

University of Minnesota Morris Digital Well

University of Minnesota Morris Digital Well

Campus News Archive

Campus News, Newsletters, and Events

12-11-2023

UMN Morris Students Connect with Community through Barn Quilt Project

Communications and Marketing

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.morris.umn.edu/urel_news

Recommended Citation

Communications and Marketing, "UMN Morris Students Connect with Community through Barn Quilt Project" (2023). *Campus News Archive*. 3499.

https://digitalcommons.morris.umn.edu/urel_news/3499

This News Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Campus News, Newsletters, and Events at University of Minnesota Morris Digital Well. It has been accepted for inclusion in Campus News Archive by an authorized administrator of University of Minnesota Morris Digital Well. For more information, please contact skulann@morris.umn.edu.



UMN Morris students connect with community through Barn Quilt Project

(December 11, 2023) First-year students in Professor Julia Dabbs's intellectual community art history course have created barn quilts for three non-profit organizations in Morris.

Barn quilts are large, decorative quilt blocks painted on wood and displayed on the exterior of buildings such as barns and tell the story of the site where they hang.

Dabbs says the course title, "Art + History, UMM+Community," sums up the goal of connecting with the community in a meaningful way.

"Working with the Clifford J. Benson Center for Community Partnerships, we selected three community organizations—the Morris Public Library, the Stevens County Historical Museum, and the Stevens County DAC—as part of the theme of lifelong learning."

The students researched the symbolism of barn quilts, took field trips and spent time volunteering at the organizations, then selected which partner organization interested them the most.

After dividing into three groups, they created a design to represent the organization.

“The groups each had to write a proposal for their barn quilt, which was presented to the partner organization,” Dabbs explained.

Riley Johnson '27, Dawson, is an art history major, but had never heard of barn quilts before taking the class.

“Our design has a sun in the center to represent how the DAC is the center force for its clients. We used colors from the disability pride flag, and a ‘twisted tile’ pattern to show how the DAC and the community are interwoven.”

Lily Chamoun '26, Fergus Falls, also worked on the design for the DAC. She is an elementary education major and was drawn to the class because of the community engagement.

She, too, admitted she had never heard of a barn quilt, but was intrigued by this form of public art.



“What I like about art is that you can say a lot, without words. There is so much symbolism in a barn quilt. I’ve never been into quilting, but this is a kind of quilting that I can do.”

Chamoun also appreciated learning about the DAC and how their work impacts the community.

“It was really special to visit with them and hear what they stand for and their heart for the community.”

Both Johnson and Chamoun said creating art as a group project was a new experience and they’re pleased with how their barn quilt turned out.

“This is something that I did that will have a lasting impression on the community,” Johnson said.