

Linda Wise is 'Eureka Artist of the Year'

The Times-Standard

Article Launched: 10/03/2008 01:27:27 AM PDT

EUREKA -- The Eureka Art and Culture Commission will award Linda Wise the first "Eureka Artist of the Year" Recognition Award at the Eureka City Council Meeting on Tuesday. This award will be presented each year to an artist who has contributed to the betterment of life in Eureka through creative endeavors.

The city of Eureka is joining art leaders and supporters across the country in celebrating October as "National Arts and Humanities Month." It is an opportunity to recognize and celebrate the positive impact the arts bring to schools and communities.

Wise was chosen because of her accomplishments as an artist, her work with children and art, her contributions to the community through public art and her support of various community organizations such as Planned Parenthood and the Humboldt Arts Council. She is known for her sculptures made of found objects.

"My art points out that there is value in everything," said Wise. "When I look in the trash, I see animals popping out at me. Well, that looks like a nose. Hey, that would make a good finger."

As the environmental compliance and safety manager for City Garbage of Eureka, Wise is in a unique position to collect what other people throw away and make it into something else.

Though she doesn't have children herself, she enjoys giving children experiences that are positive, passing on some of the things that have enriched her life. At the "Dia de los Muertos" (Day of the Dead) celebration at the Morris Graves Museum, for example, she created an opportunity for children to learn about the culture of Mexico and honor people they had loved and lost.

"It is touching," says Wise, "to help children express themselves without the restrictions adults often put on them."

Wise's childhood was enriched by the opportunity to take art classes outside of school. She says her fear is that if children don't have this opportunity to experience art, "then we as a culture are going to deteriorate."

One of her public art achievements was decorating two trash bins in Opera Alley in Old Town Eureka, each with an opera theme, hoping to make it a more enjoyable walk through the alley. Those bins have not since been sprayed with graffiti.

With a bachelor's degree in fisheries biology and a master's degree in waste water, Wise believes that art led her to science.

"There is a very natural connection between art and science, looking at detail, being creative, and learning how to express yourself and describe nature," she said.

The Eureka Art And Culture Commission acts in an advisory capacity to the City Council and the City Manager for all matters pertaining to art, literature, music, and other cultural activities. Its current focus is to promote art in public places and create a registry of artists interested in public art commissions. More information can be found at www.eureka-art-culture.com.