

Local student takes top art award



Submitted Photo

Michaela Cliff with her parents and Congressman Jim Langevin in Washington, DC, after Cliff's artwork was hung in the United States Capitol. See more photos on Page A-2 and A-6

Michaela Cliff, of Coventry, took first place in the Second Congressional District 2011 High School Art Competition

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Michaela Cliff, of Coventry, recently had her artwork unveiled in the United States Capitol.

Now, for the next year, visitors from all over the country and the world will be able to visit and see her piece, "Braving the Elements."

Cliff was chosen as the winner of Rhode Island's Second Congressional District 2011 High School Art Competition, hosted by Congressman Jim Langevin, this spring.

The second place winner was a West Warwick High School student, Jenna Lee Teller.

In June, Cliff traveled to Washington, DC, to see her art unveiled in the U.S. Capitol. There it will be displayed until the new artwork is hung next year. The states were hung alphabetically, Cliff said, about the display.

Cliff said she was always comfortable and liked doing

art, but that it was in her ninth and tenth grade years that Cliff became close with an art teacher at Coventry High School, Stephanie Allard.

Cliff does mixed media, drawing or painting and hasn't taken classes anywhere else except at the high school. She has entered several contests and she said she just had to follow the guidelines and enter her piece in this competition.

The piece she entered "Braving the Element" took her probably a total of two to three hours to complete, she said.

Cliff's mother Lisa, said, "It was unique." During the contest, Lisa Cliff said that people were asking Michaela what had prompted her to create it.

The piece is a pen drawing, created "just with a ballpoint pen," Michaela Cliff said and "It has a picture within a picture."

A lot of her work is done with mixed media, everything from ballpoint pen, to pencil, to sharpie, water color, colored

pencil and sometimes even feathers or faux fur.

Michaela Cliff said, "I like faces." She said that when she likes someone's face she usually thinks about what it would be like to draw it. She likes wrinkles, angles, side angles and especially when the person is not looking directly at her.

Cliff would like to do art therapy or become an art educator, she said. Cliff was awarded a \$1,500 scholarship to the Savannah College of Art and Design in Georgia as a part of winning the competition.

Cliff was looking forward to studying ceramics, sculpture and doing more with painting and drawing this year at Coventry High School.

Cliff's mom said that as a kid, Michaela drew on everything.

Lisa Cliff said that she still has one of the very first picture's Michaela ever made at home in a frame.

The picture is of a little girl

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Artist's work on display in Washington, DC

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carrying a cinderblock onto a boat, she said. "Michaela was 12-years-old" and "she wasn't depressed" her mother said, but she was still able to capture something, "empathy," so that you felt for the little girl in the picture, Lisa Cliff said.

Their airfare to Washington, DC, provided by Southwest Airlines, was paid for, as well as one night in the Westin. A reception was also held for the contest winners as well as a luncheon and an official tour with the congressman's aides.

"I am very critical of my work," Michaela Cliff said, "I thought mine was the worst one there."

Angelena Chapman•Daily Times

Michaela Cliff as seen in a self-portrait. See Page A-6 for more photos.



Second Congressional District 2011 High School Art Competition



Submitted Photos

Left: Michaela Cliff with Congressman Jim Langevin and her award-winning art piece, "Braving the Elements," after she found that she had taken first place in the Second Congressional-District 2011 High School Art Competition.

Right: Jenna Lee Tellier, of West Warwick, took second place.

