

# 'It's like a support group and we all have a common affliction.'

When Manierka moved to Halton Hills 11 years ago, one of the first things she did was take her kids on a tour of the local sites. One stop was the Halton Hills Cultural Centre, where the Credit Valley Artisans (CVA) were holding an art show in the Gallery.

Manierka, a graphic designer with an interest in life drawing, was inspired to join the CVA, where she met Hajek, Perdue, Dumbreck, Zimmerman and Simpson.

After classes and meetings at the CVA's Cedarvale cottage, the like-minded group often found themselves in the parking lot talking about art, inspiration and their lives. They all wanted to do more— more discussions, more sharing and more artistic exploration.



"Each person has their own idea of what art is," Dumbreck says. "Sometimes when you step outside (of their idea of art), people say 'That's not what art is.' We all wanted to step outside of that box."

After several parking lot meetings, the six artists decided to take their "do more" philosophy and create their own art group. Innerscapes was born. The name reflects the artists' dedication to their inner artistic journeys.

"There was an instant bond and connection between us and I knew I was in the right place," Simpson says. "I was so excited about what was going to happen even though I didn't know what was going to happen."

Since the group's beginning 10 years ago, the six artists have met once a week. Some weeks they sit and chat, other weeks they go on excursions to art shows and galleries, and other times they

attend art classes.

"There are no politics in the group. Everybody just shares and does," says Dumbreck. "There's an informal formality to keep going and moving forward on our journey."

All of the artists credit the group with getting them through some rough artistic times. Many have said they would have quit if it hadn't been for the encouragement and support of the other members.

"The group keeps the pot on the stove even though it may not be very hot at the moment," Perdue says.

"It's like a support group and we all have a common affliction," Manierka adds. "It reinforces that we aren't weird. Or maybe we are, but we are weird together."

The Innerscapes artists do several art shows each year as a group, as individuals and as members of other groups. Every



year around Christmas, the group hosts A Hundred Bucks in the Country where the artists sell their work for \$100 or less. They have also displayed their art locally at the Mayor's Wall at the Civic Centre, the Main Street Inn and the Gallery at the Halton Hills Cultural Centre.

No matter where their artistic journeys lead, the Innerscapes artists know there will always be someone nearby to act as a signpost.

"We've always supported and encouraged each other's individual journeys.

We can go out on our own and join different groups and always come home every week to Innerscapes," Simpson says. "It's a comfortable place to be."

For more information on Innerscapes, visit [www.innerscapesart.com](http://www.innerscapesart.com).



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