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THE TIMES-UNION

Open-air painting benefits gardens

Artists work outside at Arboretum to raise both funds and awareness

By Beth Reese Cravey
The Times-Union

On a recent weekend, 37 artists set up their paint, pastels and easels under the lush canopy of trees at the Jacksonville Arboretum & Gardens in Arlington.

Visitors strolled about, watching the artists capture the park on canvas and enjoying the scenery.

The resulting art was for sale on site and at a gala reception, with proceedings benefiting the artists and the park.

The purpose of the three-day event was to increase awareness of the 20-acre Arboretum property off 9A and Monument Road, raise funds for the park and promote artists, according to event Co-

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chairwoman Mindy Hawkins. "En Plein Air" is a French term meaning "in the open air." Since the mid-19th century, the plein air movement brought artists out of their studios and into the natural light and gave them a new, less formal way to approach their painting, she said.

Next up on the arboretum schedule is a brisk trail walk at 9 a.m. Saturday guided by a local naturalist.

Walks will be held on the fourth Saturdays for the remainder of the year. Also planned is a volunteer workday from 9 a.m. to noon May 14.

For more information or to find other ways to support the arboretum, go to jacksonvillearboretum.org.



Above: Artists at the "En Plein Air" event include Mark Howard of Atlantic Beach, who painted a landscape scene amid the landscape of the Jacksonville Arboretum & Gardens.

Left: Children also showcased their talents at the three-day event.

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