

# New Faces, New Places

Splattered paint covered the floors and tables as loud music played in senior **Lauren Christie's** basement art studio, while she worked on her portrait of an Ethiopian orphan.

National Art Honor Society students shared their passion for art with orphans around the world through the Memory Project, a nonprofit organization.

The Memory Project provided art students and teachers with the opportunity to create portraits of children around the world who lived extremely challenging lives, according to the Memory Project's website.

Founder **Ben Schumaker** wrote that the organization hoped that in receiving portraits, the children saw that others valued and cared about them, even thousands of miles away.

Christie, who said she turned to art in a difficult time in her life, wanted to participate in the Memory Project in hopes that art had the same impact on the children as it did on her.

"I just sort of fell in love with [art] and it basically saved me," Christie said. "You know, middle school is just sort of a hard time for everyone and it got me through and has been my stabilizer since then."

Christie said that, like all her art endeavors and aspects of her life, she wants to put a smile on someone's face.

Representatives from the organization take the portraits to the orphanages and photograph the children with their portrait to show the artists the effect of their work.

Schumaker said the children's immediate reactions vary by age, but that young children hold them proudly to show everyone around while teenagers commonly prefer to receive them privately to be shared with close friends.

Christie, who performs other art-related service activities, agreed that the Memory Project is a great organization for a good cause.

"It's a good way to connect to someone that you don't know, and it's cool to have your art somewhere else in the world, making someone else happy," Christie said. "It's good to take something you love and use it to give to other people."

While the Memory Project strived to benefit the orphans, the participating artists also benefitted from the work of the organization. Christie described the greatest emotion she felt as gratitude, having seen the things often taken for granted that the children do not have.

"It's very grounding," Christie said. "I know I'm not exactly the richest person, and I don't have all the money to give them, but if I could I would. But, I feel like me helping them in a little way helps me.

Christie said she planned to continue art-based community service projects and using her talents to help others.