



GOOD NEIGHBORS

Art Farmers

Husband and wife use their farm to cultivate creativity. **BY LEAH WYNALEK**

Between typical farm chores like feeding goats and tending crops, Karon Ohm and Cy Turnblad fuse glass, fire up kilns and make art with all who visit their homestead in Fish Creek, Wisconsin. Cy fell in love with the then-abandoned farm in 1998 and fixed it up into an all-ages playground called Hands On Art Studio, which includes the Art Barn and three other studio buildings. Now Karon and Cy help guests make everything from pottery to metal sculptures. We asked Karon to tell us more.

What are your backgrounds in the arts?

We both learned by doing. Cy is a potter and went to the University of Minnesota for ceramics. He has been making his living as an artist since he was 18 years old. I explain my artistic background as genetic—my great-grandfather made his living as an artist, and my grandfather was a stone

carver. Cy taught me to jump in and play with all mediums, but I focus on jewelry and fused glass.

Describe your typical day at Hands On.

I do a little bit of everything. I may start out my day grouting mosaic projects, checking on kilns for temperature and making sure the studio spaces are clean. Then I might be greeting customers, pouring glazes, helping someone learn how to cut glass, or chasing our potbellied pig, Hazel, back into her pen.

What's the age range of visiting crafters?

From 18 months to 95 years. The best part for us is seeing multiple generations of a single family coming in here. We have great-grandparents creating art with their children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. One family created a metal sculpture with everyone represented by a hand. What a great memory piece from their reunion.



Any Day Projects

Dig into your junk drawer and make something new from old odds and ends with these tips from Karon.

Recycle empty wine bottles into vases, planters or candleholders.

Use an old set of keys to make a funky bookmark or necklace.

Cover a beat-up tabletop with a mosaic of bottle caps.

Bend silverware into napkin rings or cheese plate markers.

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Have an idea to add to the list? Send it to submissions@countrywomanmagazine.com.

What is the most rewarding part of your work?

Knowing that we are making art fun and accessible. It is very rewarding to see people's joy when they're creating together, and then they get to take home the art that they made. A lot of people can't believe they did it.

Visit handsonartstudio.com to learn more.