

LOCAL



PHOTOS BY RON ALBERTSON, THE HAMILTON SPECTATOR
Cheryl Lamouri does aboriginal drawings, making them into cards or pendants for necklaces.

New waterfront market opens doors for artists

Goal of bazaar is to tackle poverty in diverse community

STORIES BY LAURA MUELLER

Cheryl Lamouri believes she'll make a new beginning this weekend.

The Métis artist will open her booth at Hamilton's waterfront Sabawoon Bazaar tomorrow morning and take the first steps in a bold local plan to help struggling and immigrant artists pull themselves out of poverty.

But it's not just about the artists. It's also about giving people another reason to spend time on Hamilton's waterfront.

The Sabawoon Bazaar will feature works from artists from countries as far flung as Libya, Afghanistan and Trinidad, and offer jewellery, clothing, pottery, artwork and even accessories fashioned out of duct tape.

Sabawoon literally means a new day or a new beginning in Pashto, an Indo-Iranian language.

But tomorrow, artists and artisans from all over the world will be selling their wares in a project that gives them enough money to start a business in what they know best.

The high cost of renting a booth at many art festivals left Lamouri unable to sell her drawings and jewellery.

But she says the Sabawoon Bazaar will give

Need to know

What: The Sabawoon Bazaar, Hamilton Art and Craft Market.

When: 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. every Saturday from June 7 until Aug. 30.

Where: Outdoor market on the Hamilton waterfront at Pier 8, between Parks Canada Discovery Centre and Williams Coffee Pub. On Discovery Drive near Guise Street East at the end of Hughson Street North.

■ For more information: sabawoon.ca or info@sabawoon.ca

her art the exposure she needs.

The bazaar's organizers, the Workers Art and Heritage Centre and Hamilton's Immigrant Culture and Art Association, say the goal is twofold.

First, it will help people and, secondly, it will stimulate economic development on the waterfront.

"This market is a strategy to address poverty in a diverse community," says Reneé Wetselaar,

executive director of the Workers Art and Heritage Centre.

"Right now, (the waterfront) is a place where a lot of people go, but there isn't much to do. So we're trying to create a mini-economy there."

Sabawoon is taking a concept that's tried-and-true in the developing world and using it to help artists here at home.

The bazaar follows the model of micro credit, a financial innovation that gives small loans to impoverished people who don't qualify for traditional loans.

The injection of capital has allowed people in the developing world to successfully build small businesses.

Half of the 30 artists at the Sabawoon Bazaar will receive \$1,500 throughout the summer to help them buy supplies.

They will get an additional \$100 each week to ensure they have a stable income to support their entrepreneurial art venture and help pay for child care and transportation costs.

In contrast to microcredit, the artists won't have to pay back the money.

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Market booth offers Métis artist opportunity to sell her drawings and gain exposure

Cheryl Lamouri was moved to express her pain through art.

After suffering through the removal of a cancerous lump from her throat and nerve abnormalities in her neck that left her crippled with pain, Lamouri found herself out of work on disability.

Inspired by the paintings of renowned aboriginal artist Norval Morrisseau, Lamouri began to draw medicine cards, which she describes as "native tarot cards."

Lamouri, who is Métis, has been giving away her drawings as gifts for a couple of years.

"I never thought my art was good enough that I

could make money off it," Lamouri says.

But a woman at a local food bank disagreed. She submitted Lamouri's name for consideration at the Sabawoon Bazaar.

When Lamouri found out that she would be selling her art and receiving money, she says she was "shocked, and very happy."