



Woman donates artistic talents to area flood victims

— Danie M. Huffman

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Expression through art is what Jan Stumbo believes is the perfect therapy for children who survive natural disasters.

Children misplaced from their homes in Horseshoe Bend due to rising flood waters, were given the opportunity to transform their deepest feelings into masterpieces.

Stumbo visited the American Red Cross shelter at Shirley Hall Middle School to help evacuees.

She did the same for child victims during Hurricane Katrina.

She brings crayons, paints, brushes, markers, chalks and paper for children to draw, paint or color whatever is on their mind.

She teaches them about expressing their feelings of sadness, fear, bitterness or even happiness through art.

Stumbo encourages them to paint and draw the pets and people in their lives.

For those who don't have a clue of where to start, Stumbo has a list, which includes ideas of their current situation, future plans, what they cannot help from happening, something they learned in school, summer activities, birthdays and holidays, possessions which were lost or survived their disaster or simply any experience they wish to express or share.

Stumbo began what she claims is her mission and goal after getting involved in the Katrina aftermath.

"I looked for ways to help," Stumbo said. "Art is a healing tool for children who are displaced dealing with economic upheaval or coping with natural disaster."

Stumbo said she waited all of her life to find what she was meant to do.

"I found my calling," she said. "My passion and goal is to open a non-profit organization called the Soul Art Project."

Stumbo creates blank books for children to log their thoughts and feelings in.

"I hand out the books to express tragedy from kids," she said.

Her daughter, Samantha, 12, got involved and loves to help.

"She's thankful for what she has," Stumbo said. "It affects her and she appreciates things more."

When their creations are complete, Stumbo gives children the option of taking their art with them or displaying them on shelter walls for others to see and appreciate.

"To see the expressions on their faces after releasing their emotions on canvas is not only healing to them, but to me as well," Stumbo said in a prepared statement promoting the project. "Part of my plan is to continue to expose my students to many forms of art and to participate in programs which enrich their learning."

To contact Stumbo or for more information about the Soul Art Project, call (817) 533-0300, or e-mail her at

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