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Children enjoy art classes at UM Fine Arts Building

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CHILDREN ENJOY ART CLASSES
AT UM FINE ARTS BUILDING

By Linda Winslow
UM Information Services

MISSOULA--

A little blond boy greets visitors at the door with a green handshake. Looking as if he had just run into a wall of red paint, he is enjoying a noisy game of follow-the-leader with six or seven equally as colorful children.

Although seemingly disorganized, these children are actually participating in the Saturday art classes at the University of Montana Fine Arts Building. Final classes this fall will be from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. Saturday (Nov. 18).

A registration fee of about 50 cents per session buys all necessary supplies and enables a child between the ages of three and 15 to learn new crafts and art ideas from University art and education students. Such crafts include drawing, painting, clay work, sculpture, printmaking and photography.

Richard B. Reinholtz, associate professor of art at UM, is the director and originator of the program. Reinholtz said that the classes were set up because the children need "to gain freedom from overly structured school experiences and learn art in a permissive, relaxed atmosphere.

"The Saturday classes also give the University students the opportunity to get acquainted with children," Reinholtz said. "They operate with children as friends and lose the authoritarian image of the teacher."

Reinholtz said that he is "very pleased with the program" and that its success is measured by the fact that these children are willing to spend a portion of their Saturdays going to school."

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All the children in the program are provided cookies and other treats to add to the "fun" atmosphere of the classes.

Lindsay K. Walterskirchen, a UM junior in elementary education from Kalispell, teaches the preprimary group with the help of students from a UM elementary education class. This group includes children from the ages of three to five. The average size of a class is 40 to 50 children. Projects for these youngsters include making masks out of paper plates, finger painting and whole-body painting.

The primary group of second- and third-graders averages 20 to 30 students and deals with such projects as painting and sculpting large cardboard boxes, making marshmallow and macaroni sculptures on paper plates and designing yellow paper gowns. Janet Lynne Wollaston, a UM senior in social work from Thompson Falls, is in charge of this group.

Lesla Marilyn Anne Graul, a UM junior in elementary education from Ingle, Calif., heads the intermediate group, consisting of about 40 fifth-, sixth- and seventh-graders.

Graul has two demonstrations per session so that if some youngsters either do not like the first demonstration or have done it before they can go on to the next one. These demonstrations by the University students have included candle dripping, macrame and tie-dyeing.

The general impression visitors to the classes receive is that the children are extremely interested in the art projects and function quite well in the natural, relaxed atmosphere.

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