

Annie Alexander Ray, who can barely see, manages to paint when Anna Layton visits her at Calhoun-Liberty Hospital.



Arts in Medicine program bringing smiles to patients

BY KELLI PEACOCK DUNN
News Editor

When Fridays roll around at Calhoun-Liberty Hospital, the patients in the swing bed program light up. The source of these smiles is Anna Layton, an artist and musician who spreads childlike fun to all

ages.

"I've always enjoyed bringing a little brightness to somebody's day," says Anna, who serves as the cultural arts coordinator for the Calhoun County Public Library.

But when the library closes on Fridays, Anna takes her show on the road

through the Arts in Medicine program. Sponsored by the Calhoun County Chamber of Commerce, the program was launched by Shands Hospital in Gainesville over two decades ago. It has spread through a grant program with a focus on linking artists to healthcare in rural communities.

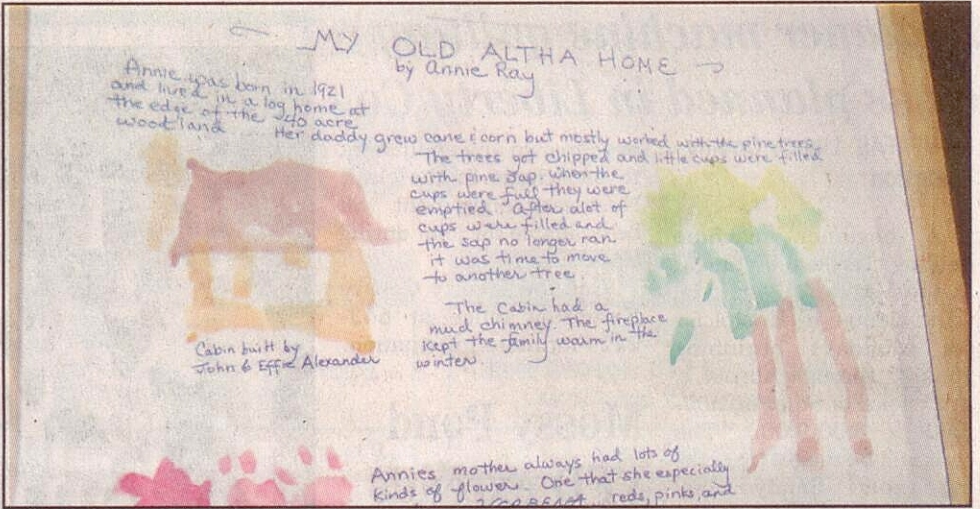
Armed with paints, a ukulele, flute, and soothing music on CD, Anna pushes her cart along the halls of Calhoun-Liberty Hospital.

Ninety-year-old Annie Alexander Ray can barely see, but she is able to fingerpaint while telling Anna her life story. She creates images depicting her childhood in Altha.

Lavada Adkins never knew she had any artistic ability until Anna came along. Although visually impaired, she has three beautiful paintings on her wall she made during their Friday visits.

Lavada Adkins strums the ukulele with Anna Layton during a recent Arts in Medicine session at the local hospital.





Annie Alexander Ray shared her story about growing up in Altha and used finger paints to bring her memories to life.



Lavada Adkins had no idea she was artistically gifted until Anna Layton began visiting with her through the Arts in Medicine program. Lavada painted the gorgeous pictures above.

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comes from individual and business donors, private foundation and grants.

Arts in Medicine cont'd————

When a patient doesn't feel up to painting, Anna sings a song, accompanied by her ukulele, or plays a relaxing tune on the flute.

"I like to try to bring somebody back to their inner child," Anna remarks. "A patient might have a long painful day, but they put forth the effort and give me the chance to help them think creatively. That brings relief and comfort from illness. It helps them pass the time and also the stress of that hospital setting which can be mundane. Patients look forward to the art sessions and even plan what they want to paint."

A former candy striper

in high school, Anna has also volunteered at nursing homes over the years. The staff at Calhoun-Liberty Hospital are delighted she is bringing her mix of art and enthusiasm to their

halls.

For more details on the Arts in Medicine program, call Kristy Terry at the Chamber of Commerce, 674-4519 or email kristy@calhounco.org

Pine Beetle cont'd—

two approved practices per year. Projects must cover at least 10 acres and funding requests may not exceed \$10,000.

All qualifying applications received during the submission period will be evaluated and ranked for approval.

To obtain application forms and more informa-

tion on program requirements and procedures, contact the local Division of Forestry office at 674-8073 located on Magnolia Church Rd.

Information and forms are also available on the internet at www.fl-dof.com/forest_management/fh_insects_spb_prevention_program.html