

CLAYWORKS

BY CONTRIBUTING WRITER GEORGE ADAMS

Did you know Charlotte has one of the largest nonprofit ceramic teaching facilities in the United States? Clayworks, located on Monroe Road, became an independent organization in 2004, teaching ceramics to students and artists. After meeting Brett Beasley, Clayworks studio manager, I was amazed by what Clayworks offers. The studio teaches approximately 200 students every 10 weeks. Classes are offered for children below 10 years old, youths and adults (18 years old and up).

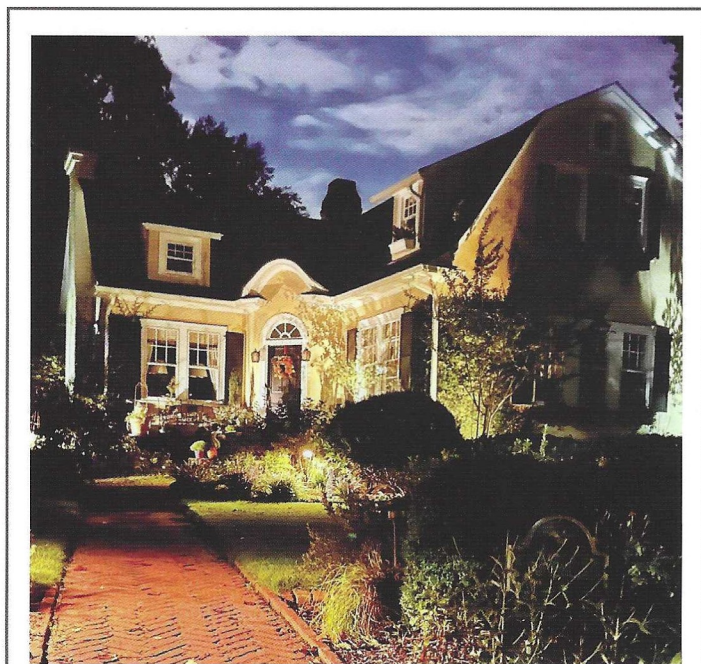
The programs vary depending on the level and type of ceramic classes offered. Clayworks collaborates with Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools, InReach (adults with disabilities), Second Harvest Food Bank (donating 300 clay bowls annually for their fundraiser) and veterans. They also have two mobile units which go out into the community to offer free programs for underprivileged individuals.

The studio consists of three large classrooms, a hand-building clay classroom, a wheel-throwing classroom and an intermediate to advanced classroom where the students are mostly professionals. There is a glaze room with an assortment of glazes and a kiln room where the clays are fired.

During COVID-19, when clay classes were shut down, many students worked from home, purchasing their clay from Clayworks and bringing in their artwork to be fired. My mom was one of those people; she created all sorts of figurines and brought them to Clayworks to have them fired. She finds that working with clay calms her nerves. Brett Beasley says, "Many people work with clay as therapy. I believe creating something out of clay is calming and gives insight into creativity." The City of Charlotte should be proud to have this huge facility that collaborates with bringing ceramic arts to our community.

For more information, including prices and class descriptions, visit learnclay.com.

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