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ESC teacher given Ohio art honors

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LISBON - One local educator received a regional award for her merits in art education recently.

Betsy Barringer, educational consultant of the Columbiana County Educational Service Center, was bestowed with the "Distinguished Educator for Art Education" plaque at the summer Ohio Art Education Association meeting. She was nominated by fellow educators in the East Central division of the state.

"It's really wonderful and a lovely honor," Barringer said. "I was just very pleased in being nominated."

Barringer has been working with students from kindergarten through high school in the county and has organized numerous cross-district activities for the various participating schools.

"Betsy does so much for everyone," Elayne Lowe, Calcutta Elementary art educator, said. "She's so active. She does a lot, bless her heart."

Lowe placed the nomination for Barringer and highlighted her achievements, especially her work with "The Gallery," a county-wide invitation to school-age art students.

"I nominated her mainly because she started to put on an art show monthly," Lowe added. "She does the baking (too). It's very nice."

Barringer's work organizing a children's art show is one of the main elements she said she enjoys in the fine arts field.

The Columbiana County ESC educator has been working with teachers and students to present a monthly art show for the past three years. Barringer said each year it has grown and now they hold a reception for the kids, parents and teachers. Those students are given certificates for their chosen artwork.

"It's really fun," she said, noting the event brings grandparents and sometimes great-grandparents. "They (the children) enjoy themselves. The teachers have a good time being with their students in an informal setting and meeting the parents."

She added, the ESC Board has been very helpful in providing the necessary funding and have helped her in the promotion and growth of the monthly art exhibits.

The summer finale art show is the pinnacle of the year. Top students from the monthly shows are chosen and in July, a special art showcase is held for them, Barringer said.

"We have a beautiful collection that has been developed," she said. "I've been able to display it at the fair and in the government building."

Barringer was nominated by an association member since she was an educator not specifically tied to art education. Superintendents, principals and teachers of other subjects are usually nominated.

Even though she covers a number of content areas, she understands the importance of art in the schools.

"It's a way for us to stress how important arts and fine arts are to the schools and how kids who do well in art frequently improve interrelated skills," Barringer said.

Barringer has been employed with the Columbiana County ESC since 1975 and has won numerous awards, assisted with grant opportunities and has presented at conferences across the state of Ohio. She received degrees from Bowling Green State University and Youngstown State University.

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