

WASHINGTON COUNTY WINTER 2012 *Arts Guide*

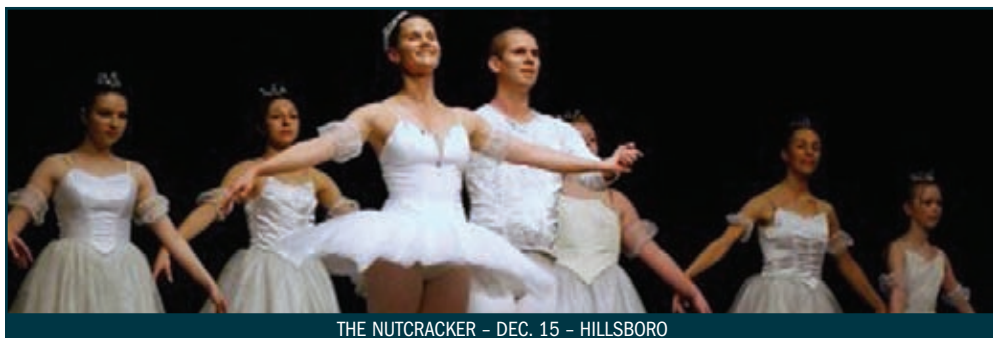
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December 2012 — February 2013

A SPECIAL PUBLICATION OF COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS, INC. AND WORK FOR ART



Putting the pieces together

Muralist Hector Hernandez creates a bittersweet tribute to life, wellness and hope at a new clinic in Cornelius

BY CARI HACHMANN

When considering the request to create a mural for the new Virginia Garcia Memorial Health Center in Cornelius, Hector H. Hernandez pondered how to best honor the life of the girl for whom the facility was named and the ongoing efforts to improve wellness in the community in which she too-briefly lived.

Garcia was the six-year-old daughter of migrant farmworkers traveling from their home in Mission, Texas to work in Oregon fruit fields in 1975, settling in a Washington County migrant camp. Along the way, the little girl cut her foot. Although the wound could have easily been treated, cultural and economic barriers kept Virginia from getting the health care she needed. She died of blood-poisoning on Father's Day, while her own father toiled in the nearby fields.

Her story spurred the community to action, and within a month the first Virginia Garcia Health Clinic opened in a converted garage in Cornelius.

Hernandez was a logical choice for the mural when the new \$13.7 million, 42,000-square-foot clinic was being planned. An artist dedicated to honoring heritage and reflecting the dreams and voices of people in diverse communities, he has also been working in health education for the past seven years.

The Portland muralist brought 25 years of experience to his creation of a colorful mosaic piece called "Revival of Hope and Wellness." The mural now decorates the front wall of the new center, which was dedicated in October.

Hernandez held several conversations with clinic staff members



Portland artist Hector H. Hernandez spent five months working on his mural at the Virginia Garcia Memorial Health Center.

and patients to develop the mural's theme before infusing his own artistic flair. He then began the five-month process of capturing Virginia Garcia's life and legacy through tiny pieces of ceramic tile.

From left to right, against a blue backdrop, the rectangular mural begins with an Agave plant, a symbol of the earth's energy that evolves and spreads. A mosaic depiction of the Garcia family at center represents what Hernandez calls the nucleus of society.

Out of the family, like migrants from the south, a kaleidoscope of butterflies soars towards the horizon. Sons and daughters of migrant farmworkers play and follow the butterflies in the

"She passed away, but there is a message of hope out of her tragedy."

HECTOR H. HERNANDEZ

strawberry fields where their parents work.

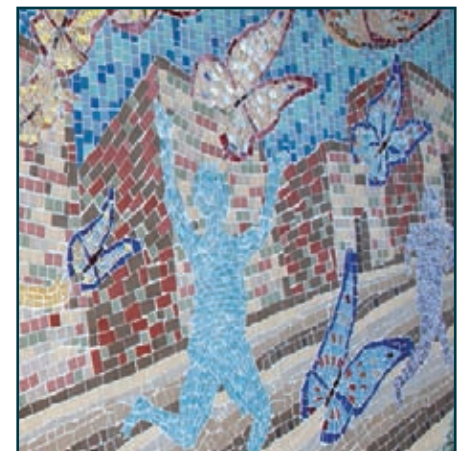
Among the children, there are flowers – bright tulips that dot Oregon's verdant landscapes.

An acorn shaped tulip represents one small child, Virginia Garcia, and the eventual logo of the Virginia Garcia Memorial Foundation.

The tulip sprouts wings and transforms into a butterfly which flies towards the sun, rising over the horizon and reaching toward the light, like sunflowers.

A rose blooming near the sun symbolizes Garcia's little life reaching the light in the same way we all do over the course of our lives, said Hernandez.

"It symbolizes how we can devote our energies to that light," the artist



Hernandez's mural uses butterflies to represent the migrating farm families who come to Washington County.

said. "She passed away, but there is a message of hope out of her tragedy."

– Cari Hachmann featured other prominent murals in Washington County in the 2012 Fall Arts Guide.

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CCWC grants support bringing the Washington County Museum's "School Days" Mobile Museum to county classrooms.

Photo: Washington County Museum

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"The Breckenridge Place," by Gretha Lindwood

move will not only benefit the museum by making it more accessible to the public, but will also increase interest in Hillsboro's historic downtown to those who typically hang on the fringes of the HWY 26 corridor.

"It's going to do great things for the museum, and also for the city of Hillsboro. It's a destination that will bring lots of people into the downtown core area," says Mason. "The businesses of course are thrilled because they want more people down there. Downtown Hillsboro is busy during the week, but pretty quiet on the weekend. We hope to help change that. We're supporting the local businesses, and they are supporting us. We're all going forward together."

Barbara Simon, the city's public affairs manager, agrees that the move is going to be mutually beneficial, saying that that in its new location, the museum will join organizations such as Bag&Baggage Productions, Sequoia Gallery, HART Theatre, and the Walters Cultural Arts Center in transforming downtown into a cultural hub for the county.

"It's exciting for the city and the museum. It's got multiple values for the community. Traditions and roots are extremely valuable to Hillsboro," says Simon. "We understand that the past, present and future are interconnected. Add to that that Hillsboro is the seat of county government... it makes sense that it would also become the home of the Washington County Museum. On a philosophical level, this is a great place for it to be."

As much of a no-brainer as the move may seem, though, the logistics of the expansion were anything but simplistic.

First, the board had to withstand some heavy lobbying from Beaverton officials who wanted the museum to anchor a cultural center there.

Then, the staff and board had to hammer out a lease for the piece of prime downtown Hillsboro real estate. Luckily, the owner was motivated.

ON A MISSION

The Washington County's evolution from a historical society to a cultural organization is reflected in its mission statement:

"The Washington County Museum ignites the imagination and brings to life the diverse cultures that so richly define this remarkable region."

The museum website explains that mission a bit more.

"We are here to tell the full story of Washington County. As a cultural leader of Washington County, we

innovate to better meet the needs of our county and create an understanding of our mutual past and shared future. The Museum offers unparalleled opportunities to experience and understand the complexity and richness of our communities. The challenge for museums today is to be relevant. We exist to preserve our heritage and help shape our future. Our exhibitions and programs are tools that cultivate learning and cultural appreciation."

The proposal from the museum to use the unfinished space in the second floor of the Hillsboro Civic Center solved a problem that has vexed the city officials since the facility opened in 2005: How to find a suitable tenant for what is supposed to be a second-floor public gathering space.

It was built to house a downtown library, but those plans fizzled when voters rejected a bond measure to finish the project and the main library ended up on Brookwood Parkway.

Seven years later, the museum was angling to fill that void.

Eventually the two sides agreed to 15 years of free rent, with the museum

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On the museum's opening day, Ilene O'Malley gave a presentation of the Bracero Project exhibit, which chronicles early migrant labor in the county.

on the hook for improvements in the space, which was wired and plumbed, but not much else.

The museum's budget is increasing from \$500,000 to \$650,000 on top of a three-year goal of raising \$3.5 million to support its goals, which also include expanding its educational offerings to reach some 10,000 students and creating an interactive online archive of historical documents dating back hundreds of years.

A \$1.5 million anonymous gift to the museum offered a gigantic boost toward that goal, which supplements more than \$40,000 worth of combined 2012-13 fiscal year grants so far from groups like the Oregon Community Foundation, the Oregon Heritage Commission, and the Juan Young Trust. Individual donors have pledged funds, but major local economic drivers like Intel and Nike are not among the supporters ("We haven't had that conversation yet," says Shogren).

The hope is that the scope of the expansion paired with the high-profile Hubble exhibit will raise eyebrows and add some clout, putting the Washington County Museum on the map with some of the bigger museums in the Portland area. Looking to the future, Shogren says it's not a matter of professional rivalry, but a necessary component to serve the citizens of the rapidly growing and evolving community.

"I'm not interested in competing. I'm interested in complementing," says Shogren, assuredly. "Part of what I'm looking at is where Washington County

will be 20 years from now. The forecast for Washington County 20 years from now the population will be over 1 million and with the state of roads and public transport, the cultural attraction of downtown Portland is going to feel physically longer and longer because it will take so long to get there. If the museum wants to eventually have the resources in our facility to support a county whose population is more than 1 million, we need to be taking those steps today."

That means climbing a mountain of a capital campaign. It means continuing to reach out to the community. It means continuing to build on the legacy of an establishment that, in and of itself, is committed to preserving the legacy of the county it serves.

For Shogren, that's just business as usual.

"I wouldn't say it's a gamble. I wouldn't even say it's a calculated risk," says Shogren, sounding a bit like Capt. Kirk's half-Vulcan first officer. "I think it's really the next strategic, logical step."

EXHIBITS ON DISPLAY THROUGH SPRING

The "Hubble Space Telescope" exhibit runs through May 31 and the "Americans All" exhibit about the county's early Latino guest workers runs through June 30. The Museum is located on the second floor of the Hillsboro Civic Center, 120 E. Main St. (above Starbucks).

Admission to the museum is

free to members, \$6 for adults and \$4 for children. Museum hours are Wednesday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturday from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., and Sunday from noon to 5 p.m. Learn about parking and other details at washingtoncountymuseum.org.

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Theater company bags a big grant

When the nomadic actors of Bag&Baggage productions put down roots at the Venetian Theater in Hillsboro in 2007, many wondered if there would be support for a second professional stage company in Washington County.

A recent operations grant from the James F. and Marion L. Miller Foundation totaling \$30,000 over two years, seems to provide an emphatic answer in the affirmative.

The grant will allow B&B, known for edgy interpretations of classic works, to expand its part-time staff, while also creating full-time positions for management, marketing and artistic direction.

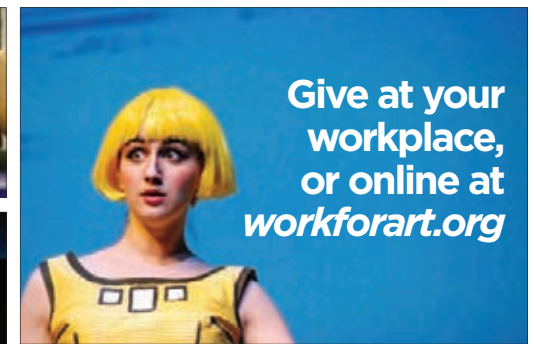
"It's a vote of confidence in us and our ability to move forward successfully," says founder Scott Palmer, who is embarking on an ambitious \$500,000 three-year capital campaign. "Not only are we here, but we're getting bigger and healthier."

- To learn more about Bag&Baggage's upcoming shows see our events calendar on page 8 or visit bagnbaggage.org.

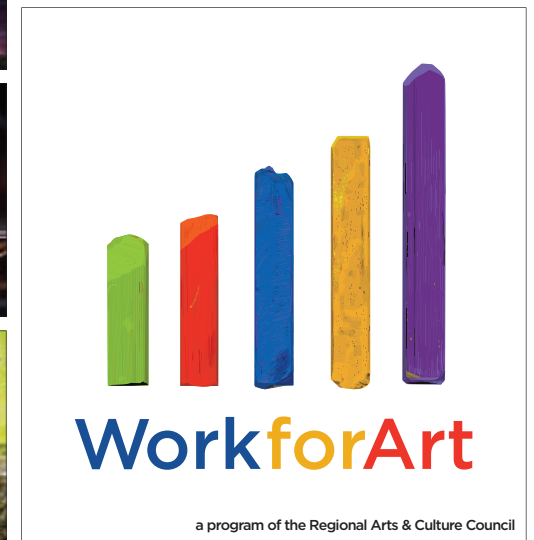


What in the Dickens? It's the Bag & Baggage production of "The Fardale Avenue Housing Estate Townswomen Guild's Dramatic Society's Production of a Christmas Carol," which will run Dec. 6-23 in Hillsboro.

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