

NEIGHBORHOODS

Youth draw out neighborhood beauty on Binghampton sidewalks

By Jada Ojii, Daily Memphian

Updated: June 30, 2023 2:54 PM CT | Published: June 30, 2023 12:32 PM CT



Youth gather in front of the Carpenter Art Garden's Purple House amid a Sidewalk Chalk event on Thursday, June 29. (Courtesy Carpenter Art Garden)

Following a neighborhood cleanup, hundreds of children and teens used chalk art to decorate Binghampton sidewalks Thursday, June 29.

Youth cleaned streets, including Tillman Street, Carpenter Street and Mimosa Avenue. Next, they were handed chalk.

Chalk art created a variety of colorful illustrations, from a written Bible verse to a tic-tac-toe layout to a "you are loved" affirmation.

New Carpenter Art Garden leader has hope for healing

Rain didn't ruin the event, but it was in the forecast for Thursday afternoon.

Jazmin Miller, Carpenter Art Garden executive director, made it clear beforehand that a little precipitation shouldn't hurt the children's fun.

"So if it rains later, that's not an unfortunate piece," Miller said. "That's the whole point. It's there. And it's gone. But the ... kids walk away with that memory of what they did, of what they created together."

With a high temperature of 97 degrees on Thursday, coolers of cold water were handed out.



Chalk art by children and teens on Carpenter Street.
(Jada Ojii/The Daily Memphian)

Small businesses and neighbors network at MEMFix event

Sidewalk Chalk-A-Thon was the first partnership between Carpenter Art Garden and Memphis Dream Center. The latter is an organization that often teams up with nonprofits to provide financial counseling, food and other support to communities including Binghampton, Frayser and Raleigh.

"I think for us, it's also helping our kids see the beauty in every neighborhood in every part of Memphis," said Kelli Carson, Memphis Dream Center executive director. "Because many times, there are areas that we focus on the negative so often in the news, and I want these kids to see the Binghampton community and the people of Binghampton is a beautiful neighborhood, and they're beautiful people there."



Chalk art by children and teens on Carpenter Street. (Carpenter Art Garden)

The Life Church is currently hosting an annual youth conference that began earlier this week, bringing in thousands of local teens. On Thursday, they spread out across the city to help out in various neighborhoods. Many teens and church leaders from the conference volunteered at the chalk event.

“They’re serving in different locations, blessing people, helping in schools, helping in neighborhoods, praying for people, passing on groceries, all of the above,” said Life Church youth pastor Anna van Blaricon. “And the goal, obviously, is to bless and uplift our city because we love Memphis, but also to show teenagers what it’s like to help other people and to be selfless.”

Street Reach gives grassroots new meaning

Many Binghampton youth are no strangers to the Carpenter Art Garden, which programs include working with mosaic tiles, attending cooking classes, creating arts and crafts, and learning how to be compensated for their art.

Through its bicycle program, children have access to bikes allowing them to attend art programs, classes and events.



Carpenter Art Gardens' Purple House June 29, 2023. (Patrick Lantrip/The Daily Memphian)

In operation since 2012, the Carpenter Art Garden also provides meals and snacks to neighborhood children and teaches skills like gardening organic vegetables in the gardens located at the nonprofit. The organization is housed in multiple gardens and spaces on Carpenter Street.

Produce from the gardens is also sold in the neighborhood and featured on the menus of local restaurant partners and area farmers markets.

More than 150 artists prepare to 'Paint Memphis'

The Carpenter Art Garden is currently hosting a summer camp, which runs through Wednesday, July 26. There, children can take part in a “full day-long creative

adventure,” including a breakfast book club, garden club, education programs, art classes, field trips and more.

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