

Youth Help Seniors to Sculpt Memories



Sophie Bruder and Jeanette Deutsch

*Carrie Riesgraf Bruder Photography
www.crbphotography.com*

"Where did you grow up?"

"What was your first car?"

"Tell me something about New Prague you think I would not know."



John Wagner with Sagan Shetka

*Carrie Riesgraf Bruder Photography
www.crbphotography.com*

Area youth asked these and other questions as they supported residents of Mala Strana senior living community in a public art project. With the leadership of project director, artist, and teacher Kiersten Dahl-Shetka, several young people and adults helped residents of Mala Strana to sculpt "bas relief" plaques (flat on one side, three-dimensional on the other) representing what they love about the New Prague Area. These plaques will be bronzed and mounted on the sculpture "Towering To Our Future," by Dahl-Shetka. The tower stands in Philipps Park, on the west end of downtown New Prague, and will eventually display 44 plaques by residents of all ages. Plaques by Mala Strana residents and other area senior adults will adorn the north side of the tower.

This project drew the help of Owen and Alex Block, great grandchildren of resident Elsie Smisek; Ava Vilensky, granddaughter of resi-



Cairo Shetka and Robert Javurek

*Carrie Riesgraf Bruder Photography
www.crbphotography.com*

dent Howard Holm; along with community youth Kaitlin, Hannah, and Sophie Bruder; Claire Hanson; Kaitlin McClellan; Cairo and Sagan Shetka; and Rochelle Widmer, as well as more than 20 adult helpers who are family members of Mala Strana participants, previous project participants, or members of the New Prague Arts Council.



Jeanette Deutsch and Hannah Bruder

*Carrie Riesgraf Bruder Photography
www.crbphotography.com*

The job of the "mighty helpers," as Dahl-Shetka referred to them, was to help seniors recall and record memories of what they love about their life in and around New Prague. - From these memories, seniors selected one or more "images" to sculpt into their clay plaques, with the help of their assistants. For example, Robert Juvarek chose to include gas pipe in his sculpture, recalling his work in the Army Corps of Engineers in Burma. Likewise, John Wagner included 15 people across the top of his plaque, representing him, his wife and 13 children, and Helen Kuzelka chose to include a likeness of Dr. Novak, for whom she worked as a nurse.

Participants worked with their helpers at Mala Strana the week of February 20 to talk, decide, and sculpt. On Saturday and Sunday of that week, Dahl-Shetka and helpers prepared the plaques for plaster and wax molds, which will be used for bronzing at Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter on an upcoming weekend.

The tower sculpture was funded through collaboration and support from the New Prague Arts Council, New Prague Chamber of Commerce, and New Prague Area Community Education, along with grant funding through the Metropolitan Regional Arts Council from Minnesota's Arts & Cultural Heritage fund and donations by area residents and businesses. A special thanks to Terry Korbek and Mala Strana campus.



Seventh Grader Claire Hanson and her father Dr. Troy Hanson helped Mala Strana resident Helen Kuzelka sculpt her plaque.

*Carrie Riesgraf Bruder Photography
www.crbphotography.com*