



Gloucester County College

LEARNING FOR REAL LIFE

Press Release # 49
Date 12-12-06

Title GCC ARTISTS CREATE MEMORIES FOR ORPHANS

Deptford Twp. - Gloucester County College art students in Eoin Kinnarney's Drawing I class are giving of themselves this holiday season by creating memories for abandoned, neglected, and abused children living in Egyptian orphanages.

For two days, the GCC artists sketched portraits from photographs they received through the "Memory Project," a program that encourages advanced high school and university-level art students to create original drawings for orphaned children as a special keepsake. Through the program, student artists learn about international humanitarian issues and discover that they can make a positive change in the world by helping to honor the children's heritage and by providing a special memory of their youth.

Ben Schumacher, founder of the Memory Project, started the art gift in 2004 after a young Guatemalan man shared with him that he had no pictures from his childhood. The project has since spread to include hundreds of schools throughout the country and received national television coverage. According to information on the Memory Project Web site, approximately 30,000 American students have participated in the program during the first full year of operation (school year 2005-2006).

When GCC's Director of Special Needs Services Dennis Cook and library personnel Lina Aloï brought the project idea to Kinnarney, the art instructor and Director of Student Activities didn't hesitate to volunteer students in his drawing class. During GCC's 40th

Anniversary Celebration on December 1, the student art show opening was included in the commemorative festivities with the memory portraits created by the GCC students on display in the upper mezzanine lobby. One of the artists, Eric Murphy of Sewell, volunteered to answer questions about the project and collect donations to help cover the \$10 per portrait fee required to offset the cost of hand delivering the drawings directly to the children at the orphanage.

“The opportunity to work on the project came at the perfect time during the semester for my drawing students, who were learning how artists from around the world create portraits. The Memory Project is about celebrating a special memory of childhood, and knowing that someone from half way around the world cares,” Kinnarney stated. “It was a moving experience for everyone involved.”

GCC’s 250-acre campus is located on Tanyard Road in Deptford, just off Exit 56 of Route 55. This year, the College is celebrating 40 years of student success since its founding in 1966. During the past four decades, GCC has grown to become a valuable asset to the Gloucester County community providing quality academic programs, cultural enrichment, and professional development.

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