

Artist helps Thief River Care Center become a home

by April Scheinoha Reporter

It was one of those "I know someone who knows someone" moments.

That's how Lili Payne got the job of painting murals and other pieces for St. Francis Health Services, owner of the Thief River Care Center.

Payne grew up in Morris, where St. Francis is based. Her mom founded a community theater group there, and her dad works as a technical theater professor at the University of Minnesota.



Lili Payne Morris. She began painting scenery for her dad on weekends at the age of 7.

"Most of my education has been on the job since I was 7," Payne said. Payne studied classics and Roman history at Gustavus Adolphus College, graduating in 2003. While there, she took two painting classes. Through a Gustavus Adolphus theater professor, she began working for Macy's 8th Floor Special Events after graduation. She then painted scenery for the Guthrie Theatre, Chanhassen Dinner Theatres and Acme Scenic Arts.

Payne soon parlayed her expertise into creating scenes for nursing homes served by St. Francis, which was looking for someone to paint scenes inside its newly-remodeled buildings. Payne's mom has a friend who works for St. Francis and suggested Payne for the job.

Since that time, Payne has worked on many scenes for St. Francis. "The company is really great to work for. My contacts are always so open to ideas and suggestions. They're really a great group to work with," Payne said. She noted how she was happy a company was willing to create art jobs in a tough economy, when most companies are eliminating those types of jobs.

Payne's job was to paint four wall murals and 123 window inserts at the Thief River Care Center. By mid-December, she had finished about 40 of the window inserts or small paintings. Seventy-one were in some state of being finished, and she had yet to work on 12. Payne planned to finish the window inserts by Jan. 1.

For one mural in the main atrium, Payne received a vague description from St. Francis Chief Executive Officer Luverne Hoffman and Projects Director Scott Jackson. They wanted a pleasant prairie scene. And Senior Services Vice President Carol Raw wanted a horse in the mural.

"Then I have to figure out how I'm going to paint it,"

Payne said. Payne found inspiration from the late Minnesota artist Francis Lee Jaques. He painted many birds and landscape scenes. Without using any sketches, Payne then began painting one layer at a time. Every so often, she would take a step back and look at the murals, trying to see how it looked and what needed to be done next.

Besides featuring the pieces listed above, the finished mural also features a second horse owned by Raw as well as a painting of Jackson in an Alhambra boat.

While one mural focuses on nature, the other focuses on scenes from Thief River Falls. To prepare for the latter mural, Payne traveled to Elks Park and took photographs of the railroad bridge. The railroad bridge is featured in the mural. Each mural took less than three days to create. It took longer to paint the ceilings. Payne said it took four days to paint each ceiling in the two pods. The ceilings feature a sky, clouds and birds.

Payne originally began painting one of the ceilings by hand and using a lift. That proved to be difficult, so she began using a cup spray gun. However, it wasn't spraying out the paint fast enough. Payne then rented an aerosol paint sprayer from Ace Rental in Thief River Falls. Payne said it shot out three times the amount of paint than the other gun did. She noted 30 percent would be a cloud and the rest of the paint would end up on her and the floor.

Calling that portion of the project an ordeal, Payne said people should be able to see the differences on each ceiling. The east pod ceilings were done by hand and those clouds have sharper edges. Payne used the machines to create the clouds in the west pod, which make the clouds look larger and lighter. She said she prefers the look of those clouds as they appear softer than the clouds in the east pod.

For the window inserts, Payne was given free reign. The window inserts make it appear like someone is looking inside a home. She found inspiration for that project from some of her decorating books, finding an arrangement of a chair, table, lamp and some pillows that struck her fancy. She would draw that scene on the masonite window inserts and then paint it. She said she would make three of the same setup but change the colors. As Payne noted, one wouldn't notice that there were three of a similar window scene since the inserts are being placed throughout the building.

For other window inserts, she painted drapes either by hand or by using a lace curtain. In the latter instance, she spray-painted on top of the lace curtain, creating that look on the window

insert.

Payne also created some less feminine-looking inserts. "I have to make sure that every window isn't a girly, frilly window," said Payne, who noted she painted some plaid curtains and more manly accoutrements on other window inserts.

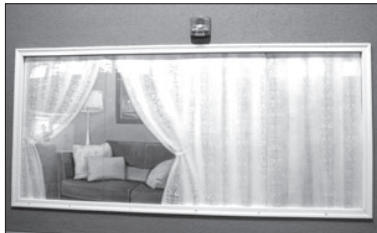
Depending on the scene, Payne said it took anywhere from one hour to five hours to paint a window insert.

Payne's time on this project has drawn to a close. She already has her next project lined up. She is now painting for Guardian Angels Health and Rehabilitation, a Hibbing facility also owned by St. Francis.

For more information about Lili Payne, go to www.gld-eddit.com. To comment on this article, email april@trfimes.com or go to www.facebook.com/trfimes.



Using a lift, Lili Payne was able to reach a ceiling to paint a bird at the Thief River Care Center. By hand and, in some instances, with the help of machines, Payne created four murals and 123 window inserts for the new building. (Submitted)



A window insert shows a couch with some pillows at the Thief River Care Center. Artist Lili Payne painted 123 window inserts and four murals at the center to make it a more homey atmosphere.



This is one of 123 window inserts placed on the walls near resident rooms at the Thief River Care Center. Artist Lili Payne painted the inserts and four wall murals at the center.



With the appearance similar to a local restaurant of the same name, the Evergreen Eating Emporium is one of two places where residents eat their meals at the new Thief River Care Center building.

New building, new meal program

by April Scheinoha Reporter

Several times, Thief River Care Center Administrator Michele Halvorson used the word "choice" to describe the new meal program at the center.

In November, residents moved into the new Thief River Care Center building. And with that move came an added bonus: The center's own Dietary Department. In the past, when the center was located at Sanford Medical Center, residents ate food prepared by the hospital's Dietary Department.

After residents moved into the new building in November, they began using a five-meal program. "I think it's a win-win for our residents and our staff," Halvorson said.

Halvorson said the changes mean residents and staff are able to have more ownership of the menu. They can provide input, and residents are able to tell staff their dislikes and likes about the menu. A Food Committee meets once a month. That committee also helps plan special meals and big events like an upcoming open house in April.

"We really include residents in the food decisions," Halvorson said. In August, at her first Resident Council meeting, she heard a request for dumplings on the menu. That request has now been fulfilled.

Residents have given their stamps of approval on the new meal program. Resident Juliet Johnson said she is satisfied with the menu. She also enjoys eating breakfast in the Blueberry Hill Cafe, one of two locations where meals are served. "I think it's nice," Johnson said about the cafe.

Meals are also served in the Evergreen Eating Emporium. Both the cafe and the Evergreen Eating Emporium are staffed by the Dietary Department.

Similar to the local restaurant of the same name, the Evergreen Eating Emporium has a more formal atmosphere with linen tablecloths and napkins, goblets, and fancy salt and pepper shakers.

Residents are able to come and go as they please during the meal times. They can also choose to sit wherever they want. The Blueberry Hill Cafe includes a roll-up counter. Residents using wheelchairs can make their way to the counter, where they sit, eat and talk to staff behind the counter. Food is served restaurant-style. The Dietary Department tries to offer meals made entirely of homemade food. Beverages are served first, and the food is delivered to residents' tables. Residents will soon be able to highlight their meal choices on a menu. If residents need assistance, help is provided. Halvorson said the Dietary Department can cater to any resident's needs, whether it's someone who needs food cut for him or her, or someone who needs pureed food.

From 7:30 to 9 a.m., residents may eat a continental breakfast of pastry, yogurt, fruit and hot oatmeal. Brunch is

served from 11:30 a.m. to 12 p.m.

On a recent Friday at the center, residents had the option of pancakes, or dumplings with a slice of pork. There are alternatives in the event someone doesn't like his or her options. Soup and sandwiches are also always available for residents who dislike either option.

A snack is offered at 2:30 p.m. Snacks consist of such things as ice cream or cookies. For those suffering from diabetes, sugar-free options are provided.

Dinner is served from 4:30 to 6 p.m. A high-protein snack is then served at 7:30 p.m.

If a resident doesn't want to eat at the appointed time, a plate of food is set aside in the refrigerator for the resident.

The Dietary Department is staffed by about 14 employees. Dietitian Deanna Skaar assesses residents' meal plans, helps with menus, and provides nutrition education to some residents and their families.

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Lili Payne painted a bird on a ceiling at the Thief River Care Center earlier this year. Payne painted four murals and 123 window inserts for the new building. (Submitted)



Residents can choose to eat their meals right at the counter or at tables inside the Blueberry Hill Cafe at the new Thief River Care Center building. The cafe is one of two places where residents can eat their meals.