



PHOTO: KATE SOSIN

Virgil Aiello of DeLuca's Market and Alix Childs at a Beacon Hill Business Association event at her shop Ceremony

Local Business Owners Increasingly Under 40

by **Kate Sosin**
Courant News Writer

The influx of fresh boutiques on Beacon Hill may have started more than a decade ago with the advent of businesses like shoe and accessory store Moxie and the boutique Wish

Businesses Rallying To Aid Kids' Art Program

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Beacon Hill-based photographer Susan Symonds remembers her first camera well. It came with 100 rolls of film and a promise from her father that when the film was done, she could upgrade her camera.

Symonds, owner of Infinity Portrait Design, is among a handful of downtown business owners looking to pass along similar resources to the next generation of young artists this summer.

Starting Saturday, June 7, area businesses will be raising money for Art Resource Collaborative for Kids (ARCK), an organization that aims to build art programs in public schools.

"It's about paying it forward," said Symonds. "I've had some great opportunities."

ARCK is a nonprofit dedicated to bringing arts education to Boston Public Schools. Downtown resident Sara Mraish Demeter founded the organization two years ago after learning that Josiah Quincy School, where her son was a kindergartener, had no arts program. ARCK has grown since, raising funds and resources for other schools.

"It's giving them creative outlets to think about their academics," said Demeter. "It's really connecting the art lesson to what kids are

learning in class."

Now, area businesses are jumping behind that effort.

On June 7, ARCK will host, "A HeART for ART" a heart painting party on the Boston Common near the Earl of Sandwich. People of all ages will be invited to paint hearts for ARCK to be displayed in local businesses this summer. The businesses will choose a day to display the hearts and donate a portion of their proceeds to the organization. ARCK supporters can follow the campaign on Twitter via the hashtag #followmyheart.

Ben & Jerry's will be scooping free ice cream for the June 7 event.

"With ARCK, it's very in line with our values," said Ryan Midden, Ben & Jerry's Boston managing director. "It's one of those programs where it's not necessarily about a direct cause or an issue, but it's really about investing in our young people."

Demeter said she hopes to raise \$10,000 this summer for paint smocks.

Symonds, a board member of ARCK, said her staff felt it was important to participate in the campaign because they all got hooked on photography during their grade school years.

"Kids are so hungry for artistic expression," Symonds said. "My dream is to see a society where art and cultural sharing is part of what we do every day."