

April 27, 2010 Galway Public Library wins SALS Library Program of the Year Award

Galway Public Library's Story Sculptures Program, a drawing, writing, painting and sculpture project inspired by Galway local history, and funded by the Story Quilt Arts and Literary Fund, won the Southern Adirondack Library Systems (SALS) Library Program of the Year 2010. The award ceremony will be held May 17, 2010 at SALS 52nd annual meeting in Greenwich, NY. The Southern Adirondack Library System (SALS) is a voluntary association of 34 public libraries in Hamilton, Saratoga, Warren and Washington Counties.

Galway Public Library's Story Sculptures Program encouraged 25 youth under the age of 18 to work together in a series of five, one hour, library workshops and public events to create twenty-six free standing wood sculptures with the assistance of local artist Benno Kollegger and Galway, NY town historians, Tom Cwiakala and Ray David of the Galway Preservation Society.

Youth were encouraged to answer the following: "Who visits and drinks from the Galway Cast Iron Watering Trough?"

The first workshop took place at the Galway Village Green in front of the watering trough. There youth listened to local historians discuss the trough history and the youth were encouraged by the artist to sketch the trough and the creatures who may have visited the trough. Youth illustrated their imaginations based on the possibility that any person or creature, real or mythic, could pause for a cold sip of water from Galway Village's historic cast iron fountain.

The following three sessions took place at the library where the artist assisted the youth to transfer their drawings to plywood, and in the later workshops, they painted their sculptures for outdoor display on the library grounds and wrote short stories about their sculptures and why they were at the Galway watering trough.

The fifth event was an outdoor "artists' reception" where the youth as artists were available to the public to share their art and their experiences. The Daily Gazette coverage, plus the public turnout to view the sculptures, enhanced the overall community pride and support for this project.

After the artists' reception, the sculptures were displayed in front of the library and were highly visible to patrons and visitors to Galway Village. Once the weather turned (mid-October) the sculptures were relocated to the Galway Elementary School stage and cafeteria, where children could enjoy the art produced by their classmates.

This spring 2010, the sculptures will once again be on public view in front of the Galway Public library until September 2010 at which point the sculptures will be returned to the youth artists.

Story Sculptures is a unique community outreach, youth and public relations program that established partnerships between the library, Galway Preservation Society, the Galway Central Schools, local artists, parents, and children. It was a learning opportunity promoting community pride, the arts, local history and culture.