

Contributors

WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE WAY TO SPEND THE FOURTH OF JULY?



We try to stay home on July 4th and keep it simple: pool time, family time, relaxing time. So we either have a few friends over for a casual cookout or we pour ourselves a nice craft beer and sit on our deck after our toddler has fallen fast asleep and reminisce about how fast the summer has already gone by.

–Blake Miller, writer



Well of course there's always hamburgers. I always think of my Dad grilling them up and serving our family and the friends I would have over in Los Angles for the evening. Then he'd put down a sheet of plywood in the back yard and as soon as it was dark the fireworks would begin. I did this with my kids as well until they were grown. Now it's just about the hamburgers!

-Dustin Peck, Photographer

My favorite way to spend the Fourth of July is with a small group of friends and family, lots of food, and of course fireworks. If at all possible, throw in a bicycle ride with friends and you've got yourself a truly wonderful Fourth of July!

-Grant Baldwin, photographer



Growing up, celebrating the Fourth of July was always a big deal in my family. Both sides of my family trace our forebears back to the Revolutionary War, and that is something that we are very proud of. From 2003 to 2010 my husband, our four daughters, and I lived in Europe—part of that time in Manchester, England. Ironically, the Fourth of July gatherings that the American expats put on were some of the most memorable parties I've ever attended—all of us Americans happily celebrating our independence from England!

-Jenny Brule, writer



My tradition enjoying the Fourth of July is having friends over for a backyard barbecue with lots of fresh veggies on the grill alongside traditional burgers, dogs & brats and watermelon. Then, it's inside for a stereo simulcast of 'A Capital Fourth' pops concert broadcast on PBS from Washington D.C. I was there many years ago in person and absolutely love all the marches and patriotic music.

-Michael Solender, writer



The Cornelius Community Arts Project portrays the power of

storefront in an old chair factory off of Cornelius's North Main Street is an unlikely home for an enchanting world of discovery. Yet that is precisely what Lake Norman area residents find when they enter through the doors of the Community Arts Project.

Formed as a nonprofit in 2009 through a merger of two independent arts organizations, CAP's roots of area service extend back more than 15 years. Today they touch thousands of regional residents, both adults and children, with program offerings that include the area's only ceramics studio, painting, drawing, music, jewelry making, photography, print making, and much more.

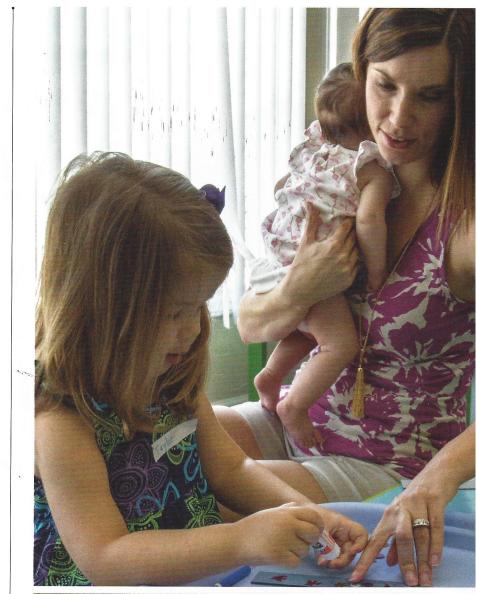
Process focused instruction

"Our focus here is process-based instruction," says Cathy Templeton, CAP's executive director. "What that means is 'the how' is just as important as 'the what.' Our work with the kids is all about engaging them in making choices, exploring their creativity, collaborating with others and having fun. The art created is a byproduct and not the sole focus of the activities."

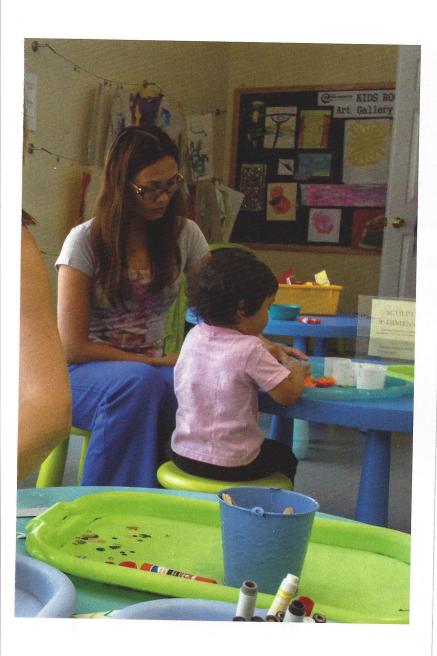
Visitors to CAP's primary studio space (they have their ceramics studio in another nearby location) enter through a small gallery where they're surrounded by all manner of vivid oil, watercolor and mixed media paintings, funky ceramics, handmade jewelry and art of all description for sale at modest prices. The work is created by area artists and educators who serve as instructors in the myriad of program offerings.

In the adjacent large children's studio, bright pastel colored tables surrounded by tiny stools call to children and parents to pull up a seat and get involved in hands on arts and crafts creation. A nearby story and music room finds literacy based learning and play where children may start a session with a song that leads to a story and may then have a related craft projects.

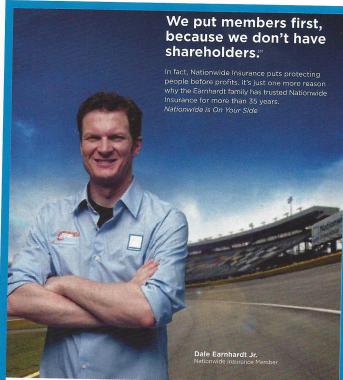
It's not all kids play at CAP, however, as older kids, teens and adults will find plenty to strike their fancy including figural model drawing, painting with oil and watercolors and sharpening pottery skills through hand building classes.







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Community outreach

"CAP's mission is bringing art within reach in the Lake Norman area," says Tracy Keehnle, a longtime fixture at CAP as office manager and program coordinator. "That has us not only offering programs here but bringing art experiences to residents that might not ordinarily have them."

CAP has several community partners where they collaborate to offer programming and is on the continual lookout for ways they can team with others.

The Ada Jenkins Center, a Davidson health and human services organization, partners with CAP to deliver after-school art classes supplementing their LEARN works programs to Center constituents.

CAP programs can frequently be found at area Habitat for Humanity Block parties, where volunteers, new homeowners and neighbors celebrate their efforts.

"We bring supplies, tools and everything folks will need to complete an art project and set up a table at these events," Templeton says. "Children are immediately attracted and when the parents learn it's free, they give the OK and join right in. Soon we have multi-generational families and neighbors all working together. We really are building community here." www.thecommunityartsproject.org



