students are supposed to do," Maggioncalda says.

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