

THURSDAY, September 14, 2006

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Artists, farmers join forces

Woonsocket Arts Festival, French Farmers' Market set for next week

WOONSOCKET — It's two festivals for the price of one — and that price is free.

This year, the third annual Woonsocket Arts Festival is combining forces with the 24th annual French Farmers' Market, and it means two days of special events on Sept. 22 and 23 at River Island Park and sites throughout the city.

The French Farmers' Market makes its annual appearance on Sept. 23 at River Island Park, presented by the Northern Rhode Island Council of the Arts. Inspired by the city's French Canadian history, the market will feature arts, crafts, food, fresh produce from area gardens — and musical performances by Les Joyeux Copins and Boreal Tordu.

The Woonsocket Arts Festival is the creation of the young people at RiverzEdge Arts Project and involves organizations and locations citywide. Entertainment, improv comedy, art exhibits, food and a raffle are on the agenda.

Officially, RiverzEdge is an independent arts and entrepreneurship program that combines creativity with learning.

Led by the young people, age 13 to 18, who participate in it, RiverzEdge fosters the arts as a career — and earns money through its revenue-generating design studios.

But to Pin Inthaphone, RiverzEdge is "a really great program for teens, a place to come after school and find something positive to do."

"It is an organization that nurtures youths' talents," adds Chan Xatkoun, who discovered his own artistic ability only after joining RiverzEdge.

The two young people are co-chairpersons of this year's festival. With the help of other RiverzEdge participants, they have planned the events, found participants and sponsors, handled publicity and generally made everything happen, including getting the Citizens Bank Foundation to underwrite the event. Here's what they've got planned.

The arts festival kicks off on Sept. 22 from 5 to 9 p.m. at River Island Park. There will be food and drink for sale, face painting and lots of entertainment.

The Orange Jam Conspiracy will perform reggae and Latin music, while Ted



Submitted photo

ELLEN EBIWA, 15, demonstrates the silkscreening process at the RiverzEdge Arts Project, the organization that founded the Woonsocket Arts Festival.

Sorlien will play reggae with a blues influence. Students from the Krylo Dance Studios will give a performance, and Adam Go will kick in with some jazz.

■ Saturday brings activities from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. The French Farmers' Market is the main event at River Island Park, but the arts festival

spreads out to St. Ann Arts and Cultural Center, the Homestead Group (formerly the Arc of Northern Rhode Island) and RiverzEdge itself.

■ St. Ann is hosting an art exhibit by Maureen Gaffney-Wolfson called, "Celestial Passion." Originally from Boston, the artist now lives in

California, but many of her works were inspired by the frescoes, stained-glass windows and marble sculpture at St. Ann.

She will be on hand to meet visitors and to sell a limited series of reproductions of her work.

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ENTERTAINMENT

Thursday, September 14, 2006



Submitted photo

THE MEMBERS OF Northern Rhode Island Council on the Arts pose for a photo. They are, back from left, Jeannette Cousineau, Ray Rivet, Sharon Charette, Bill Marrah, Ray Nolan and Mariana Hadady. In front from left are Monique Jean and Phyllis Thomas.

Festival

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Complementing the exhibit will be performances by the French Alliance Chorus of Rhode Island. Admission will be free, and guided tours will be discounted to \$5 per person. Refreshments, souvenirs and raffle tickets will be on sale.

■ The Homestead Group will present an exhibit and sale of work by its clients as part of the festival's "Art as a Healer" theme. Sponsored by Landmark Medical Center, "Art as a Healer" events include a meditation labyrinth

created by Labyrinth Ladies at River Island Park, and "right-brained painting" led by artist Karen Talbot. The right side of the brain is supposed to be source of creativity, while the left is the logical side.

■ Many Main Street businesses will be exhibiting the artwork of RiverzEdge participants, and Family Resources will provide a free shuttle that will travel a loop to all these sites every half hour. The YMCA will hold an open house.

■ RiverzEdge itself will be open so visitors can see its

painting, graphic arts and silk screen studios. It also will be the location for a workshop and a performance by Unexpected Company, a Warwick-based improv comedy troupe that has performed in Canada and England as well as throughout the region. The workshop will be Sept. 23 at noon followed by the performance at 2 p.m.

RiverzEdge also is sponsoring a raffle. Area businesses have donated gift certificates for services ranging from gifts and meals to haircuts. The RiverzEdge participants also

collected their own spare change to raise money for a gift basket of art supplies that will be included in the raffle. Tickets will be sold throughout the weekend and are available in advance at RiverzEdge.

Wesley Cruz, a 16-year-old RiverzEdge participant, designed the Woonsocket Arts Festival logo, and Kujana Boyd, 15, did the graphic design work to put the logo on the poster.

Young people in the silkscreen studio have re-created the logo on t-shirts that will be sold at the festival.

Events and participants still are being added to the Arts Festival, and updates are on the arts project's Web site at www.WoonsocketArtsFest.org, or available by calling (401) 769-9846.