

The Nancy Stephen Gallery and School of Art

15 Years in East Greenwich

By Abby Fox and Nancy Scelsa

In a slow-growth economy like today's, how does a small art school survive, like the Nancy Stephen on King Street?

"We built our success on reputation," said owner Nancy Scelsa. "The need is there; otherwise, we wouldn't be here. We love being here for the community and when you have the right attitude, it multiplies." Whatever financial condition the state or the country is in, "You're always going to have the need for fine arts," she said.

Scelsa started her art school out of the basement of her West Warwick home, then to another home, then moved to Friendship Street in East Greenwich and then to King Street, where has been for 12 years. She said that having three children, now in their 20s,

changed her life, because it changed her priorities from a self-promoting career, as a creative director in advertising for the *Providence Journal* and as graphic artist and assistant advertising manager for Sears, to a children-centered lifestyle. "This was what was in my heart," she said. Her focus is entirely on nurturing children and building their confidence, she said.

Scelsa wrote a short essay about her years as an art school and gallery director for the *Pendulum*:

The Nancy Stephen Gallery and School of Art has been a lifelong dream of mine that came to fruition 15 years ago when I opened the school at Friendship Street.

I had dreamed of creating an art school since attending Paier College of Art in New Haven, Conn.,

where I majored in graphic art with a minor in fine art. It was at Paier that I met my mentor Adele Paier, the president and co-founder of the school. We formed a close bond, one which propelled me to fulfill the same destiny Paier had years earlier: to open an art school.

The gallery, when it was on Friendship Street, had no more than ten students in a class due to limited space. Students of all ages who wished to discover their inner selves through art were welcomed. In three years, we outgrew our space and moved to our present location on King Street. That was twelve years ago.

Through the years the school has grown with its students. Year-round classes and summer camps for youth and adults are offered. Many of our youth students have attended the school for seven years or more, making it a close-knit art family. Upon graduating





The school
can be reached
at
884-8979
and
nancystephenartschool.com

high school, we send them off with a feeling of confidence that prepares them for a career in art.

We celebrate “Art Parties” for alumni and give alumni art classes, for past students, to give them a chance to catch up on each other’s life adventures and art endeavors.

It is important that we connect with each student, adult or youth, to bring out the art talent of each individual. We do not teach one style of drawing and painting. We are more interested in cultivating the student’s individual style.

No student is ever turned away, because of his or her income. We have offered scholarships throughout the years to youth who have the desire to pursue fine art. We have accepted students on scholarship through the PPAC program and will always remain dedicated to the needs of learning fine art.

The Nancy Stephen Gallery teaches the development techniques for using oil, acrylics and watercolor, along

with other media. Students work from many sources, including direct observation and reference material.

This year will mark our seventh annual art show, showcasing the work of the students. We have several very dedicated teachers, including award-winning artists and certified art teachers, dedicated to reaching out to the community and exploring the world of art.

We like to think of Nancy Stephen Gallery and School of Art as your personal connection to art.

