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LeCroy wants to make Arts Center more visible

By GREG OLIVER
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CLEMSON — Cheryl LeCroy, whose family moved from California to Clemson, was a school PTO volunteer the first time she visited The Arts Center. It was a visit she has never forgotten.

"I was rounding up guests for our variety show, which is an annual event, when I came here and just fell in love with the place," LeCroy said. "It's a great environment."

While LeCroy received a basket donated by Arts Center director Deborah Pagano during her visit, she also received something else — a request to volunteer for a gala auction. LeCroy, a full-time mother of three at the time, agreed and has been part of the center ever since. Eventually, LeCroy, who is now the business director, became the first paid employee and has been working at the center for two-and-a-half years.

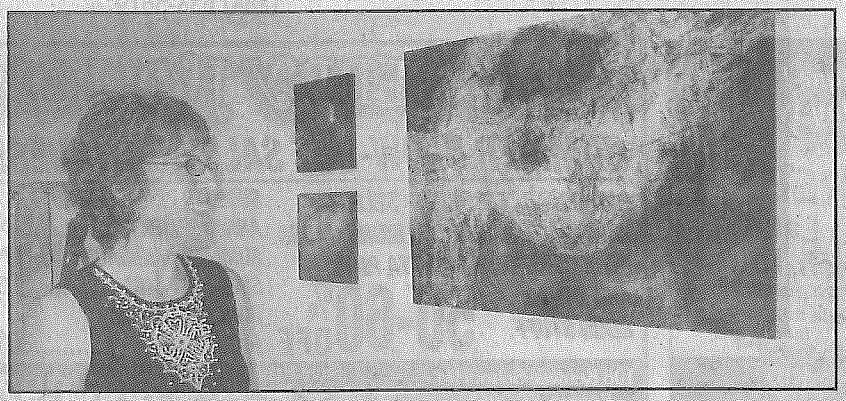
After working in retail during the 10 years spent in California, focusing primarily on seasonal retail in malls throughout the Golden State before transitioning into design, LeCroy said it was a tough adjustment when her family first moved to Clemson.

"There was always something to do (in California), and here it wasn't always that easy," she said.

But LeCroy's introduction to The Arts Center changed all that. Having an opportunity to enroll her sons Alden, Chase and Dain, now 9, 7 and 5, respectively, into classes and meet the art instructors fueled a passion for art that has only grown stronger.

"You can tell the quality here and, upon meeting the instructors, the quality of art instruction you receive," LeCroy said.

Now, LeCroy said she and Pagano are focusing on putting their stamp on The Arts Center by providing activities to which the community may normally have little or no access.



Cheryl LeCroy, business director for The Arts Center, said the center serves the community in a variety of ways.

Greg Oliver/Staff

Currently, the center is hosting an Art Camp for children and youth and the Young Artist Exhibit, set for 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. July 26, will recognize the best artwork from among the camp participants. LeCroy added that fall classes will be offered on recycling in an effort to raise awareness, highlighted by a fashion show featuring recycled clothing wear.

According to LeCroy, the next major goal is to provide a series of classes in the mornings to senior adults.

"Mornings are kind of quiet, and we want to create a series of classes that are geared toward them," LeCroy said.

LeCroy, a physical fitness proponent who enjoys running four to five times per week and is presently training for a marathon, hopes to make The Arts Center more recognizable to the community.

"At least once a week, we still have those who come in here and say they didn't know this place existed," she said. "So, our focus is to get people in and, once they get in, to make them feel at home and have something to fill their time."

For more information on programs offered by The Arts Center, 212 Butler St., logon to www.explorearts.org or call (864) 653-3916.