

# Perspectives

## Cowpokes & Brush Strokes engages toddlers in art, social skills

Imagine creating an art pizza, or painting a rooster with a fork. That's what the children in "Cowpokes & Brush Strokes" are doing at the Chisholm Trail Heritage Center in its exclusive program designed for 2-4 year olds.

Now in its fourth "season" the Heritage Center's creativity program is sponsored by Oklahoma Arts Council, and provides toddlers with tools for art and helps build social skills.

Parents and grandparents from around southern Oklahoma bring their children to Duncan for participation in this program. While most of the participants are from Stephens County communities -- Duncan, Marlow, Comanche, and Velma; quite a few have come from Elgin, Fletcher, Walters, Ratliff City, Foster, Frederick, Lindsay, Lawton, and even Burkburnett, Texas.

"This shows a need for art and music programs for this age," CTHC's Education Coordinator, Leah Mulkey said.

Each season has eight Monday sessions for the pre-enrolled participants and an adult is required to stay with the child during the session that lasts 45 minutes. A unique art, music and story time theme happens each session. This

ated an "art pizza" and a watercolor paper snail. They are able to take home their completed projects. Children are introduced to hand-eye coordination techniques, incorporating shapes and textures into their art projects and CTHC's trained educators -- Edie Smith Stewart, Mary Lowry and Cindy Parks, lead the programs. After an art session, the children also experience story and music time.

"This art experience would not happen without the financial support of the Oklahoma Arts Council," said Executive Director Stacy Cramer Moore.

State Rep. Marcus McEntire visited Monday to see the program in action. He sat with participants, Cristian Moore, who was with grandmother, Deborah Triche; and Ginny Anderson, who was with her grandmother, Dede Cole. Both children engaged McEntire with conversation and art tips as they worked on their paper snails on coffee filters.

"We are grateful to the Oklahoma Arts Council for their generous financial support of the Cowpokes & Brushstrokes program held at the Chisholm Trail Heritage Center. The Cowpokes program enriches the lives of young



Photo Submitted

**ART PROJECT:** Ginny Anderson and Cristian Moore show OK State Rep. Marcus McEntire just how easy creating art can be, during a Cowpokes & Brush Strokes creativity session at the Chisholm Trail Heritage Center, Monday. Moore's grandmother, Deborah Triche, and Anderson's grandmother, Dede Cole, were there to assist the little ones with their art projects. Oklahoma Arts Council is the sponsor of the program, now in its fourth season.

for them to explore their creativity with provides a safe and social environment how engaged this group of children are;