

The Paradise Center Presents

Maddox Van Elswyk

Thompson Falls Elementary

Spotlight on the Arts – December 2023



Article 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.

Maddox VanElswyk is 10 years old and is in the 5th grade at Thompson Falls Elementary School. His favorite visual arts medium is pencil drawing, both with graphite and color pencils, but he also enjoys painting. His approach to both reflects a strong sense of design.

Maddox comes from an artistic family, and he is clearly inspired and supported by each individual and the collective group. His mother offers art classes for youth in kindergarten, mainly 4- and 5-year-olds. His sister does landscapes incorporating trees, flowers, and light. An older brother is involved with graphic design.

Although VanElswyk’s work reflects a sense of design, his use of materials varies from hard-edged patterns to more free-form color flow. As an observer, I was amazed by the scope of his approaches to subject matter, choosing a medium and technique that reflect his interpretation and understanding as well as the nature of what he wants to accomplish. His use of a hard-edged technique (an image or pattern clearly defined by line) shows an ability to capture a variety of images. His use of a free-flowing, spontaneous technique, with color flowing in unobstructed ways, demonstrates a more emotional approach to a subject. His ability to go from one to another will enable him to create a wide variety of artworks as he continues his artistic path.

The artwork that accompanies this article reflects the two approaches. “Your Favorite Things” clearly demonstrate careful planning and design, using a defined pattern to create a

background. On the other hand, "Sunset" reflects a circular pattern but without borders. It is a sensitive reaction to an undefinable, boundless image.

Maddox encourages others interested in the visual arts to experiment with different media and see what works for them. As for himself, a variety of media seems to work, depending on the subject matter and his desired outcome.

Like many young artists, VanElswyk is also interested in the performing arts, mainly music, and sports. Soccer is one of his favorite sports, and as for music, his interests span from the generalized hope of playing in a band to the specific desire of playing the trumpet and/or the drums. Art in one form or another will certainly be part of his future.