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SATURDAY, April 14, 2007



ART EXCHANGE

Links Rockwall to Poland >> 20-21



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

Pictured, from left, are Kathy Melton, Patt Jordan of the Art League, Maya Monroe, Mayor Bill Cecil, Margaret Kochan, Norma Morris, and Madzia Kochan in front.

Nature, art link two continents

BY MARGARET KOCHAN

The Rockwall County Library recently hosted an International Art Exchange between Lakeland Academy and Elementary School Number 15 from Przemysl, Poland.

Artwork by students from both schools was displayed in Przemysl in January and then in Rockwall throughout March.

This is the third time the two schools have participated in the exchange.

This year's theme was "Nature Around Us." Children produced

fantastic portrayals of the beauty of their surroundings. There were splendid representations of flora and fauna specific to Texas and Central Europe.

This year's exchange had special meaning because it marked the Montessori education program's 100th anniversary. Norma Morris, founding head of Lakeland Academy, said her school puts the same emphasis on art and academics.

"The exchange provides a wonderful opportunity for students to experience communication

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Jane Stockton, SAGE teacher at the Rochell Elementary, shows her excitement about student artwork.

COVER

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through the universal language of art and opens a window to another culture," Trish Underwood, Lower Elementary guide, said.

Margaret Kochan attended elementary school in Przemysl and currently teaches at Lakeland Academy. She decided to add another dimension to the joint project.

With the support of Kathy Melston, library director, a reception took place March 23. Guests, including Rockwall

Mayor Bill Cecil, enjoyed a beautiful display of art and chances to learn about Polish culture. They also sampled homemade Polish pastries. The Polish-American Foundation of Texas, a non-profit group committed to promoting Polish culture in Texas, provided snacks and refreshments.

Maya Monroe, foundation president, recognized Melston for her support with a special certificate of appreciation.

"In a world that can sometimes be disconcerting to children, it is wonderful to have this kind of cultural exposure available to our children and our community,"

Melston said during the reception.

Three years ago, William Bolla, U.S. consul to Poland, opened the first International Art Exchange exhibit in Przemysl. This year his Polish counterpart, Krystyna Tokarska-Biernacki, echoed his enthusiastic support of the program.

Krystyna Tokarska-Biernacki, consul general of the Republic of Poland to the U.S., awarded Norma Morris, Margaret

Kochan and principal of Przemysl school 15 Mieczyslaw Bar with certificates of recognition for their involvement in the artistic youth exchange program.

"Thanks to your devotion, young people can meet new friends and experience new cultures," she said. "This plants the seeds for a lifetime of international understanding."

Plans are already under way for the next year's educational exchange. Both schools would like to conduct lessons via the Internet to give students more personal contact.

The International Art Exchange exhibit will be on display at the public library in Quinlan throughout April.

Margaret Kochan is the exchange coordinator.

"Thanks to your devotion, young people can meet new friends and experience new cultures."

Krystyna Tokarska-Biernacki



From left, Ruth Peck of MusicFest, Margaret Kochan and Jan Self of Rockwall County Alliance for the Arts are all smiles at the International Art Exchange March 23.

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Maya Monroe of the Polish-American Foundation of Texas recognized Kathy Melston with a certificate of achievement for her support of the International Art Exchange between Texas and Poland.