

# the Chronicle

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## It's really going to be a banner year

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the future.

"My big interest is how creativity can engage people in the community," Dahlberg said.

The young artists will be present for Saturday's public opening, which is scheduled from 1 to 4 p.m. on the second floor of the arts center at 866 Main St. The public is invited.

The artist-in-residency program was created thanks to a \$50,000 donation from Mansfield residents Jeffrey and Eileen Ossen.

Its purpose is to bring various art forms to local youths through programs and presentations offered at the four elementary schools.

The donation was funneled through the Community Foundation of the Tri County Area with offices in Willimantic and Norwich.

Willimantic Waste, the Town of Windham, Windham Arts Center, The Home Depot, rePublicArt, and the International Center for Creativity and Imagination all supported the banner project.

Fran Funk photos

**LEFT:** Willimantic firefighter Natalie Lang displays one of the banners being hung along Main Street in downtown Willimantic. The banners are public art designed and created by Windham elementary school students. The two-sided banners were created with artist-in-residence JoAnn Moran of rePublicArt, who worked with students for three weeks. Recycled vinyl billboards were used for the banner material. The young artists and their parents will be at a reception at the Windham Arts Center, 866 Main St., Willimantic, on Saturday from 1 to 4 p.m. **ABOVE:** Willimantic firefighter Pete Bruscato sets one of the banners on a lightpost on Main Street.

## It's really going to be a banner year

By **HEATHER LAKE LOTTIER**  
Chronicle Staff Writer

**WILLIMANTIC** — Brightly colored banners hung Wednesday from Main Street's lampposts, a product of the Windham school district's artist in residency program.

The banners were created by local kindergarten through fourth-grade pupils under the guidance of New Haven visual artist JoAnn Moran, who has been working with the children for several weeks. A larger banner was also created and will be strung across Main Street.

All four of the district's elementary schools participated in the project, which was intend-

ed to engage the community.

Steve Dahlberg, a creativity consultant with the International Center for Creativity of Willimantic, coordinated the banner project. It will culminate in a public opening at the Windham Arts Center Saturday.

Hundreds of submissions by local youths were whittled down to 64 to create the two-sided banners designed under the theme "Creativity: The Heart of the Community."

"It will be hard to believe when you see the art," Dahlberg said of the quality of the children's work.

Dahlberg said he's been working for two years to pull such a project together.

"This is a fantastic example of engaging the young kids," Dahlberg said.

At 3 p.m. Saturday, Windham High School's Young Poets will be reading their poetry and those attending will also hear from LaResse Harvey, a women who participated in author Wally Lamb's writing program at the women's prison in Niantic.

Some of the Young Poets met with the even younger visual artists last week and Dahlberg said the high school students were impressed with what they saw.

He said he hopes to coordinate a collaborative project between the two age groups in

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