

SAUGATUCK-DOUGLAS HISTORY CENTER

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HEALING POWER OF ARTISTIC EXPRESSION SHOWN IN MAR. 21 SDHC PUBLIC PROGRAM

MARCH 9, 2018 -- "Art Heals", exploring art as therapy that can promote healing in an at-risk population, will highlight Saugatuck-Douglas History Center's next free monthly program on Wednesday, March 21, starting at 7:00 p.m. in the Old School House, 130 Center Street, Douglas. Public attendance is invited and audience participation is welcomed to enrich the discussion.

Local artist Jeff Blandford looks back over his personal journey -- from "getting hooked" on ceramic arts at high school in Holland, gaining his Bachelor of Fine Arts at Michigan State University and teaching at Ox-Bow, to opening Jeff Blandford Gallery in Saugatuck -- telling of how that journey led him to Allegan County's Juvenile Detention facility and the discovery that introducing kids to ceramic arts can help them refocus their minds and lives.

"These kids are full of emotion", Blandford says. "Introducing them to positive outlets of expression like creative arts promotes calm concentration and can lead them to discover alternative routes to their future. I believe they get something from art that many others don't."

"In the process", he adds, "I've learned that teaching is an integral part of who I am. Working with kids has always been something I've enjoyed, and the combination of art, therapy and kids who need help is, to me, the ultimate teaching experience."

Blandford creates at home on his organic farm in Fennville, amid various outbuildings that provide studios outfitted for working on ceramics, painting, and glass-blowing arts. His Saugatuck gallery is located at 240 Butler St.

The Saugatuck-Douglas History Center's free monthly program series presents entertaining and informative insights into local history and community life. This month's program is sponsored by an SDHC member wishing to remain anonymous.

For more information about the Saugatuck-Douglas History Center, its Museum in Saugatuck and Old School House in Douglas, and its activities planned for 2018, visit www.MySDHistory.org.

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Benefits of local artist Jeff Blandford's ceramic arts instruction at Allegan County Juvenile Detention facility highlight SDHC's March 21 public program. (student's identity masked as required by law)