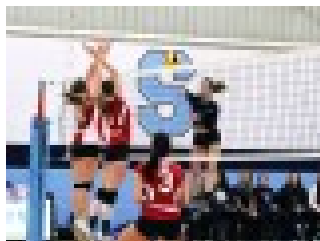


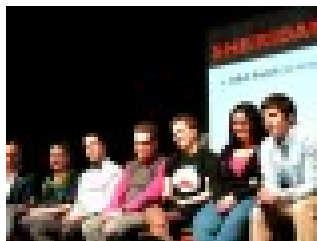
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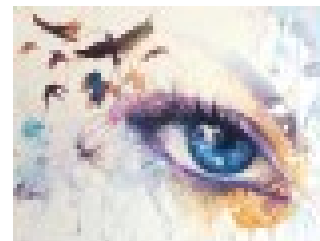
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Milton shows off its cultural side



Culture Days served to promote art and provided activities for all ages last weekend.

STORY BY JENNIFER STIENSTRA

Mary Hansell thinks tai chi can help people beat stress and learn to relax.

On Friday, Saturday and Sunday, she was teaching tai chi to visitors who came out for Milton's third annual **Culture Days** festival.

"I hope to get people excited about tai chi. Whether they take it here in Milton or anywhere because tai chi is all over. It's good for today's (stressful) lifestyle," she said.

Culture Days, held in the **Milton Arts Centre**, was an opportunity to showcase different kinds of art and let people of all ages try new experiences, says Carly Anderson, who helped run the Milton event.

"For the last weekend of September, it's a free cultural activities for all ages put on for free by the arts community," she said.

Culture Days is a nationwide event, Anderson said, taking place in multiple cities across the country the same weekend. The event shows off various kinds of art, be it visual arts, singing, or dancing, and make it accessible to people. The event has been going on for five years, though in Milton it only started three years ago. She said that there's been an increase in attendees each year.

Among the activities of Milton's Culture Days were bracelet making, music, singing by different choirs, painting, philosophy and tai chi.

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Hansell said the event was the perfect opportunity for people to try something new.

“Neighbours get to see what other people are doing in the neighbourhood,” said Hansell.

Visitors to the event could also participate in different arts and crafts to bring out their creativity while listening to a choir sing from the balcony above them, and were free to sing along if they knew the lyrics.

“We’ve never been so we wanted to come and check everything out,” said John Handel, one of the many visitors to Culture Days.



While guests were treated to the free activities that were available, choirs would sing in the balcony above them.

Culture Days also served as a way to promote art and different artistic organizations. Friends for Harmony, was one of these organizations.

Friends for Harmony helps youth who have endured bullying or mental health issues to find peace in music, according to Daniel Gaudry, co-founder of the organization.

“This opportunity is about showcasing the talent that Milton has [...] and to share what the initiative is.”

While Culture Days is still small in Milton, Anderson says organizers hope to expand the event in the future, by providing more activities outside and down the street, as other towns and cities have done.

“Our hope is for next year to grow it outside of the [Arts Centre] so we can see a festival atmosphere created in all of Milton.”

