

MAKING MEMORIES MAKING ART

"We all love our new artwork very much," Jennifer Hayden tells Carlyn Ray, owner of Carlyn Ray Designs, the glassblowing studio that offers families something more than just the ability to purchase fine art.

"I was especially surprised, and totally thrilled, to learn how proud and excited the kids are about what they were able to do. In addition to showing off their specific pieces to everyone who comes through the door, they wake up in the morning and want to turn the lights on to look at it while they're eating breakfast. It's too cute!" Hayden continues.

What the Hayden family and many others are so enthusiastically raving about is the ability to participate in the creation of their own Carlyn Ray original art glass installation. Children, six and older, can enter the studio and take the lead doing everything from coloring the glass and heating it to pulling it

out and learning to cut hot glass into sections.

Each family member selects their own accent color from a palette preselected by Ray based on her visit to their home, then Ray and her team guide each member through a hands-on experience of creating glass art. "Knowing this part of the process and being a part of it, makes the piece magical," says Ray. "Having a family share a creative experience together, that is really special and the piece they create together will be something they will live with for the rest of their lives."

The process begins when the family decides they want a Carlyn Ray Designs original. Ray visits the home and places paper on the wall where the final piece will hang. She begins drawing the shape and size of the piece and making notes on colors that will complement the rest of the room. From these notes, she is able to create the

custom palette for the family members to choose from when they visit to the studio.

The hands-on portion of the process is about an hour long and every family member is involved. After all of the individual glass pieces are formed, the team at Carlyn Ray Designs begins the weaving and fabrication process to finish the piece. Depending on the size and scale of the finish piece, the typical time to complete and deliver the art after the family visit is two to four weeks.

Families with kids in grade school all the way to grown and out of college have used this one-of-a-kind experience to bring members together and create lasting memories as well as an heirloom art piece. Corporations have also created art as a team-building exercise, the result of which is an installation they can see every day and be reminded of the time they helped create it together.

"Our family is so grateful for our glassblowing class. We made such fun memories that will be talked about for years!" says Linda Hanna, the mother of a family who came together to create a unique piece where each family member added a glass blossom or leaf to a custom metal branch installation.

Enjoying art can be a shared experience that brings people together. There is joy in owning something beautiful. Being able to participate in creating a one-of-a-kind piece of art is what memories are made of and cherished for a lifetime. At Carlyn Ray Designs, they offer both experiences.

"It is a gift to be able to share the magical process of creating art with those you love and who will live with the piece," says Ray.

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Photographs courtesy of Carlyn Ray Designs



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Metalwork with DeGarrio Metal Studio
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"Glass Hanna Branch"

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