

# Elementary students create butterfly tree with Shorehaven seniors

[Alec Johnson](#), Milwaukee Journal Sentinel Published 9:01 a.m. CT July 24, 2018 | Updated 12:54 p.m. CT Aug. 1, 2018

SHARP Literacy students, Shorehaven residents team up



(Photo: C.T. Kruger/Now Media Group)

OCONOMOWOC - A special art project will be unveiled at Shorehaven Living Center in August, thanks to teamwork among seniors at the center and elementary school children.

Those seniors, along with children from Summit View Elementary School in Waukesha, enrolled in SHARP Literacy's summer intergenerational program. The two groups have been working together to create a mosaic butterfly tree to be permanently displayed at Shorehaven.

[SHARP Literacy](#) is a local nonprofit organization tailored to help K4 through fifth-grade students build their reading, writing and research skills using visual arts as a primary learning tool. SHARP Literacy was in 39 public, choice and charter schools in the 2017-18 school year in Milwaukee and Waukesha counties, serving 8,600 K-4 through fifth grade students and teachers, according to the organization's website, [www.sharpliteracy.org](http://www.sharpliteracy.org).

Students and seniors have been working with award-winning Milwaukee artist Sally Duback for an hour on Wednesdays since June 20 (except for July 4) in designing, glazing and assembling tiles to go on a concrete tree.

The project was expected to be completed by July 25. It will be about 6 feet tall and 2 feet wide at the top and covered in colorful mosaic tiles.

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## Creating the partnership

Lynda Kohler, SHARP Literacy president, said she wanted to see the intergenerational program expand into Waukesha County after seeing its success in Milwaukee.

"We were looking for a partner and Shorehaven - we came and we talked to Nina (Birschbach, campus lifestyle coordinator) and said 'is this something you would be interested in? She's like, 'absolutely. We've been trying to find a program, an intergenerational program. We'd be so thrilled to be a part of it.'"

Birschbach was happy to hear the proposal.

"We were thrilled because we have residents that love art and love kids, so to us, it was a no-brainer," Birschbach said. "We were thrilled to have that collaboration.

"It's built up each week. The seniors love it, the kids are wonderful, and they're bonding. They're forming relationships and working together."

## Working on the project

Former art teacher and current Shorehaven resident Allen Caucutt is one of those helping with the project. He said he tried to get the children to be more creative in making the butterflies for the tree.

"Somebody had put out a whole bunch of pictures of butterflies. I pushed that away because I told them they all know what a butterfly was, and you can create your own butterfly, which would be prettier than any of those on the paper," Caucutt said. "They like that idea. So they created their own butterflies."

"Being an art teacher, I never had them copy something. That diminished their creativity," Caucutt said. "If you talk to any employer nowadays, they want somebody who's creative, and you are not creative if you copy things."

## Future programs, tree unveiling

Kohler said that after the summer program, SHARP will put on a fall program called Read To Me, in which students from Banting Elementary School in Waukesha will visit Shorehaven and read to residents there, as well as an intergenerational program that will work on another ceramic tree and an art-integrated project.

The butterfly tree is expected to be unveiled in Shorehaven's prayer garden during a butterfly release ceremony to remember those from the center who have died, at 6 p.m. Friday, Aug. 24.