

Young artists explore abilities at Discovery Museum session

By Angela Jones
The Winchester Star

WINCHESTER — Silvia Valladares stared at the blank piece of white paper for a long time.

The 9-year-old Winchester resident had just drawn and painted a Christmas tree while her 8-year-old twin sisters, Daniela and Gabriela, painted pre-drawn pictures of Santa Claus and a dog.

Under the watchful eyes of Peter R. and Patricia L. Buynak, the young artists-in-the-making participated in the Shenandoah Valley Discovery Museum's visiting artist series on Sunday.

Located on the Loudoun Street Mall, the Shenandoah Valley Discovery Museum provides families an interactive, hands-on experience focusing on the sciences, math, humanities, and the arts.

The Visiting Artist Series is supported by a grant from The Marion Park Lewis Foundation.

The Buynaks presented a two-day session called "Water Color Free Expression," providing children the opportunity to explore their own artistic abilities.

On Sunday, while the girls painted their pictures, Peter Buynak said that Saturday's event drew about 30 kids, most of whom were in the 3-to-4-year-old range.

When they visited the museum last year, Peter Buynak said, children were lined up for three hours non-stop.

This year's sessions weren't as crowded or busy, he said.

Initially, Peter Buynak said he asked his wife to join him to keep him company, but when they get busy and there are so many kids, "it takes two of us."



Patricia Buynak said she and her husband take classes at the Valley Educational Center for Creative Arts in Woodstock, where they live.

She said they began taking painting classes in the 1980s.

Peter Buynak said at the time, he was coaching soccer. He coached their three boys and, in total, coached for a total of 12 years.

His wife suggested they get out and do something fun and relaxing for themselves.

Since then, they have taken and offered classes in watercolors, oils, and flemish oils.

While Silvia drew out the details of her landscape and Daniela moved on to painting a fish, Peter Buynak said when working with children, "you can see the learning experience coming out of them more than others."

When asked why they hold this type of session with children instead of older people, Peter Buynak said, "Kids are more fun."