



South Okanagan
Similkameen
Medical Foundation

February 13, 2019

Turning medical waste into art

Who knew there could be such beauty in jars full of pill bottle caps, empty vials and other medical waste?

Well-known Penticton artist Renee Matheson is turning that waste into a butterfly mosaic – and the public is invited to take part.

It's all part of the artistic endeavours promoted by Penticton Regional Hospital's arts committee under its Healing Power of Art program.

Inspired by a similar piece at Toronto General Hospital, Renee decided on turning recycled medical waste into a mosaic butterfly. For the next few months she'll be working on the project at the Matheson & Grove Fine Art Gallery at 205 Martin St.

"Recycling is such an important thing right now. Wouldn't it be nice to recycle those things into something meaningful," she said. "I just think a butterfly is the perfect subject – it represents a true and beautiful transformation."

The medical materials are being placed onto a large tabletop frame in Renee's art studio and surrounded by resin. The work will likely take until the spring to complete.

By making a donation to the hospital arts program, donors have an opportunity to become a hands-on participant in the project. Working with Renee, they will be able to place some of the pieces directly onto the artwork.

"A part of you – your energy – becomes a part of the art. It's really exciting," she said.

To schedule an appointment to assist in the project, contact Renee Matheson at 250-488-4999 or email her at mathesonarts@gmail.com.

Renee is donating her time to the project – the main cost is the resin. At least three layers of thick resin will be required before the butterfly artwork is completed.

Renee said some friends among the PRH medical staff collected hundreds of pill bottle caps and other medical waste items for several months. Her sister and brother-in-law then spent hours sorting them by colour.

Bill Everden, a member of the PRH arts committee, said having an artist of Renee's calibre involved is definitely a bonus.

"She has really put a lot of thought into this. Her subject is so appropriate," Everden said. "We're hoping to raise people's thoughts and possibly make a donation for more artwork at Penticton Regional Hospital."

Monetary donations can also be made through the South Okanagan Similkameen Medical Foundation. Call 250-492-9027 for more information.

Photo cutline information:

Pill caps, empty vials and other items of medical waste are being turned into a unique piece of art by Penticton artist Renee Matheson in support of the arts fund at Penticton Regional Hospital.