

Ashley Tindall



1. Did you make any art before becoming a member of the BIAWW?

Growing up I was an athlete, a competitive athlete, then the accident happened and that part of my identity was taken from me. It seemed to be replaced with a medical identity, appointments all the time, therapy appointments and everything just surrounded around medical. It was my Mom's idea to give me something to look forward to, something that wasn't medical related. She enrolled me in pottery classes, and I absolutely loved it. It was a great way for me to just forget about my medical recovery and things that were going on with my health. And be able to have a chance to have creative expression, get out of the house and enjoy social interaction with my teacher and anyone else in the class. I really enjoyed those pottery experiences.

2. Is it part of your daily life now?

I wouldn't necessarily say that it's a part of my daily life, however if I get stressed by something going on and I want an opportunity to stand back from reality, then one of my go to things is making homemade greeting cards. I absolutely love that program and when I'm working on it I'm not thinking about the stresses of day to day life. I'm able to focus on the artwork that I'm doing and how others will be able to enjoy it.

3. What do these programs mean to you?

Specifically for the greeting card program, it is an absolute win win win situation because, as I mentioned, I get so much enjoyment out of making the cards and using it as a creative expression. I love showing them to my friends and family for them to see what I've been enjoying doing and they love purchasing them. It's something that is so much better, giving a homemade greeting card then one got at a store. And I know then that some of the money being raised by selling the greeting cards helps to fund the Camp Dawn Program, and sending brain injury survivors to that program. I feel like I'm winning by having the opportunity to make the cards, my friends and family are winning because they enjoy purchasing the cards and then other brain injury survivors are winning by having the opportunity to go to Camp Dawn. All around it's just an incredibly supportive program, and a great opportunity to work on art.

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4. What medium do you like to work in the best? What was the most memorable program for you?

Another thing that I really enjoy doing is the paint nights where because of covid we've been doing them online through zoom. It's fun evening to be part of a bigger community and one of my favourite painting projects that I've done is this sunflower one. To be truthful it makes me feel a bit more professional when I'm painting on a canvas, and it's a lot of fun. The canvas painting and the greeting cards are probably my favourite, although I've really enjoyed all of the art programs that I've taken part in. I definitely learned some new skills from doing the programs.

5. Why do you think these programs are important?

So my Mom and I are writing a book about the ups and downs of life after brain injury. In the summer of 2000 I was in a serious car accident and my family came by my side throughout my recovery. And my mom and I just want to show others that you're not alone, that there's always support. And my Mom is writing from the perspective of the parent and caregiver, and I'm sharing my journey from the perspective of the survivor. So yeah we're just hoping to share our journey and show others that you're not alone and that you can not only get through trauma but be stronger because of it.

And I try and mimic the sunflower like in my favourite painting in the same way that it turns to the sun, to get the most benefit, I try to keep my head up and surround myself with positive people that can help throughout life and day to day challenges and just keep a positive outlook.