

Reception held for 'sculptural library'

By Patrick Fisher
Staff Writer

The latest bronze plaque for what was called a "sculptural library" were unveiled Saturday, April 13, at Mala Strana Health Care Campus, 999 Columbus Ave. N, in New Prague. The Tower Project Display and Reception allowed Mala Strana residents, family and friends to see the finished pieces.

Approximately 50 people attended the reception in the community room at Mala Strana. On display were plaques designed by 11 Mala Strana residents who had help from family and friends in making them. Local artist Kirsten Dahl-Shetka said the plaques will be attached this summer to the Art Tower in Philipp's Park in New Prague. Located near the intersection of Highways 19 and 21, Dahl-Shetka said, "I'm hoping people will go there and have picnics."

The bronze pieces made by the senior citizens will be put on the north side of the Art Tower. The other sides of the tower have other age groups, including children, fourth grade to high school students and adults. Dahl-Shetka hopes the various plaques will provide a "sculptural library" of people's lives, the area's history and allow children to make up stories from the different images.

The project began in February 2012 with participating residents and helpers making clay plaques. Those were used to make casts, which bronze was poured into in late November by Stanley Shetka, husband to Dahl-Shetka, at Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter.

Residents who participated were Bea Bowman, Helen Kuzelka, Helen Javurek, John Wagner, Jeanette Deutsch and Jack Lepeska. Two couples working on pieces were Howard and Kathleen Holm and Stella and Robert "Bud" Javurek. Unfortunately Kathleen Holm and Robert "Bud"



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Kirsten Dahl-Shetka, left, explains the history of the Art Tower and creating the various plaques for it to Mala Stran Health Care residents and visiting family and friends. Dahl-Shetka, an art teacher at Holy Cross School in Webster, has been leading the project since it began in 2008. To see more photos go to newpraguetimes.com and click on the blue button.



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Pictured are the plaques made by Jeannette Deutsch, right, and Stella Javurek and her late husband Robert "Bud" Javurek, who died while the plaque was being finished.

Javurek, along with Elsie Smisek, were among three residents who died before the final unveiling.

During the reception, Dahl-Shetka pointed out some of the various stories represented by the images on the plaques. The one made by John Wagner includes a buck for when he shot two 10 point bucks on one day. Another by Helen Kuzelka has a nurse's hat for when she worked as a nurse with Dr. E.E. Novak at Queen of Peace Hospital. On the plaque by Jack Lepeska is a Purple Heart in the center of a ferris wheel. He received the Purple Heart when he served in the Korean War

and the ferris wheel is for when he used to work at carnivals.

Jeannette Deutsch looked over her plaque that includes a cross, a Czech flag, a family and shelved books. "They represent my family, belief and work," said Deutsch adding she was a librarian at New Prague High School.

"It's been a great project," said Terry Korbel, therapeutic coordinator for Mala Strana. "It's been great for the faculty and for families." He also helped with one of the plaques, as Helen Javurek is his grandmother.

"This is such an amazing project," said Amy Eich, di-

rector of New Prague Area Community Education. The organization with the New Prague Arts Council has been working with Dahl-Shetka on the Art Tower. "It brings generations together. They are making something that will last long beyond any of us."

She noted that Dahl-Shetka has been a leader in the project, which began in 2008, and she brought in partners and others to help.

"To bring that many people together for a community art project it's inspiring," said Eich. "People should make it a point to see the Art Tower this summer."

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