



ANNE NEILSON

HEART OF AN ANGEL ON THE WINGS OF AN ARTIST

By Allison Parker

The soul of a person is often reflected in their everyday deeds. In the case of local artist Anne Herring Neilson, her giving spirit pours out in her creative artwork and outreach efforts.

As the holidays approach and cold winds blow, many of us are thinking of family celebrations, decorating and exchanging presents. For Anne Neilson, it's a time of year that she relishes dearly. The time gives her pause to reflect on the many ways her art has impacted the lives of others.

Inspired to her creative side as a child, Anne reflects, "I always knew I wanted to be an artist since I was a little girl, I wrote it down from a young age. "

Her initial path in art started with a pottery venture, Herring Designs, Inc. Anne's life in Charlotte included marriage and children during which Anne took time to focus on being a wife and mother. In 2003, Anne rekindled her love of art with oil painting.

With her passion to be a great wife and mother, Anne was also drawn to paint as a reflection of her faith. She notes "I picked art back up again and we had a small studio built in our home off the kitchen when we contracted our home in Foxcroft. "

Faith was the main inspiration for her beloved and well-known Angels paintings. Working to beautiful praise music, Anne created her beloved first Angels paintings.



“My sister was one of the first to see my initial Angels painting , she commented ‘You’ve found your voice’. Neilson recalls.

A beautiful visionary voice flowed through Anne’s paint brush. Anne’s Angels were making their way to local venues and beyond.

“Paint and Give Back” echoed in her heart.

Anne’s inner voice stirred a passion to champion causes such as homelessness, Alzheimer’s and many other worthwhile areas of giving back to the local community. Her Angel Series gained momentum and allowed her a platform to grow her outreach efforts.

In 2012, she self- published Angels in our Midst. With over 30,000 copies sold to date her influence is impressive as is her drive to continue to give from her heart. A follow up book, Strokes of Compassion, followed. Most recently, her latest coffee table book, Angels: The Collector’s Edition is sweeping waves of

necticut. The dreary March forecast put a glitch in the plans as it seemed Kathy would have to cancel her visit. However, as fate would have it, Kathie Lee made it to meet me. She told me “The Lord told me to come and encourage you. “

What an amazing friendship and connection that these two talented ladies share- It is a true mark of how friends can bring sunshine into each other’s lives.

Anne adds, “It was a beautiful time to have recently shared Kathie Lee’s birthday in Nashville with her and friends.”

With Anne’s art gallery growth over the past 17 years, she has moved from South End to the South Park Area. The last few years, Anne has expanded the art gallery to include other artists from emerging to established. Her entwining outreach among her peers has allowed her to raise over \$400,000 to help organizations in need.



awareness to social issues such as poverty and homelessness.

Anne’s voice through the paintbrush took flight from Charlotte. Connections made through her caring outreach have left lasting impressions within her life and the lives of others. Anne’s Angels paintings have touched the lives of such celebrities as Oprah Winfrey and Kathie Lee Gifford.

Her connections to others fuel her creativity and heart. She felt inspired by Ron Hall and Denver Moore’s book Same Kind of Different as Me. It is the story of an art curator and his relationship with a homeless man that is impactful to both in a positive way.

Anne’s caring heart has endeared her to many people who come to know her through her paintings and community efforts. Her friendship blossomed with Kathie Lee Gifford from their initial contact. The two ladies have a similar faith inspired life.

She explains, “Shortly after I sent Kathie my Angels book, Kathy planned to meet me at one of my art shows in Essex, Con-

Always busy helping others, Anne is never too busy to share a few moments with a new friend or visitor. When we met, Anne was working on an evening event for the Memory Center Charlotte. (Memory Center Charlotte is a local nonprofit that is integral to fighting Alzheimer’s and related dementia.) Next up on her plate was an event with Maria Shriver, The Purple Luncheon, in support of The Women’s Alzheimer’s Movement. There is no limit to the good that can come from a caring soul like Anne.

Just spending a short time with Anne, it was visibly apparent that her strong faith and creative utilization of talents glowed in her every action and word. As a servant to her fellow man, Anne has proven that it’s truly better to give than to receive. Her heartfelt actions and passion for art make her a perfect combination. I had to think as I looked at the impeccable delicate Angels created by Anne, how much these incredible paintings reflect almost a self-portrait in her selfless soul and passion for uplifting others.