

The Clark Fork Valley Press
And The Paradise Center Present

Scott “Tuff” Ryder
Trout Creek School
Spotlight on the Arts – March 2023



Scott “Tuff” Ryder,
Trout Creek School
Interviewed by Karen Thorson

“Spotlight on the Arts” by The Paradise Center honors and encourages students in the arts by highlighting their talent and acknowledging the support they receive through their schools and teachers.

Scott “Tuff” Ryder is 14 years of age and an eighth-grade student at Trout Creek School. His artistic talent is clearly recognized by many, including Principal Preston Wenz, his teacher Ms. Jo Hanson, and fellow students (who often ask him to depict something of

interest to them). He prefers graphite (pencil) as an art medium and he has mastered it, from sharp lines to soft shading. His subject matter spans from Japanese swords to emotional depictions, from anime to realism, from individual items to action scenes, from simple images to symbolic creations – all done with amazing attention to detail, perspective, texture, light/dark values, and interesting composition.

Ryder has been drawing for as long as he can remember and his passion for art is evidenced in his explanation and discussion of each piece of his work. He can describe the inspiration for each drawing, explain his approach and technique, as well as share the connection and energy he feels for each-and-every image.

He is an artist among artists in his family. His mother, a member of the Crow Tribe, enjoys colorful beading. His father draws and is masterful with color. His brother draws geometric images such as the flower of life. But maybe the most influential and inspiring person is his

Native American grandfather, who worked in a museum, painted a wide range of realistic images including action scenes, faces, and much more.

Almost all artists have favorite subjects, and Ryder prefers to draw cars, but as evidenced by the artwork shown here, he goes well beyond his favorite subject matter in many ways. He indicates he is not yet successful with depicting animals, but he plans to conquer that soon. And art is not Ryder's only interest – he plays basketball and runs cross country track. As for his artwork, he has sketchbooks full of drawings, ranging from a pagoda in a mountainous landscape to imaginary action figures and everything in between.

The images accompanying this article include: (a) his favorite subject matter, a car; (b) "End of the Trail," which he describes as an aging warrior returning home, exhausted after a battle; and (c) "Life" that depicts his personal experience - his special Japanese Katana Sword, signifying his interest in that culture, a hat representing his earlier life in eastern Montana on a ranch, and a feather symbolizing his Crow heritage.

Ryder's advice to others about engaging in art is multifaceted: you can practice in secret using a sketchbook that no one else sees, you can choose to work with subject matter that is personally meaningful and that you know well, and you can ask for help if you feel you need it.

Future plans certainly include art but remain open regarding a career. He admires artists who use Facebook and YouTube to share their work and knowledge. Ryder wants to challenge himself with drawing less familiar subject matter. If his artwork to date is any indication, he will excel with anything he chooses to draw.