

the times

Illiana Artists welcoming regionites, visitors

By Tim Shellberg Times Correspondent | Posted: Wednesday, August 11, 2010 4:30 am

The qualifications to become a member of the Illiana Artists Association are simple in the eyes of its president, Maria Braun-Perez.

"Basically anyone who shares a belief in arts and helping other people and who wants to network together and learn and share with one another is eligible to join," she said.

The association will present creations at the W.F. Wellman Exhibit Hall at the Indiana Welcome Center in Hammond starting Aug. 17. The Illiana Artists Association has been exhibiting works throughout the region and bringing area artists and art organizations together for approximately three decades, according to Braun-Perez.

There are currently 56 members in the association and Braun-Perez, a Hammond-based digital artist and graphic designer, has served as their president for the last two years.

Their exhibit at Wellman Exhibit Hall is an extension of the association promoting community art. In addition to showcasing the works of more than two dozen of its own members, the association asked 119th St. Artists in Whiting and Hobart Arts League to contribute to the exhibit as well.

More than 100 original paintings, sculptures, photographs and mixed media works make up the display.

"A lot of the work that you'll see on display is going to be taken from people's surroundings or environments, whether it's photography or whether it's paintings," Braun-Perez said of the exhibit. "It represents the quality of the arts and the variety of different techniques and styles."

To Braun-Perez, the Wellman Exhibit Hall is an ideal place for her association to showcase its work.

You have people coming from out of state stopping in, so it's a great way to get your work out there and get people more aware of who you are and what it is you do best."

Erika Scheeringa, director of public relations for Indiana Welcome Center, agrees.

"Bringing local artists to the Indiana Welcome Center to display their work is a fantastic and creative way to showcase what the South Shore has to offer," she said.