

Deana Mervyn-Flemming



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

I enjoyed art but I didn't have a whole lot of time to actually participate. I taught art as part of my job as an elementary school teacher and then I did the mom stuff with my kids and I did scrapbooking and that kind of stuff which is creative and artistic. So I did a little bit, but didn't have time to do a whole lot.

2. Is it part of your daily life now?

I am doing all kinds of creative and artistic things, probably almost every day. Either through photography and doing things with photos. I enjoy different types of yarn crafts. I've really made it part of my life now because I have the time since I had my accident. It makes me feel a sense of accomplishment, and I enjoy being creative.



3. What do these programs mean to you?

It's introduced me to a lot of different things that I might not have done on my own. Painting being one of them. I've never felt confident in painting actual things, I was more of an abstract kind of person. But now that I've done the paint nights and done them at the pace that they do them in the Brain Injury Association. I've really gotten into them and it sparked some new interests for me, in different forms of art.



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

I had done glass fusing before my accident, I actually had gone to a workshop once before and I really enjoyed it then. But again, it was a whole time constraint that I just didn't have the time to go out and do projects like that, so when glass fusing was offered through the Brain Injury Association, I jumped at the chance because I just loved it and I'm drawn to glass artworks too.

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5. Why do you think these programs are important?

I think the whole creativity aspect of it is getting my brain working in different ways rather than sitting at home. I really like the fact that it's sparking my creativity and it's giving me new interests. I've been able to go back and do more of the activities that we've done through workshops and do them on my own. I feel that it's done a lot for me personally with growth, brain growth, and the whole social aspect of the workshops as well. That puts a whole other aspect into those workshops, the fact that you're making connections and knowing people because we're all at the workshops together. We can talk about daily life, but we can also talk about different strategies that help us out in daily life because of our brain injuries. I think the whole social connectedness really plays a part in those workshops as well.

I used to knit, my mom was always a knitter and my grandmother was a knitter so they had taught me how to knit when I was a kid. After my head injury I actually picked up on knitting for a little bit shortly after my injury, just because I thought following patterns would be really good for my brain. But then I had an incident after my brain injury where I lost feeling on the right side of my body. I thought crochet would be a little bit easier for me. So just last year I ordered some kits. It was so much easier for me than knitting where you are using two needles, just using the

one hook became so much easier. I have been crocheting steadily for a year. I have a project going all the time. I've made everything from the little animals, the little amigurumis, to blankets, huge blankets. I sell them, and I don't make a whole lot of money off of it, but it gives it a purpose right? I sell crocheted beds at my son's pet supply store, Terrible Tobys, and I sell some of my projects through the Brain Injury Association on their website as well as craft sales and other events. It makes me feel not so guilty sitting in front of the tv.