

Artist (name undisclosed)



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

Yes I loved art I used to draw and I liked making zentangles. I was always up for a good art project and did most of my art because I thought of a project on my own.

2. Is it part of your daily life now?

I don't do the same art. I'm not able to think of my own specific art projects like I used to. I can't draw at all because of how my eyesight was affected. I wouldn't have even tried new things on my own if it hadn't been for the art program showing me that I can do it. I color pictures in a coloring book. I took up making resin jewelry because it was easy for me to do. I also took up working with polymer clay because you have to bake it. I can work on it for weeks at a time if I want. I find clay relaxing. I also really enjoy card making because it's something I can do at my own pace and take it with me when I go to my trailer. I'm capable. I really enjoy all the art projects I do with the brain injury group as well. It's also good for rehabilitation. Works on fine motor skills, thinking clearly. And pacing.

3. What do these programs mean to you?

They provide connection with other brain injury survivors where we can meet and share stories and I usually end up meeting a new person or sitting with a new person at each in person craft project. It gives me a chance to learn something new that I wouldn't have done before. It gives me something to look forward to that's only about me and that I can do at my pace in a controlled setting because many activities I'm given up due to noise, sight, and a busy environment. They take place at various times during the day and week so if someone tires out during the day then maybe an activity that Occurs in the evening might not be a good fit. If you have more energy in the morning you can go to the morning activities. I know I'm not going to be judged on my work at all so no need to be embarrassed. The teachers know we are going through brain injury so they are very patient and understanding as well as all the group members attending the activity. I wouldn't be able to go to a regular class. The online paint nights are great fun and something I would never do on my own but always wanted to. Again paced for all of us, paintings are easy for us to do and I like the fact I can do this at home because I don't have to rely on someone else to drive me there because I haven't been able to drive since my concussion. They provide three ways of doing art - online with a group , in person with a group and working at my own pace doing the cards.

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

I like all of them. I haven't come across a craft that I haven't wanted to do. I wish I could do every craft opportunity provided because I enjoy them all so much.

5. Can you talk about this specific piece and what it means to you?

There are many different pieces but to me each one represents my value. When I don't think I'm doing enough or I can't do as much as I want I can look at them and be proud that I was able to do that project and I will be able to do one again. I also learned something new. I also really like the fact that the cards earn money for the brain injury group. It makes me feel like I'm giving back.

6. Why do you think these programs are important?

They provide connection, a sense of accomplishment, a chance to learn. They build up self esteem and confidence and because I have these pieces at home I can always look at them and remember how I felt and how I still feel about them. It's brought a positive outlook to my brain injury. Before the art program I used to think about what I couldn't do a lot of the time. Now my thinking has changed to what I can and have done. They also make us pace. If I'm going to do an evening craft I know I have to plan my day accordingly. Pacing is something very important for a brain injury survivor and I'm learning more with each activity when I'm at my best, how much I can do during the day and still be able to function during the craft and how much my brain can handle. If I mess up and don't end up with enough energy for the craft I can cancel and everyone understands.