

First sculptures added to art tower

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There has been a change to the art piece "Towering To Our Future" in Philipp's Park on New Prague's west side. The first set of bronze sculptures have been added to the 8-foot, 10-inch tower.

Artist Kiersten Dahl-Shetka who has been leading the project, explained that so far 12 relief sculptures have been done. The majority of those were recently attached to the tower. During the Dozinky celebration, Dahl-Shetka will be at Philipp's Park to talk with anyone interested in the undertaking.

Dahl-Shetka led two classes over the last year where people from the fourth grade to adults were able to design and help build the sculptures that were cast in bronze. Adults who have completed pieces are Carrie Bruder, George Kukacka, Cindy Shepard, Richard Shepard, Igor Vilensky and Dahl-Shetka. Those in fourth grade to high school seniors who did sculptures are Kaitlin Bruder, Adam Ilkka, Abby Kallal, Cairo Shetka, Sagan Shetka and Sophia Vilensky.

Dahl-Shetka noted there have been families involved. She and her two sons, Cairo and Sagan, made pieces. She also has a senior citizen signed up for the next class, whose son-in-law and granddaughter have already contributed.

"You don't have to be an artist to do this," said Dahl-Shetka, adding they have had very creative people from a variety of backgrounds participate.

She is working with four different age groups and will place their sculptures on certain sides of the tower. On the east will be plaques made by children



Patrick Fisher Photo

Kiersten Dahl-Shetka shows off some of the bronze sculptures that are now part of the art tower in Philipp's Park in New Prague.

ages four to third grade. The south will have fourth grade to senior high school students. On the west will be adults and on the north will be senior citizens. From the last group, Dahl-Shetka hopes to have residents of Mala Strana Health Care Campus and Villages of Lonsdale participate.

Each side will have 10 to 11 sculptures, which can represent stories and what people love and want to bring into life. The diverse themes already depict religion, music, reading, nature and neighbors.

"It's an amazing opportunity for students to leave their mark with a permanent sculpture and learn bronze casting," said Dahl-Shetka. She has told the younger participants that some day they will be able to bring their grandchildren

to the tower. "I also see it (the tower) as an incentive for people to come here and eat, shop and play in our city."

The tower was built through the help of Scott Equipment. Also Stan Shetka, Dahl-Shetka's husband, a teacher at Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter has done the bronze casting. She is also looking for Czech china, chipped or broken, to use to tile the base of the tower, since Czech settlers are the bedrock of the area's history.

The cost of the project has been defrayed by grants, which Dahl-Shetka continues to look for.

Dahl-Shetka will be doing an art show on the art tower at Hillstrom Museum at Gustavus Adolphus, November 22 through January 28.