

Hats Off to Life

Artists honor elders with memento chapeaux

If you go

- **What:**
Hats Off to Life Exhibition
- **When:**
Free admission 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. to May 18
- **Where:**
Hera Hub, 9710 Scranton Road, Suite 160, Sorrento Valley
- **Contact:**
Felena Hanson
(619) 889-7852
info@herahub.com

BY LONNIE BURSTEIN HEWITT

Last December, eight local artists met one-on-one with nine residents of Fairwinds Ivey Ranch Retirement Community in Oceanside, asking them to talk about their lives. Each artist went out to create some form of fanciful headgear inspired by what she heard, and in January, Fairwinds presented a fashion show and reception, with the seniors modeling their one-of-a-kind chapeaux. The event was called "Hats Off to Life."

On Feb. 23, a photographic exhibit of Hats Off to Life opened at Hera Hub, "a work, meeting and event space for enterprising women" in Sorrento Valley. The large-scale photos are not



Barbara Below poses with Raymond Elstad's photograph of her wearing her hat, made of yarn, silver and dichroic glass by glassmaker Debb Solan.

just close-ups of the artist-designed hats, but windows into the souls and spirits of the six women and three men who were the inspirational models.

The original idea was an offshoot of Art Meets Fashion, an impressive collaboration of artists and designers who showed off their work last spring on catwalks at the airport and Liberty Station. AMF was co-produced by Patricia Frischer, founder of San Diego Visual

Arts Network (the main sponsor of Hats Off to Life) and Felena Hanson, founder of Hera Hub.

"After Art Meets Fashion, we wanted to do something different, but still related to art and fashion," Frischer said. "Someone suggested a project with the elderly, and someone else suggested hats. The hat woman went on to something else, but we still liked the idea. And then another of our collaborators, Denise Bonafino Sar-



At the opening of the Hats Off to Life exhibit, Gloria Winship poses in front of her photograph by Melissa Au with artist Patricia Frischer, who designed and made her hat.

ram, got a job as Program Supervisor at Fairwinds, and found us our models. I love it when everything comes together like that!"

Frischer loved the idea so much, she designed two hats for Hats Off to Life. And Hanson, whose main focus is building community, was happy to offer a perfect space for the photography exhibit.

"Hats Off to Life is celebrating the lives of people who don't often get cele-



Felena Hanson, founder of Hera Hub, an event space for enterprising women in Sorrento Valley, hosts the exhibition.

PHOTOS BY LONNIE HEWITT

brated by connecting them with talented artists," she said. "And we do quarterly rotating exhibits by women artists at Hera Hub, so it's a great fit all around."

Hera Hub, which launched last August, already has 120 members who use it as a co-working space. "It actually grew out of my own needs," Hanson said. "I was working at home as a marketing consultant and found it so isolating. I wanted access to a place I could

meet with clients and network with other women in business but I didn't really need a fulltime space. So I came up with Hera Hub. The look is professional, and at the same time, feminine. I call it 'spa-inspired.'"

The large-scale photos of Hats Off to Life will be adorning Hera Hub's walls through May 18. All photographs are for sale, and the photographers and artists may be contacted for special commissions.