

(10/16/24 District Administrator's Corner article)

One of the things that River Valley does well is celebrating community.

During the month of October, a community group known for the Spring Green Literary Festival (aka "Lit Fest") has taken steps to celebrate the connections between literature and nature. One of the events is a free art exhibition ~ titled "Driftless Prairie Visions" at the Wyoming Valley School Cultural Arts Center for two weekends, October 11-13 and October 18-20 from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm.

The community is invited to view the multimedia exhibit that includes collages, sculpture, watercolor panels, framed designs, and a graphic art book. It also includes an original acrylic by a local artist Simone Jelle, a senior at River Valley High School. In interviewing Simone - one thing became incredibly apparent. Simone is as humble as she is talented. Simone's talents have been embraced by some incredible adults in her life.

Simone shared that her grandpa is an artist and inspired her from a young age. She has fond memories of his studio and his talent for loving "everything nature". She shared how as a younger child she would stare at this collection of water colors, and colored pencils, and paints and dream of how she could find inspiration as he does from nature. Simone smiled as she shared memories of being 'up north at the cabin' and how it inspires her by being peacefully silent.

Four years ago, when Simone entered our high school, she fondly remembers getting to be in classes with Kasey Maxwell, our high school art teacher (who she had met as an elementary student). Ms. Maxwell has led her through four years of course work - which is culminating with the Advanced Placement Art course and a Senior Independent Honor's Art course which will require 25 projects with accompanied texts explaining the connections between her work and architecture. Entering the high school, she felt like her readiness was developed by her middle school teacher, Ms. Sue Quale. Simone shared a classroom experience of watching Ms. Quale take a chunk of clay to sculpt a dog in minutes. Simone was inspired by the great sense of independence Ms. Quale shared personally, "Ms. Quale cared about you - not what others thought."

So, join us in celebrating connections and community and Simone. Venture out to see the artists (Simone Jelle, Jill Metcoff, Gigi LaBudde, Karen Ellzey Wright, Peggy Timmerman and Joni Graves) at the Wyoming Valley School Cultural Arts Center, October 11-13 and October 18-20 from 10 am – 3 pm. You will enjoy the show. You will see that River Valley cares about making connections and inspiring our learners, whether you are young, old, or anywhere in between. (For a list of other events feel free to investigate at springgreenlitfest.org)