



Grant fulfills dream for Newmarket artist



Grant winner. Artist Olga Oreshyna earned a grant at the 2011 Newmarket Celebrates the Arts Gala.

By Teresa Latchford

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For Olga Oreshyna, winning a Newmarket arts grant is a dream come true. Now in its third year of providing arts grants to the community, the 2011 Newmarket Celebrates the Arts Gala at Pickering College raised enough funds to hand out \$31,000 through the town's arts grant program. There were 19 applications received, falling under the three grant categories — project-based and community groups, youth, and post-secondary education.

Mayor Tony Van Bynen and members of council presented the recipients with certificates earlier this week. Ms Oreshyna was among those recognized in council chambers and will use the grant to create a public work of art for the community.

"My family and I are so happy to live here and I have always wanted to make a contribution to the community," she said, explaining she has lived here for five years.

With a passion for woodworking and respect for the environment, she has been creating works of art for the past three years using only abandoned pieces of wood, rather than cutting down trees for materials. Ever since she heard a story about deforestation, she felt a tugging in her heart to give discarded pieces of wood most people would see as scrap a second chance at life.

The Recycling Council of Ontario recognized her last year for excellence and commitment to a sustainable environment.

"So much plastic, metal and concrete surround us in our everyday life," she said. "When creating these amazing wooden structures, I feel a huge energy come over my hands." Every week, she collects pieces of wood from various places, not discriminating based on size or shape, as she believes each piece deserves special attention. In her Newmarket studio she builds, glues, adjusts and balances all the pieces to create a visually appealing piece of art that not only reflects her passion for the arts, but also her environmental values.

She will use the grant to create a piece called Beauty of Abandoned Nature. It will consist of a series of three wooden block panels to be displayed in a public facility to be determined by the town.

"This is my way of making a difference while sharing a positive message of how we can recycle and reuse in creative ways," she added. "I'm proud to be receiving this grant."

She expects the project to be completed in the next four months.

"John F. Kennedy once said that art nourishes the roots of our culture," said Mr. Van Bynen, who is co-chairperson of the Newmarket Celebrates the Arts Gala committee. "We embrace this philosophy."

The gala, along with contributions from community sponsors, have allowed the town to continue planting the seeds for a vibrant, creative, innovative and inspired community, he continued.

The arts grant program began in 2010 to provide members of the community with funding for arts and culture initiatives and projects.

The town provides several opportunities for residents to participate in cultural activities and artistic programs. In October 2009, it launched its first ever cultural master plan that will shape the future of arts and culture in Newmarket over the next decade.

- *For more information about Ms Oreshyna, including pictures of her previous works, visit [olga66.wordpress.com](#)*

- *For more information about the grants program for Newmarket artists and groups, contact Lena Thorogood at 905-895-5193 ext. 2011.*