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Photo Caption(s): 1) Diana Fernandez (left) and Barb Tucker (right) in front of their mural at Atmosphere Community Arts Center. 2) Judy Boyette (front) and Loretta Langdon (back) put the finishing touches on their mural at Smithfield's Civitan Park.

Arts Council & Friends Partner on New Murals Across County

July 19, 2023 (Johnston County, NC) – Over the past year, the [Friends of Johnston County Parks](#) has worked in partnership with the [Johnston County Arts Council](#) on an outdoor mural project. With financial assistance from the Arts Council, the Friends group embarked on their first art-meets-nature initiative. The Friends hired muralists to paint artwork onto 2 existing outdoor structures in Johnston County to make these outdoor areas more inviting and friendly for citizens.

“This project was a partnership between Friends of Johnston County Parks and the Johnston County Arts Council. With funds from the American Rescue Plan Act being used to pay the artists for their time and materials,” said Darlene Williford, Executive Director of the Johnston County Arts Council. “This mural project helps sustain and improve art in open spaces thanks to the Friends group.”

The Smithfield Civitan Park mural was done by Judy Boyette and Loretta Langdon; a beautiful piece of art celebrating recreation and the sport of baseball. In addition, the barn at Atmosphere Community Arts Center now has a colorful piece celebrating native plants by Barb Tucker and Diana Fernandez.

“In the past few years JoCo’s parks and trails saw a huge uptick in traffic from both residents and visitors seeking outdoor spaces to recreate. Adding beautiful art to these spaces for everyone to enjoy only adds value to our vital natural assets,” stated Ashby Brame, VP of Marketing & Communications for the Johnston County Visitors Bureau and Friends Board Member. “In addition, these murals join a growing and diverse [mural art trail](#) covering the entire county.”

The Friends group and the Arts Council are already in the planning phase for another round of art installations moving into 2024. The [Friends of Johnston County Parks](#) is a volunteer coalition advocating in support of parks, open space, the arts, and recreational opportunities on behalf of all Johnston County citizens and visitors. The organization started in early 2020 and is a 501(3)C non-profit with a 509(a)(2) public charity status. They have 14 board members and 2 ex-officio members.

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