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Oak Park Police Station gets the artistic treatment

The Oak Park Police station, 123 Madison St., recently got an artistic upgrade. Oak Park artist Lindsay Olson has converted a hallway in the station into Oak Park's latest – and most exclusive – art gallery.

Olson's goal was to take what was potentially a hectic workplace and turn a portion of it into a calm, creative space. She also thought an art gallery might be a good morale booster for the police department. Police Chief Rick Tanksley agreed.

“By displaying a wide variety of artistic expression, we hope to enrich the lives these hardworking, dedicated professionals,” Tanksley said.

The art in the gallery is scheduled to rotate every six to eight weeks. Olson plans to experiment with a wide range of different artists and styles through the year. Currently, an exhibit by Oak Park artist Janice Elkins, whose studio is located at 149 Harrison St. in the Oak Park Arts District or online at www.janiceelkinsart.com, hangs in the space.

According to Olson's framed mission statement, which hangs in the gallery space, “The real value of this gallery space is that it gives a few of us creative types a chance to show our appreciation to all the members of the Oak Park Police Department.”

For now, Olson is hand-picking each artist for the gallery. However, she's also been taking surveys from Police Department staff on which artwork they like and why. Her hope is that she can find out which types of art the staff prefer. Olson says she also hopes to seek grant money for the project. She would like to explore getting new lighting in the hallway to make the look and feel of the gallery more professional.

For more information on the police station art gallery, call 708.386.3800 or e-mail police@oak-park.us.

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