

## Lydia Pinkham Studio a true jewel in Lynn

By Gayla Cawley

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LYNN — It's 10 years and counting for The Lydia Pinkham House and its open studios where artwork from the building's tenants is displayed and sold.

Volunteer Arthur DeFabio, who guided visitors in and out of the Western Avenue building on Sunday, said a committee of artists in the the building organizes the open studio showings. He said the first open studio started with North Shore Clay, which is now the Clay School, primarily featuring adult classes.

Kristen Bassion owns Clay School. She founded the Lydia Pinkham Open Studios 10 years ago after opening the Clay School with a friend. Initially, Open Studio was just going to be comprised of artists taking part in the Clay School, but evolved into including all artists who have a space in the building. Bassion said open studios are a way for artists to do marketing and sales for their pieces and to meet other artists. She said she's seen growth in the show: About 150 people attended 10 years ago and almost 700 people walked through the building's doors this past weekend.

This year's Open Studio, which Bassion said is Lynn's largest open studio, spanned Saturday and Sunday. The Lydia Pinkham House is located at 271 Western Ave. Bassion said there were about 45 artists showing their work, with 21 of those artists from the Clay School.

DeFabio said those attending the studio for the first time usually have the same reaction: “I had no idea the quality of art available in this building existed in Lynn on Western Avenue.”

To celebrate 10 years, Bassion said a mural will be displayed on the wall in the Clay School, comprised of 68 8-by-8 tiles that all incorporate the number 10 in some way. For example, one of those tiles could have 10 leaves or 10 dots. Next year, she’s hoping to expand the Open Studio to downtown Lynn artists and those who are a part of RAW Art Works.

“They can basically ride off the success we’ve had,” Bassion said.

Elen Tieger, a student at the Clay School for the past three years and a Lynn resident, put some of her free hand work up for sale during the weekend. One of her serving dishes features a curved handle, a new design she has been using. A visiting nurse by day, Tieger said art helps her relax. “It’s my peace of mind,” Tieger said.

Kate Luchini, of Marblehead, and Tim Hansen, of Swampscott, are the owners of Digs, and make enamel jewelry, which they displayed at the weekend show.

Luchini said their jewelry is copper based with glass enamel over the top. She puts the pieces in a kiln to fire them. Hansen said a piece like a necklace could take about two hours to make.

Jon Paddol, who works with Resource Capital Group, the company that manages the Lydia Pinkham House, said it’s been fun seeing the Open Studio grow, with more people coming in.

“It’s exciting to get the artwork out so the city can appreciate it,” Paddol said.