

ArtHouse makes its way to Gary Allan High School

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- Dan Kraemer

A not-for-profit organization that has been delivering a variety of arts classes to Halton Region has now made its way to Georgetown.

Don Pangman, who founded the organization nine years ago, says he believes all schools should have equal access to the arts.

"Some schools have lots of arts, and some don't. We're just doing our best, as a charitable organization, to raise some money to provide these programs and bring in some really great instructors," Pangman said. "We want our instructors to be really great at what they do, but we also want them to be able to bring out the best in every child and teen that they're working with. And it's working."

On April 5, ArtHouse officially launched at Gary Allan High School's Georgetown campus, following its previous success in Oakville.

Over the years, ArtHouse programming has been implemented at dozens of other institutions across Halton Region, including the Leap program at Robert Bateman, White Oaks and Craig

Kielburger Secondary School, as well as Kerr Street Mission, Halton Multicultural Council, Children's Aid Society, Our Kids Network and more.

And with their latest location, ArtHouse is officially in all four Halton communities.

"I started the organization here in Oakville in 2009, and we are Halton-based today, and I feel that we probably only tapped 15 to 20 per cent of all the people that we would love to reach," Pangman said. "I'm proud that we have continued throughout the past nine years to grow and serve more people and that our donor base has grown because they believe in what we're doing and what we've generated."

Dan Kraemer, who is teaching visual art through

the program in Georgetown, says for him the most rewarding aspect is seeing students gain more interest in the arts as the program progresses.

"I love seeing how the students respond to the various art projects. Especially students who, at first, come off as not being interested or not wanting to do art.

They'll spend time observing everyone else and eventually get into it," he said.

Kraemer says art is not only therapeutic, but is a mindful exercise for students to partake in.

"It allows you to focus in on one thing and kind of forget other things that are happening in your life," he said.

For more information on ArtHouse, visit www.arthouseonline.org.

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