

Vol. 39 No. 23 (310) 372-0388 TBRnews.com July 23, 2015

THE BEACH REPORTER



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Kayla Ryyth's Redondo Union High teacher recommended she check out the free art classes at Ryman Arts.

submitted photo

Redondo grad benefits from free art school

by Ellen Robinson

Redondo Union graduate Kayla Ryyth knew she had passion and talent when it came to art, but she was unsure of where it could take her in life.

Then Ryyth was selected to take free classes earlier this year at Ryman Arts, located at Otis College of Art and Design in Los Angeles, and she now plans to peruse a career in drawing, possibly for Disney. "The Ryman school

exposed me to so many different fields. They helped me put together a portfolio and give great advice and guidance. A lot of the field trips we went on really boosted my interest," she said.

She is currently enrolled in the Summer of Art program at Otis College of Art and Design, where she'll attend school in the fall.

"There is a huge emphasis on the human body in the life drawing class that I'm taking. We focus on creating charac-

see ART STUDENT / 15

ART STUDENT / from 12

ters and working on animation," Ryyth said. "I wasn't sure of what I wanted to do, but then taking classes at Ryman really boosted my interest in pursuing an art career. They are very professional."

Executive director of the school Diane Brigham said the programs are designed for students just like Ryyth.

"The school is for teens with high potential and who are eager to explore art and art careers more seriously. It is specifically for teens who view themselves as artists and have a lot of talent and ability and are looking to do more than what art classes in high school offer," she said.

Classes are small and are organized into three 12 week semesters that span over the course of a year and a half. Students take a foundation class, then an intermediate class and finally an advanced painting class. All classes are taught by professional artists and there is a major emphasis on drawing and painting.

"We focus on the fundamentals because being strong in those basic skills will become an asset in any art career," Brigham said.

The final course also focuses on college planning. About 95 percent of Ryman graduates continue on to college. The school brings in college recruiters from a variety of universities and students are guided through their choice process. The programs are held on the Otis campus and California State University — Fullerton. Only 300 students are accepted annually. "There is this misconception that there is no future in art, but indeed there is in Southern California ... the creative industry is a major employer here. It relies on artists and designers, and a lot of the entertainment industry offers high paying careers," Brigham said. "A lot of people forget how important artists and designers are."

She said many students go on to work in the film industry even if that was not the first thing that they considered as a career path.

"We are a unique school in that we offer full scholarships. We have a holistic nature to the way we teach art and round it out with teaching them about colleges. It's really a unique experience for very talented teens. Teens are at that pivotal moment in life where they are making decisions that will affect the rest of their life, we like to be there to guide them through that," Brigham said.