

Artist Unveils Donated Tricycle Painting at UC San Diego Preschool

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Rex Graham

Prominent Orange County painter and printmaker Elizabeth Wallace will unveil "Angel Trike," a painting of a red tricycle against a brilliant blue background that she has donated to the Mesa Child Development Center at UC San Diego. The unveiling capped an open house reception Sept. 30 at the center.

The award-winning artist created the 36 by 24 inch pastel-on-paper painting as part of a series exploring her son's three-wheeler from different vantage points.

"Angel Trike" will hang in a classroom at the Mesa Child Development Center, a part-time preschool occupying UCSD's first building to be certified as LEED "Gold" by the U.S. Green Building Council. The building was renovated in 2009 to engage the children 2 1/2 to 5 years old through the innovative use of space, light and color.

"I loved your place and was surprised how much it is like my home and how much we share in green philosophy," Wallace said.

Wallace said she decided to donate her artwork because she supports the University of California system; her daughter attends UC Davis. Wallace also supports the Mesa Child Development Center's commitment to the Reggio Emilia philosophy of hands-on, child-driven learning.

"We are excited and honored that such an accomplished local artist has recognized our innovative program by donating her beautiful painting," said Gary C. Matthews, vice chancellor of Resource Management and Planning at UC San Diego. "By depicting a meaningful connection with an everyday toy, it embodies the self-direction and exploration that the Child Development Center promotes."

"I admire the center's respectful approach to childhood learning and its dedication to providing a safe and creative approach to childhood development and communication," Wallace said. "The tricycle can inspire them to do projects about freedom and the ability to take off and grow."

The vibrant artwork "illustrates the bright side and potential of human life," said Wallace.

"I used pastels as the medium because pastels are pure pigment, without additives or fillers," Wallace said. "Therefore, pastels mirror the simplicity and directness of a child's intentions."

Wallace's work has been featured at the world-famous Pageant of the Masters annual art festival, and she recently completed "April 16 Pastels," a commission of 32 portraits of students and faculty Virginia Tech. Wallace studied fine art at Laguna College of Art and Design and holds a bachelor of arts degree from the University of Iowa.

Mesa Child Development Center chiefly serves preschool-age children of UC San Diego faculty, staff and students. The center offers a half-day program in the morning and in the afternoon. The Sept. 30 open house was sponsored by Trader Joes and Daphne's Greek Café, both in La Jolla Village Square.

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