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Photo by Matthew McKeown

Judy Walter and Chris Stimeling of the YWCA of Greater Harrisburg.

Local Artist's Work Reflects Spiritual Rebirth

By Paula Marinak
Capital Times Staff Writer

A lifelong painter and art lover, Virginia Parkum once avoided showing her work for fear of criticism and rejection.

She remembered the moment, one year ago, when her attitude changed. She had gone to the Hershey Library to hear a talk on Buddhism.

"Something made me get out of bed that morning; I don't know what," Parkum said.

She recalled holding the door for a man who entered the library after her and being struck by his serenity. His name was Tony Stultz, and he was the man whom Parkum had come to hear.

As one of his main points, Stultz urged the audience to remember that their emotions did not control them.

"The minute he started talking, lights lit up in my head," she said. "I thought, 'this is the kind of connection I need, and it's being made in a way I've been looking all life for.'"

Looking back on the moment, Parkum realized that it symbolized the opening of a new door in

her life.

She now studies meditation and Buddhist religion and philosophy with Stultz, a practicing spiritual counselor and adviser in Harrisburg. Parkum credited him with helping her discover a new approach to her work.

She said Stultz's instruction taught her that creativity would flow when she learned to appreciate life's experiences as they happened.

"Meditation allows you to live out of a free and open space," Parkum said. "Whatever is there I just go with it. My paintings often address the same topic from different angles," she added. "It's a way to wake up the mind, to say 'Look again. This is here and it's now.'"

Students and faculty can see the results of Parkum's artistic reawakening through the end of December. Twenty-six of her paintings line the wall near the Bursar's Office in Olmsted's lobby.

The Art Association of Harrisburg selected her work to hang as part of a holiday exhibit.

Parkum described her work as expressionistic. In other words,

it is interpretive, and not identical to a photograph of an image.

In fact, Parkum rarely works from pictures or models while she paints. "The images are already inside me somehow, and that's what can come out when you're in that free space," she explained.

She uses acrylic paint because it is perfect for the depth and

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Photo by Matthew McKeown

Virginia Parkum's paintings are on display in the Olmsted Building.

Domestic Violence Awareness Month Activities a Success

By Cathie McCormick Musser

Capital Times Staff Writer

Clotheslines, life-size cutouts, burning candles, videos, poetry, hugs, tears and legal discussions seem an unlikely combination. But, over the last two weeks, participants observing Domestic Violence Awareness Month (DVAM) at PSH wove this list into a powerful tapestry.

Angela Keen, one of the coordinators of the activities, is pleased. "I think the campus responded well," Keen said.

Events included displays designed to raise awareness of domestic violence, a candlelight vigil in remembrance of victims and educational activities to promote advocacy and increase understanding of the legal process regarding domestic violence.

The Clothesline Project took place Oct. 21 and 22. T-shirts created by people touched by the specter of domestic violence or sexual abuse hung on clotheslines at angles across the east end of the Oliver LaGrone Cultural Arts Center.

Survivors of abuse create the shirts as part of the recovery process; victims' family and

friends create shirts as a step in the grieving process.

The display of brightly colored shirts seemed almost festive before closer inspection. Some shirts have holes and tears representing the damage inflicted by the abuser. Most carry saddening messages addressed to abusers or victims.

The Clothesline Project is a grassroots effort begun by the Cape Cod Women's Agenda in 1990.

According to a paper written by Clothesline Project Coordinator, Carol A. Chichetto, the effort is now active in 41 states and five countries. The idea of using shirts on a clothesline seemed natural to the project organizers. "Doing the laundry has always been considered women's work...and women often exchanged information over backyard fences while hanging their clothes out to dry. The concept was simple: let each woman tell her own story...and hang it out for all to see," Chichetto wrote.

The local project is coordinated by the YWCA of Lancaster. Shirts on display at PSH were created by Lancaster County victims, survivors and their families and friends.

The Silent Witness Project display continued the awareness process for the PSH community on Oct. 25. This traveling exhibit consists of red, life-sized cutouts representing Greater Harrisburg area women killed by batterers. Attached to each cutout is a document outlining the victim's story.

The memorial, sponsored by the Junior League of Harrisburg and the Domestic Violence Services of Cumberland and Perry Counties, is coordinated by the YWCA of Greater

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