

# Students find success creating art

Winners from Fletcher School were novices

By Nancy Thomason



(From left) William Ritchie, Marcus Guarnieri, and Bill McGowan from The Fletcher School display their winning art from the recent North Carolina Women's Clubs Art Festival.

Watching the sparkle in a child's eyes as his imagination forms ideas into works of art is a priceless experience.

Three boys from The Fletcher School on Sardis Road recently learned that imagination and art can bring them a great deal of joy - and put them on the road to personal fulfillment.

William Ritchie, 14; Marcus Guarnieri, 13; and Bill McGowan, 15, all students at Fletcher, were winners in the 2010 General Federation of Women's Clubs - North Carolina (GFWC-NC) Arts Festival held in March at Salem College in Winston-Salem. The boys, all art-contest novices, were surprised with their success. Six schools from throughout the Charlotte-Mecklenburg area participated. The Fletcher School is a non-profit, independent college preparatory school for students with learning disabilities.

"You can tell I like bright colors," said Marcus of his slab-built clay house painted with primary-color glazes. His effort won third place in the Visual Art category. "I'd really like to try the potter's wheel next."

Eighth-grader William made a choker collar out of beads for his dog. William's work earned him first place in the Crafts category. Bill, also in eighth grade, focused on imaginary junkyard beasts. These creatures were constructed from recycled metal and household materials welded together with a MIG welder. Fletcher art teachers Carla Perez and Bess Forshaw are proud of the effort the students showed.

"The art program here is expanding as the school grows, and we are enthusiastic about looking at other competition opportunities for the students," said Forshaw.

**Nancy Thomason is a freelance writer who lives in the Arboretum area. Have a story idea for Nancy? E-mail her at [greatstories28270@gmail.com](mailto:greatstories28270@gmail.com).**

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