

# Arts & Entertainment

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## Little artists big on talent, dedication



Carmine Marinelli/NOW

Artist and teacher Evelia Espinosa gives student Denes Gyorgy some pointers during an art class for children.

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Becoming a painter is no easy task for a child. With the stress of homework, chores and making new friends, it's easy to see why many children could care less about building this difficult skill.

But according to local artist Evelia Espinosa, painting is very important for self-expression and anyone can learn with a little encouragement.

By attending the upcoming second-annual Children's Art Festival in late June and early July, it's now easier than ever to show support for these da Vincis-in-the-making.

Originally from Mexico City, Espinosa was studying as a teacher when she developed an interest in art. She then pursued an art degree to bring her skills up to a professional level.

After moving to Canada five years ago, she decided to bring her love of teaching and art together, and now teaches 26 children from six to 16 years old in her Coquitlam home studio.

Dozens of hung paintings, alongside stacks of canvases laid against the studio walls, showcase the many subjects that inspire her students. Pictures of pets,

animals, landscapes, fruit bowls and cartoons are rendered with impressive ability.

"When I teach children, I can see them become artists. This is amazing for me," she said with a hand on her heart. She tells her students, "Remember the theory, and you can do whatever you want."

Espinosa's students know they need dedication in order to develop their skills as painters.

She sets an example by spending three hours a day, six days a week, on her own art, and is a member of the Port Moody Art Association, the Federation of Canadian Artists and has a permanent exhibition at Mexico Arte, a store in Kitsilano.

To start, she shows her students how to paint three different pictures to teach the correct technique. She teaches sketching, colour theory, mixing and proper brush form, but says the kids can sometimes feel rushed to develop their skills.

"They say, 'How long until I become a professional?' And I say, 'It takes time, but if you keep painting, you will get there.' But they can be so impatient!" she said with a hearty laugh. It's obvious she cares deeply about her students' success.

Eleven-year-old Patrick Epvran, a Scott Creek Middle School student, has been coming to Espinosa's class for two years. He is working on a complicated landscape with rocks, trees and moun-

tains in oil. When finished, it will be a proud addition to any wall. He said that when he grows up, he's going to become a pianist and a painter.

Aspiring artist Diana Postu, also 11 and a student at Scott Creek, has been learning to paint for about a year. Right now she's working on a vibrant oil painting of a boy and girl based on a cartoon poster. The two look almost exactly alike.

Pitt River Middle School student Sandra Cervantes, 12, said she definitely plans to paint when she's older. "I want to be an actress. But I think I'll still paint because if there's a lot of drama, I can sort of let my mind float away," she said.

Stephanie Wan, 13, a student at École des Pionniers, is in her third year with Espinosa. She's painting a meticulous, true-to-life rendition of a flower. She said that although she wants to become a doctor or a lawyer, she'll still paint for a hobby.

When a visiting reporter remarks aloud how she wishes she could paint with a fraction of their ability, both Patrick and Sandra say enthusiastically: "You can!"

• You can view the children's work at the Civic Centre Galleria in Port Moody from June 20 to 23, and at the Coquitlam Public Library's Poirier branch from July 2 to 31.