



Everything Michigan

Self-described 'goofy kid' cartoonist bringing Dare to Draw in 3-D camp for children to Grand Rapids

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By **Laura Michels | The Grand Rapids Press**

Cartoonist Mark Kistler considers himself a human lighter whose mission is to ignite the fire for art in everyone he meets.

–Art is why we work so hard at science, math, and engineering,” he said. –It’s all around us. Look at the buildings the bridges, the planes the space shuttle and the space station, the pencil you hold in your hand, the computer you are typing on, look at the design of the computers ... it’s all from artists.”

Kistler is bringing his Dare to Draw in 3-D camp for kids ages 6-14 to the Grand Rapids campus of Ferris State University. Besides drawing workshops, Kistler has presented more than 7,000 school assemblies, created books and DVDs and starred in public television specials.

–I’m a goofy kid myself. ... I’m able to teach the kids in a really fun, entertaining way.” Kistler said. –It’s so step by step. It’s so fun and you look ... and say, “I can draw. Wow, I can!”

Kistler gets a kick out of fueling the creativity of the parents of his workshop participants.

–I give the parents a special assignment ... I ask them to draw one lesson out of the book the human eye. Out of 180 kids, 100 parents stay for the entire week,” Kistler said. –They stayed and had more fun than the kids, and I know the kids had lots of fun.”

For Kistler, part of teaching drawing is encouraging people to abandon their perfectionistic habits.

–Drawing is something that everyone has wanted to learn how to do since they were in kindergarten. ... By



Cartoonist Mark Kistler

Mark Kistler's Super Summer Art Seminars

When: July 11-15

the time we get in sixth grade, seventh grade ...we just don't have the confidence. We don't think our drawings look any good," he said.

So Kistler encourages his students to just do it.

Kistler, who calls himself the "drawing crazy man," said passionate teachers he encountered in his formative years molded him to chase his creativity.

"My teacher when I was in elementary school just loved art, just loved drawing, and my high school teacher, my junior high teacher I was so lucky they just loved, loved their subject and were able to impart their passion into me," Kistler said.

Because arts funding in schools can be the first thing to go when school budgets are tight, Kistler said he hopes his workshops help remind decisionmakers of the necessity arts play in a comprehensive education.

"I just don't get it, because every house you live in has to be designed by artists. The car we drive, the gas station pump, someone had to draw it before they develop it. It's all tied together," Kistler said. Kistler wants the children he works with to learn to view drawing, art and creativity and as avenue for tackling even their most unfathomable dreams.

"Anything is possible with the imagination," he said.

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Where: Ferris State University, 151 Fountain St., NE, Grand Rapids

Details: Five sessions per day lasting 60 minutes each. Each class geared toward specific age group, The fifth program (6:30-7:30 p.m.) is for family and friends. One session daily for one week is \$89 per child, with \$69 for each additional sibling. Times vary based on session.

More info and to register: Visit Draw3D.com