

Teets contest for more than prizes

MOTHER, DAUGHTER CONNECT WHILE COMPETING AT THE MERCER COUNTY FAIR FLORAL HALL

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It doesn't bother Debra Teets. It really doesn't.

It doesn't bother her that her daughter, Chloe, beats her every time the two compete at the Open Floral Hall at the Mercer County Fair and Horse Show.

It doesn't bother her that Chloe went all the way to the Kentucky State Fair in her very first year, or that she won four blue ribbons, two reds and a white.

"Every year she beats me," Debra said.

Chloe also does pottery, wool and needle felt. She recently spent a week burning Norse runes into a walking staff.

"I would love for her to do more basket weaving," Debra said.

"I haven't done a basket in a long time," Chloe said.

Nowadays she prefers what she calls the "2-D stuff:" pencil drawings, acrylics and—Chloe's favorite—water colors. Recently, Chloe attended water-coloring class at the University of Wisconsin at Green Bay.

What is it about water colors?

"The colors are vibrant and you

can do a lot with it," Chloe said. "It's very versatile."

She hasn't picked a college yet, but Chloe plans to study art. "I'll probably major in fine art," she said.

Debra concentrates on crafts—basket weaving, painting gourds, making stools.

She said she didn't grow up in a crafty home. "I didn't know I could do anything until later on," Debra said.

It was her roommates at Kentucky State University who taught her to weave baskets.

As an English and cultural studies teacher at Mercer County Senior High School, Debra brings her love of arts and crafts into the classroom. She has her students paint gourds.

"It's an old art," Debra said. "It used to be something very essential for survival."

She feels it gives students a feel for how earlier generations lived their lives. Our ancestors couldn't just run to the store to get everything they needed. They had to be able to "create something from scratch," Debra said.

But there's more to it than that.

"It's a neat art that I fear is going to be dead for future generations," she said.

She said her students have their

doubts at the start. But they quickly learn it takes real skill.

It also takes time and it takes dedication. Debra said it takes eight hours to make a hearth basket.

Debra and Chloe were recently sitting in their kitchen, looking over their projects for this year's county fair.

"I compete against her every single year in the adult category and she wins," Debra said.

It doesn't really bother her. Not really. Because, what it really means is that Chloe has skills that will last her the rest of her life. What it really means is the highest compliment a teacher can ever get.

"It means I taught her something," Debra said.



The Harrodsburg Herald/Robert Moore

Debra Teets, left, admits her daughter, Chloe, right, beats her whenever they compete at the Floral Hall at the Mercer County Fair, but she doesn't really mind. "It means I taught her something," Debra said.

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