



Community Outreach

Oakland VA – Painting a Birthday!

Playland at the Beach was an amusement park that once lay adjacent to Golden Gate Park on Highway One across from the beach and the Pacific Ocean. This amusement park, and amusement parks in general, was Nancy Redden’s special request subject matter for this session with the Oakland vets.

Nancy has been in charge of the Oakland VA group for more than 20 years. Four years ago she saw the CWA volunteers working with the vets in Martinez. On the spot she invited CWA to work with the Oakland group. The CWA volunteers have had a wonderful relationship with the Oakland vets and Nancy. We all have our painting styles, and even when we’re “step by step” painting a barn, trees and fields, Nancy has produced artwork that resembles the Cliff House or some other feature from that amusement park world. So it was at her request and in

honor of her birthday that we took on the painting of Ferris wheels, merry-go-rounds, roller coasters, people and that exciting, fun atmosphere of the amusement park.

Being a birthday there had to be cake. Nancy is well loved and, as it turned out, there were three cakes plus vegetarian ceviche and chips. In the middle of lighting the candles a very loud alarm went off and a practice fire drill began. Afterwards, the candles were lit again. The birthday wish was made, and the candles blown out in one breathe! Cake was served. All the while the painting of amusement parks was carried on. Time flew and, in the end, the group shared their artworks. George Archibeque and Michael Friedland gifted their paintings to Nancy. She was very happy. We all went home having had a creative, dramatic, and tasty time.

Sheila Cain

