Michigan State University
Community Butterfly Flower Gardens
Artist - Zahrah Resh

Community Butterfly Gardens are art installations organized by MSU AgeAlive, MSU College of Osteopathic Medicine. AgeAlive's mission is to contribute to a world in which there is respect, wellbeing, and quality of life for all people of all ages and abilities, especially through intergenerational, life-enriching programs, beauty, and the healing arts. The Gardens exemplify this goal by encouraging inclusive community wide participation and engagement. All of the butterflies in the Gardens are painted, folded, and tied by people in the community of all ages and backgrounds.

My role as the AgeAlive Artist in Residence is to create art project opportunities that further the mission and are fun and accessible to all members of the community. These projects should allow participants to share in the joy and life-enriching opportunities of creating art. The challenge for me is to create a project that is artful, fun, visually appealing, easy, and can be done by people of all skill levels. Using simple materials like paint, paper and zip ties, community members paint, fold and tie hundreds of colorful butterflies while I dye and shape all the paper flowers and create and install the exhibit.

When people participate in a creative, fun, and engaging activity like this, they feel connected to community. It generates story-telling and sharing of ideas, opinions, and experiences. This sharing creates understanding which in turn leads to friendship, embracing our differences, empathy, sharing of knowledge, and goodwill towards others. My hope is that these Gardens will provide a positive experience for you and others, that it will improve your life and others' lives in the everyday things that we do.

Please learn more by visiting my gallery at http://www.zahrahrgallery.com/. Also visit AgeAlive at www.agealive.org and sign up for email updates.

Thank you.
      Enjoy.

Zahrah Resh