



Artist Jan Funk poses with the larger of the two farm murals she painted for the Brandywine Hospital in Coatesville. The paintings were dedicated to the farms' owner, Ernest Pyle.

Farm Murals Bring Cheer to Brandywine Hospital

BY SUZANNE KEENE
Home and Youth Editor

COATESVILLE — Two murals depicting farm scenes brighten the walls of Brandywine Hospital. Visitors, patients and nurses alike pause to study the colorful paintings, which upon careful scrutiny reveal painstakingly accurate reproductions of two farms that border the hospital.

The 4-by-8-foot mural on the third floor of the hospital illustrates the Ernest Pyle farm, a 75-acre steer farm. A second, smaller mural on the hospital's second floor shows the Robert Lynch farm.

The murals were a gift from artist Jan Funk, who dedicated them to the farmers who owned the farms. They are also a tribute to all farmers for their hard work and dedication, Funk says.

Ironically, Funk came to know the local farmers and to love farming through her job with Homemaker's Home Health Service of Exton, which provides home health care for primarily terminally-ill patients.

In 1981 Funk began taking care of Laura Martin, a farm woman who introduced Funk to her neighbors, the Pyles; Funk later cared for Ernest Pyle, who owned the farm depicted in the third-floor mural.

"That's how I grew to love farming," Funk says, remembering the friendship she shared with these farmers and their families. While caring for the ill farmers, Funk was impressed by their dedication to the farm and with their uncomplaining attitude toward hard work.

"I have a high respect and ad-

miration for farmers," she says. "It's not a nine to five job. There's nothing such as vacation or sickness."

While caring for Ernest Pyle during his stay in the Brandywine Hospital, Funk said she spent many hours peering out the hospital windows watching the activity on the farms.

But the view from the window showed only the rear of the Pyle farm and she decided that weary visitors or lonely patients would enjoy seeing the front as well.

Now that Funk's completed mural hangs in the hallway, patients can see the front of the barn and farmhouse and the neat, white board fence that ensconces them. Bob Pyle and Bob Lynch work in the field baling hay, while Ernest Pyle directs the activity.

Both murals contain caricatures

of people who live and work on the farms, and the mural of the Lynch farm contains 39 animals.

Funk says she hopes her mural will brighten the days of hospital patients and staff. Through her work with the terminally ill, Funk has grown to appreciate her own health and she tries to make life more cheerful for her patients.

"I think I'm so grateful not to be in the hospital that I want to brighten the lives of those who are," she says.

Funk has fought her own battle with illness, having had a successful corneal transplant in 1981. She was legally blind in the right eye before the operation restored her vision.

And although she continues to suffer from keratoconis, a deteriorative eye disease, she

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This mural of the Lynch farm hangs in the second floor hallway of the hospital. Although smaller than the Pyle mural, it still contains 39 animals, Funk said.



This view from the third floor of the Brandywine Hospital shows the back of the Pyle farm, which borders the hospital. Visitors can now see the front of the farm by looking at Funk's mural.

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