

# CAMAS-WASHOUGAL POST-RECORD

## Brushes & Brews Canvas & Cupcakes

'Painting parties' offer participants a chance to be creative in a relaxed environment

By [Danielle Frost](#) | December 22, 2015 1:26 pm



*Kathy Dering launched her mobile painting business this fall. She offers painting parties at Wild Flour Cafe & Cupcakes, Amnesia Brewing and 54-40 Brewing, all in Washougal. The classes include all materials and an outline of the painting. Participants choose the colors and use their imaginations.*

[\(Danielle Frost/Post-Record\)](#)

After a spinal cord injury three years ago left her temporarily paralyzed, Kathy Dering turned to painting to help her regain strength and coordination in her hands.

"I found that painting not only worked as 'yoga' for my hands but was also very satisfying creatively and emotionally," she said.

Now, she is taking that hobby and turning it into her passion. In September, the Washougal resident of 28 years launched The Paint Roller Mobile Paint Party.

"I call what I offer 'painting parties,' instead of 'classes,' so that I can create an environment where fun and creativity can happen," she said.

The events for adults are held at Amnesia Brewpub, 54-40 Brewing or in private homes. Dering supplies all materials.

"These are relaxed environments where people can socialize with their friends," Dering said. "The pictures are pre-drawn on canvas panels. I think that breaks through the fears some may have about painting. They get to go straight to colors and brushes. As I put in my flyer, 'You don't have to be able to draw a straight line.'"

Children's parties are held at Wild Flour Cafe and Cupcakes in Washougal. There are balloons everywhere, and all participants receive a cupcake, a glass of milk and a beret to take home.

"The only rule I have for the children's parties is that all artists must wear a beret," Dering said with a smile. "I've found that children are not as afraid to try something different and have a more creative approach." She also noted that when kids are painting, you can hear a pin drop.

"Even if they are with friends, they tend to be serious about what they are doing," Dering said. "With adults, it's more of a social occasion, but I think both are fun and valuable experiences."

Dering added that adults tend to be more self-critical than children.

"But I always tell them that acrylic paint is very forgiving," she said. "It's more doing and less thinking. You can fix most anything you don't like. Many 'mistakes' I've seen have actually turned out quite positive. Until you paint, it's hard to explain how it feels."

Dering's idea of a mobile painting business was born while volunteering for the ARC of Clark County this summer, teaching children to paint.

"I just loved it," she said. "They had never painted before and it was amazing what they could do." In August, she and partner Rich Beck began the Brushes & Brew nights at Amnesia.

"I was shocked at the response we got," Dering said. "But we really wanted to reach kids. Working with kids is wonderful. She began offering "Canvas and Cupcakes" parties for kids at Wild Flour in November.

"The children are very proud of their masterpieces, and can't wait to show their parents when they are done," she said. "I've had more than one tell me they were going to give their picture as a gift, and I think that is very sweet."

She is now offering painting parties for couples, where each person paints half of a canvas, then matches it up with their significant other.

"I say, 'make date night a paint night,'" Dering said.

She will also begin a Silver Brushes program for senior citizens in January.

"I want to get them out of their homes and get them creative," Dering said. "Sometimes when we get older, people withdraw. If they aren't able to get out of their homes, I will come to them."

Future plans also include working with students at Hathaway Elementary.

"My big end goal is to make one end of my business big enough so I don't have to charge kids for anything," Dering said. "Right now, I have to charge something but we do offer scholarships."

In January, Dering will also launch a gallery for the young artists at Wild Flour. Those featured have all participated in the parties and there will be an exhibition catalog available. A private reception with artist showings will take place prior to the public event.

"By being creative, children become more like themselves instead of more like everyone else," Dering said. "The gallery is a reward for the children. We hope it will inspire them to create their own artist path, wherever that may lead. They have been so proud of what they have done and it is nice for them to be recognized."

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