

# Clinton Rocks touch the community

By Nicole Skelton

A community-building group known as Clinton “Rocks!” began a new Clinton tradition in order to spread joy and inspire creativity within the town. Those taking a stroll through Olde Towne or down the Clinton Community Nature Center trails may stumble upon a peculiar rock or two. People of all ages are gathering painting supplies and using their creativity to display a variety of artwork on an unusual medium – a rock.

The goal of the Clinton “Rocks!” Facebook group is to motivate people to try something new, use their imagination, and explore the community. Painting and hiding rocks offers an opportunity for kids, parents and grandparents to rediscover parts of the community that they haven’t appreciated in a while, and have a lot of fun while doing it.

The process is quite simple: find some rocks with a relatively flat surface in order to easily paint or add any type of unique artwork, buy a variety of painting supplies, then, get creative!

Many locals have already participated in Clinton’s lighthearted and fun activity. One of these active participants is twenty-four-year-old Savannah Shepherd. Shepherd has been a Clinton native for eighteen years. She began painting and hiding rocks around town about two and a half years ago.

“I discovered the Clinton ‘Rocks!’ Facebook page, and got into it,” said Shepherd.

Shepherd began painting rocks to help alleviate her symptoms of depression and get to know the members of the Facebook group as well as people in the Clinton community.

“It gave me a new way to express myself,” said Shepherd.

Since beginning her new leisure activity, Shepherd has spread hundreds of painted rocks around the town.

“I paint whatever my mind thinks of,” said Shepherd. She has created a large variety of rock artwork from



Photo by Savannah Shepherd

*Savannah Shepherd creates various kinds of rock artwork to hide around Clinton. Her “take one, leave one” garden is on display in her yard, where kids can take a rock and leave one for someone else.*

Disney scenes to different kinds of animals. Shepherd has also taken her artwork to the next level by gluing pieces and creating scenes in 3-D.

Shepherd has also deliberately pursued spreading Clinton’s sweet secret to more communities in surrounding states.

“Recently, I have hidden many rocks in Alabama and Georgia,” said Shepherd. “I have many rock pals from all different states that I do monthly swaps with.” Her goal is to collect painted rocks from every state.

Along with her family, Shepherd views painting and hiding rocks as a way to intentionally spread joy and comfort.

“Painting rocks benefits the community by getting people outdoors, making new friends, and sharing a common interest,” said

Shepherd. Her family bonds over painting and hiding rocks on a regular basis.

“My whole family is into it,” said Shepherd. “My brother makes some really cool painted rocks, and me and my mom travel to Georgia to take rocks painted by other local artists.”

Shepherd believes that painting and hiding rocks is a brilliant and easy activity for children to participate in.

“It will spark their imagination and get them outdoors this summer,” said Shepherd. Sometimes, she has kids come over and paint rocks with her. Shepherd has an entire garden full of “special” rocks that kids have made and left for her. She also has a “take one, leave one” garden.

“Kids can take a rock of their choosing and leave one for someone else to take,” said Shepherd.

Many kids in the community enjoy rock painting and Shepherd’s large showcase of rock artwork around town.

“I just wanted to share a message

I got today,” said Shepherd, as she read a heartwarming text from a parent. It read, “While driving in the car, my six-year-old son said that he was a fan of the Jonas Brothers and

of the girl who hides rocks from Mississippi. Keep creating rocks and spreading beauty all over, because you make people happy.” Shepherd was extremely touched, and she responded with saying, “This person may never know just how much this means to me.”

Painting and hiding rocks is more than just a leisure time activity. It spreads love and beauty.

In addition to adding a subtle charm to the community, painting rocks forms relationships and unites the locals through a sweet and innocent cause. Shepherd encourages Clintonians – especially those with young children – to pick up a few rocks for themselves and their kids this summer and get to painting, for one never knows who may appreciate the simplest, sweetest small-town gesture.

