

School Talk: An Artist Among Us

School Board Secretary - Sally Owen

September 17, 2011

Joel and Debra Huntley, of Wisconsin Pottery on Park Avenue in Columbus, have lived and worked here for the last twenty-seven years, thirteen years working in a studio on Highway 16 and fourteen years in their present location. Joel says they have always been resources for the Columbus Public Schools. They have volunteered, and they have been asked to participate in artistic endeavors over time. Joel feels enrichment occurred for both parties, for “we have received as much as we have given.”

They both feel that citizens need to be responsible resources for the schools, as parents, as artists, as business people, and as members of society. Debra taught school, has been on the Columbus School Board, and all family members have strong educational backgrounds.

Joel, in particular, has worked with students from elementary school through the high school with pottery and with artistic design. He has worked over the years with teacher Bonnie McDaniel, beginning with her second grade students in a program called ***The Artists Among Us***. Students worked with Joel in the classrooms creating pottery designs and other demonstrations, then took field trips to his studio and gallery to observe him at work. The high school has its own equipment, but Joel is available as a resource for students there as well.

Joel is in the process of selling his business and retiring from active pottery creations. He would like to see a group of artists take over the business and add another dimension to the Columbus community. He will continue to work with students when he can as he has always been a resource for educational activities. It is indeed a pleasure to have talked with Joel about his marvelous philosophy, his contributions to the community, and to observe his creations. Our thanks to Joel and Debra Huntley for their services to the Columbus School District.