

GREENFIELD



Isabella Leibenow, 10, left, uses chalk paint to decorate a parking space Friday night during the socially distanced "Chalk It Up!" art event at Greenfield Middle School put on by the Greenfield Recreation Department.

STAFF PHOTO/DAN LITTLE

## Recreation Department offers middle schoolers a new monthly program

By ANITA FRITZ  
Staff Writer

GREENFIELD — A small group of students spent about an hour on Friday painting pictures they had designed at home on parking spaces in the Greenfield Middle School parking lot as part of the Greenfield Recreation Department's new "REC the NIGHT" series for teens and preteens.

The monthly series held its first event on Sept. 25, from 6 to 7 p.m. The program will feature a special "tween-centric" activity each month, the first being "Chalk It Up!," a socially distanced art event, at which participants each used a parking space as a canvas.

"I'm not sure what it is I designed," 12-year-old Ruby Remillard said of her work. "I'm into things like aliens and funky things right now."

Remillard said she has participated in Recreation Department events in the past and is glad they're being offered again. As she loves painting, she decided to join in the fun on Friday.

"I hang out with kids in my neighborhood — we keep our distance — but I thought this would be something a little different. I'm glad they're offering this," she said.

"We had planned to kick off this series in the spring, but the pandemic delayed those plans," Recreation Department Director Christy Moore said. "We needed to readjust what we were planning and offer it safely."

Moore said the department

hopes to keep youths, especially middle schoolers who are at a challenging age, engaged.

"We want to give them time outside until it's too cold, and then we'll figure something else out," she said. "Right now, middle schoolers get to see their friends remotely, but this will give them a more in-person experience at a safe distance. Middle schoolers are at that age where they need, don't want, supervision, so we need to develop relationships with them and find activities for them to do together."

Moore said, without giving a lot away, October's "REC the NIGHT" event will have something to do with Halloween and decorating pumpkins.

Victoria "Tori" VanVleet, the department's program supervisor, planned "REC the NIGHT" earlier this year, and was disappointed when the pandemic caused programs to shut down. She said everyone hopes the Recreation Department will be able to slowly reopen to the city's youths as time goes on.

"We can't open the center until we know the pandemic is under control, but we've renovated the game room and are ready when it's time," Moore explained. "I'm looking forward to that time. It will be nice when we can reopen. We're right across the street from the middle school, so we're in a perfect, easy to access location"

The "REC the NIGHT" events are free, but space is limited, so registration is re-



Colored chalk paint is used to decorate a parking space Friday night during the socially distanced "Chalk It Up!" art event at Greenfield Middle School put on by the Greenfield Recreation Department.

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quired. For more information, call 413-772-1553 or visit [greenfieldrecreation.com](http://greenfieldrecreation.com).

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# COLORING BETWEEN THE LINES



STAFF PHOTO/DAN LITTLE

**Ruby Remillard, 12, uses chalk paint to decorate a parking space Friday night during the socially distanced “Chalk It Up!” art event at Greenfield Middle School put on by the Greenfield Recreation Department. For a story and more photos, see Page A5.**