

S A I N T  
**AUGUSTINE'S**  
C O L L E G E  
For Immediate Release

Nov. 10, 2009

**Contact:** LaToya Sutton  
Communications Specialist  
Office: 919-516-4119  
Fax: 919-516-4360  
E-mail: [lmsutton@st-aug.edu](mailto:lmsutton@st-aug.edu)

**Countdown to Peace participants illustrate their visions of a world without war**

Saint Augustine's College honored veterans and the celebrated peace Saturday, Nov. 7, during the "Countdown to Peace: Surviving Iraq" workshop. During the event, participants discussed their personal experiences with war and the psychological toll it takes on the men and women who serve and the family members they leave behind.

The College received a grant from the North Carolina Humanities Council to present the workshop. In addition to discussing the effects of war, each participant created a piece of artwork that will become a part of the larger Countdown to Peace project.

East Carolina University professors Catherine Billingsley and Jodi Hollnagel-Jubran came up with the idea for the Countdown to Peace project in 2007. Their goal was to receive one submission – a four-inch square that symbolizes the artist's vision of peace – for each day the United States was at war in Iraq. The idea for a collaborative art piece was inspired by Sonya Clark's beaded prayers project.



"Our goal was to get as many peace entries as possible and keep a calendar record of how many days we were at war," Hollnagel-Jubran said. "In the end we did not get as many submissions as

we had hoped, but the inspiration, interaction with others and hope was overwhelming, knowing that the people who did participate wanted peace.”

Billingsley’s personal motivation for the project came from her son-in-law Steve Bixby. Bixby, a career Marine, served five tours in Iraq between 2003 and 2009. He had just returned from his fourth tour when Countdown to Peace began.

“My son-in-law was emotionally torn between what he was doing in Iraq and what he was missing at home,” Billingsley said.

The Countdown to Peace project and the workshop hosted at Saint Augustine’s College were not outlets for people to voice their opposition to the war in Iraq, but both offered an opportunity to support those who served the country in war.

“It’s something to prompt a discussion about war and surviving it,” said Virginia Tyler, project director and art professor at Saint Augustine’s College. “It’s not pro or anti. The main message is, ‘Welcome home and you’ve got friends.’”

Capt. E.L. Brown, a Vietnam veteran and an expert on the Buffalo Soldiers, told participants that his memories of war have haunted him since he returned home.

“You live with it the rest of your life, but you must learn to cope with what you’ve seen,” Brown said.

Workshop organizers said discussions like the one Saturday go a long way in helping veterans of war share their experiences and learn how to work through their emotions.

The Countdown to Peace project is on display in the Seby Jones Gallery at Saint Augustine’s College through Dec. 4. The artwork created during the workshop will be featured during the exhibit’s closing reception from 6-8 p.m. Dec. 4 in the Seby Jones Gallery.

**\*\* Photo cutline:** Saint Augustine’s College art professor Virginia Tyler works with students as they begin working on their submissions for the Countdown to Peace project. Their artwork will be showcased during a reception on Dec. 4.

[www.st-aug.edu](http://www.st-aug.edu)

**\*\* Saint Augustine’s College \*1315 Oakwood Avenue\* Raleigh, NC 27610-2298\*\***