



Fran Wittgens and Muriel Kennedy are pictured painting ceiling tiles which were installed above examining tables at the Antigonish Women's Resource Centre. (Contributed photo)

Colourful tiles bring healing

by Heather MacAdam

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Healing through art was the aim of a recent project undertaken by a number of women in Antigonish.

Ceiling tiles were painted with soothing colours and images before being reinstalled at the Antigonish Women's Resource Centre.

Local artist Anne Camozzi said the idea for the project came from a hospital in the U.S.

"They had been using art as a form of healing therapy," Camozzi said. "That really appealed to me because my own art is kind of healing therapy."

Camozzi said she watched a documentary about this particular hospital and when patients are wheeled to surgery they travel under the painted ceiling tiles.

"When you wake up in recovery you're looking at painted ceiling tiles. It was a children's hospital and they actually had children who were going to surgery paint the tiles. I thought it was such a cool thing."

It was several years ago when Camozzi first heard of this hospital and it has been something that has been on her mind ever since.

"I approached the women's centre because they have Lindsay's Health Centre," she

said, adding the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Program is run out of the centre.

"I was thinking about the women who have been sexually assaulted and they're lying there being examined, wouldn't it be nice to be looking at something other than a white ceiling tile."

Camozzi approached the Antigonish Women's Resource Centre and the project quickly got off the ground.

About five or six painting sessions took place at Camozzi's home studio.

"I had picked women who had never painted before and they worked on these ceiling tiles. The idea behind it was sort of doing painted prayers for the people. Not prayers in the traditional sense, but we were thinking about the women that might be looking at these tiles when we painted them - trying to put healing energy into them."

In total there were 10 tiles painted, Camozzi said. There are two examining tables in the centre - one for the doctor and one for the nurse.

"There are five over one table and five over another table," she said.

The nurse who works in the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Program came and painted a tile, Camozzi added.

"The ceiling tile that's over

her examining table she helped paint. I thought that was cool."

A lot of the women who came were from the St. James United Church Social Justice Committee, she said.

"I'm on that committee. The committee took it on as a project."

Two women who recently had deaths in their families also came and helped paint tiles as a healing project.

"It turned out to be a really lovely project from a whole bunch of different levels."

Camozzi said she would like to see more interest generated in art in healing locations in Antigonish.

Vangie Babin of the Antigonish Women's Resource Centre said so far the feedback to the ceiling tiles has been great.

"The women really like it because ... it's a nice distraction," she said. "They're done in a way that - there are spirals that will take you on a little journey and there are different colours that are soothing. They're just lovely."

Babin said she would love to see similar projects catch on at doctor's office throughout the town.

"I think more people should [try it]. No previous experience required."

"It was really a very nice project."