

## Good Works: Art sale helps keep cultural events accessible to disabled, needy

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After her husband was killed and she was left paralyzed from the waist down in 1999, Minna Hong looked for a way to occupy her mind. That's when she started making jewelry.

Today she has a partner, and their work is available in 360 stores nationwide. But Hong still displays her jewelry at the yearly VSA arts of Georgia Holiday Art Sale, which not only gives disabled and underfunded artists a venue for their work, but also helps fund other VSA programs that bring art and culture to the disabled and disadvantaged.

"I believe in the VSA mission of making art available to those in the community who might otherwise not be able to enjoy it," Hong said. "And they were so good to me when I was first starting out, so I like to give back to the gallery."

Elizabeth Labbe-Webb, executive director of VSA arts of Georgia, said the organization gives disabled or disadvantaged artists a chance to learn how to present their work in a gallery setting so they can eventually move into mainstream locations.

"We help them learn how to do things like label items, ship things, how to make an attractive display — things other galleries expect them to already know how to do," Labbe-Webb said.

Paula Buford said she's been displaying pottery and jewelry at the VSA's Arts for All Gallery for about four years. Because of a slight brain injury, Buford, a pastoral counselor, can no longer work full time, or even regular hours. Having the ability to do art when she feels up to it and sell it at the gallery has helped her, she said.

"It's a therapeutic hobby that now pays for itself."

But the holiday sale also helps fund VSA's core mission to ensure that people with disabilities or those with lower incomes have access to arts and cultural events. Labbe-Webb said they distribute tickets to everything from plays and dances to music, museums, sports events and even the zoo.

"The holiday sale is one of our major fund-raisers and also allows us to show the community the range of talent of artists with disabilities or lower-income artists who wouldn't get their work seen otherwise," Labbe-Webb said.

The show is in the Healey Building, 57 Forsyth St., Atlanta, through Dec. 22. 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Mondays-Fridays, 5-8 p.m. Dec. 7, noon-3 p.m. Sunday and Dec. 10 and 17.

### Christmas toy drive

**What started three years ago as a few friends throwing a party to gather Christmas toys for children has become an annual bash that founders hope this year will draw 4,000 people. The event, called the Toy Party, has gotten so big it has moved to the Inforum in downtown Atlanta. Bring a new, unwrapped toy or gift card worth \$10 or more and enjoy cocktails and hors d'oeuvres. Festive holiday attire encouraged. 5:30-9 p.m. Sunday. 250 Williams St., Atlanta. Information: [www.forthekid.org](http://www.forthekid.org).**

### Shop for Salvation Army

Make a donation of at least \$1 to the Salvation Army on Tuesday-Thursday at Belk stores and get a coupon worth 20 percent off a regularly priced item and 15 percent off a sale item (some exclusions apply). Salvation Army workers will be selling the tickets in front of stores or shoppers can buy them at the register. Money collected for the coupons goes to the Salvation Army.

### How to submit items

Send items and photos for this column to Good Works, Features Department, 72 Marietta St. N.W., Atlanta, GA 30303, or e-mail us at [goodworks@ajc.com](mailto:goodworks@ajc.com). All items must be submitted in writing. Please include date of event and a daytime phone number for a contact person.