

## E D U C A T I O N

# It's never too late for art

Older students experience artistic success.

BY KORI LEE GARNER

Pam Schader



ing and art history with older students (mainly women) between the ages of 45 and 90. Many of Pam's students have studied with her on a weekly basis since she started teaching at IVC over 19 years ago.

Pam also teaches expressive arts in several addiction recovery clinics in Orange County and is the founder and president of ART4KIDS, Inc., an international nonprofit based in the OC that provides art packs and expressive arts classes to children in crisis around the world. Pam and some of her students recently returned from San Miguel de Allende in Mexico, where they combined charitable work at a local orphanage with hands-on art instruction for themselves from the local artisans and craftspeople of this art-filled colonial town.

Professor Pam Schader is an artist, a woman of passion and an inspired teacher. She has been described by admiring students as a "free spirit who possesses the soul of a wise and noble leader." When asked how art has impacted her life both professionally and personally, Pam responds, "Personally, being an artist gives you an excuse to have a messy desk, to think outside the box and to pursue personal expression. Art becomes a metaphor, mirroring the journey through life flawlessly. Professionally, it has led me to great adventure—experiencing extraordinary people, places and things. Art is the greatest joy."

A teacher who pushes her students to "reach for the stars," Pam received her M.A. degree from CSU Fullerton in 1975, and has dedicated her time ever since to creative thinking and visual art. She is currently an instructor in the Emeritus Institute at Irvine Valley College where she shares her knowledge of painting, draw-

Many of Pam's students have come to art late in life or returned to art after a long break in which they pursued careers, marriage and the "mommy track." Inspired by her passion and enthusiasm, they now exhibit in local art shows and have come away from the experience transformed. All of them say it's never too late to kindle your inner artistic fire.

For instance, Robin Fayer, aged 62, has grown children, works in public schools with autistic children, and was an art major at UC Berkeley in sculpture. Her mom discovered Pam's class at IVC. When Robin drove her mother to the class to sign up, she ended up signing on too! "Very quickly the class

became one of the most interesting and important aspects of my life," says Robin. "Pam is able to find a spark of promise in all of her students' work. With her encouragement I've been able to develop as an

**"Be the change you want to see in the world."**

—Mahatma Gandhi

artist beyond any level I had imagined. I now see myself as an artist; I'm not afraid to say so. This has really been a transformative experience." Robin recently took first place award at the 2006 IVC Annual Student Art Exhibition.

Victoria Porcello, in her sixties, is a lawyer and corporate executive with a masters degree in Clinical Psychology. She's recently retired and began her study of the visual arts with Pam three years ago. She's participated in three Emeritus art exhibitions and two Emeritus art celebrations on campus. Victoria took a third place award in the 2006 IVC Annual Student Art Exhibition. "I'm new to art but have had lots of artistic success since studying with Pam," she states.

Robin Fayer



Carole Zavala, also in her sixties, is a former principal in the Capistrano Unified School District. She left education in 1980 to start a consulting company, CZ Associates, for non-profits in OC and LA. "I have always loved to draw

**Carole  
Zavala**

and paint, but seldom had the time to take classes during the past busy years," she says. "I enrolled in IVC Emeritus in the fall of 2005, taking watercolor classes and drawing and found the experience to be life transforming! What began as an experiment in learning new techniques and getting comfortable in watercolor quickly became a new life passion."

"Courses at the local art school are too expensive...other venues are too far or too pricey for my semi-retirement budget," Carole continues. "Thank God for the IVC Emeritus art program and the guidance and support of my fabulous instructor, Pam!"

Many of Pam's Emeritus students' art works are currently displayed on the walls of the South Orange County Community College District offices, located on the 3rd floor of the new Health Sciences building on the Saddleback College campus. They have proved so popular with students, faculty, staff and visitors that their loan has been extended to mid-March.

For more information on Pam Schader's art classes and the Irvine Valley College Emeritus Institute, please call 949.451.5382 or email [danderson@ivc.edu](mailto:danderson@ivc.edu). To find out more about ART4KIDS, Inc., visit: [www.art4kidsinc.org](http://www.art4kidsinc.org). For more information on this article, please contact the author at [kgarner@socccd.org](mailto:kgarner@socccd.org).

