

# DIRECTOR USES ART TO HEAL

## Marggraff brings new energy to the Winchester bureau

BY DEBBI MORELLO  
REPUBLICAN-AMERICAN

WINSTED — Sarah Marggraff said she's always been an artist, so it made sense that she pursued fine arts as an undergraduate.

But Marggraff didn't necessarily take a direct route to her new position as director of art therapy at the Winchester Youth Service Bureau.

The Winsted resident, now 35, was accepted at the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York, where she began studying textile design and illustration, until she realized something was missing.



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**Marggraff**

art provided a way for her own self-reflection and healing.

"It wasn't easy," Marggraff said. "I realized I was tackling my own demons through my art."

One day while working on the campus at Northwestern Connecticut Community College, a pamphlet fell out of a folder on the profession of art therapy. She then completed her associates degree in fine arts and her bachelor's at University of Connecticut with the goal of becoming an art therapist and counselor. While pursuing her master's degree at Albertus Magnus College in New Haven, she worked at the Winchester Youth Service Bureau as an intern and a group counselor.

Now, she works full-time in the newly created position of director of art therapy at the Youth Service Bureau. Marggraff provides therapy for at-risk youth ages 6-18 in individual and group counseling. The 8-week program promotes the creative process of art to improve the well-being of youth with emotional, behavioral, and cognitive needs and disorders.

Through creating art and reflecting on the art produced, a child can develop more self-awareness and cope with symptoms of



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**In the newly created position of director of art therapy at the Winchester Youth Service Bureau, Sarah Marggraff provides therapy for at-risk youth ages 6-18 in individual and group counseling. This is an example of the art produced by one of the children in the program.**

stress and traumatic experience.

Marggraff said the art itself becomes a third person in the therapeutic relationship.

"Children, and even adults, sometimes just don't have the vocal expression," she said. "In art therapy, through the imagery, the art has a voice of its own. It has been wonderful to witness some of the real successes of how the art has provided a curative path for these kids."

Marggraff received the Gladys Agell

Award for Excellence in Research for 2011-2012 from the American Art Therapy Association for her graduate thesis on the use of art therapy to stimulate insight and self-reflection.

The Winchester Youth Service Bureau is a multitown, youth serving agency. A branch of the Northwest YMCA, it is housed at the Winsted Branch at 480 Main St. The bureau serves high risk and at-risk youth age birth to 18 and their families.