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## *Living*

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## Gardeners feeding the hungry



# Living through *rose* colored glass

By Emily Kilian

Working out of a renovated school bus, glass artist Jennifer Lynn Farrar is an expert at picking up the pieces of any situation



Farrar stands beside her school bus art studio. Over the years, fellow artists and visitors have helped her decorate the outside of the bus.

Sitting in her country home listening to the rain hit the roof and peering out the window at her school bus turned art studio, Jennifer Lynn Farrar admits she is unconventional. Farrar, a Canadian Valley Electric member, is a consultant by day, but her true passion is glass art.

“Glass artists work with their medium to create and bring out the best potential of the glass,” Farrar says. “When you hold glass up to the light, it puts forth a reflection and energy you can’t deny.”

Glass art can take on many different forms. Some artists blow glass into delicate shapes while others fuse or cut it to make designs. Farrar breaks glass and crafts her work based on the shapes of the broken pieces.

“Only a few artists do this sort of style,” she says. “Usually if you get stained glass people together and put my art out there, it sticks out like a sore thumb because it’s not your normal stuff.”

After working in a stressful upper-administration position for years, Farrar discovered glass art at a 4-H exhibit in Norman eight years ago and was immediately drawn to make a change in her life. The glass artist from the 4-H exhibit, Patience Rhodes, taught Farrar the unique style of breaking glass, and Farrar began designing art out of a shed behind her house. However, she needed a safer place to work.

“When you melt the metal [for glass art], the fumes can be toxic,” Farrar says. “Also, the shed was always too hot or too cold.”

The solution to the shed problem came in an unusual way. Four years ago, a friend of Farrar’s suggested buying an old school bus to use as a studio.

“At first I thought it was disgusting and would trash up my place,” Farrar says. But she also says she is always trying

to think of alternative ways to reach a solution.

“I bought the school bus and secured it on my land,” she says.

Farrar removed the seats along one side of the bus for more room. She took the legs off old tables and put the tabletops on the seats lining the other side of the bus.

“I use the space underneath for storage,” she says. “It’s not a fancy-dancy studio, but I’ve created a place where I can work.”

Farrar invites visitors and fellow artists to sign the bus or paint the outside.

“Some people write quotes or inspirational messages,” she says.

Farrar’s personal motto is found on the front of the bus in pink and green. It reads, “Unlimited Potential.”

Farrar says she thinks potential is found everywhere.

“Everyone has potential,” she says. “It lays there dormant until you call it forward.”

Farrar has been a member of the In Your Eye Studio and Gallery in Oklahoma City’s Paseo Arts district since April 2007. Fellow Gallery Artist Gayle Curry appreciates Farrar’s unconventional style.

“Her medium is so different and so colorful,” Curry says. “It is so unusual from anything I’ve seen, and it looks so organic and free-formed. The first time I saw Lynn’s art, I fell absolutely in love with it and immediately had to buy a piece.”

Because the gallery is a cooperative, Farrar had to wait for an open spot before joining.

“We all pay the rent, we all help keep it up, and we all serve hours in it,” Farrar says. “Every month there’s a featured artist.”

Farrar’s art was featured at the gallery in February 2008. Her show, entitled “Colorlicious,” celebrated the colors



and shapes of the psychedelic era through glass. She says she finds it hard to part with completed art because every piece comes from something she's experienced.

"When I am satisfied with the piece and finally let it go, it feels like I've given birth to a child," she says. "It becomes a part of me." She says inspiration for new pieces is always just around the corner, even within the parameters of her other career. Far-

*"Sometimes people tell me to take off the rose-colored spectacles, but I am just doing what I feel I am compelled to do."*

rar, who has a master's degree in human relations from the University of Oklahoma, is a consultant for Head Start, a government-funded program for children of low-income families. Farrar's team travels from coast to coast, making sure programs are meeting all necessary guidelines and standards set by the government.

"That [auditing] is how I make my living, but the diversity of the places and the people I meet help compliment my artwork," she says.

Farrar is also a certified mediator. She helps people on the small claims court docket find middle

ground to keep their cases out of the court system.

"I do mediating as a volunteer, and it's sort of like taking broken things and piecing them together and moving on," she says. "I tie it into my artwork, too."

Farrar says she considers herself a problem solver.

"I'm always trying to think of ways to make something happen," she says. "I go through an experience and try to think about the lesson in it, and then I move forward utilizing what I've learned."

Artistic ability runs through generations in Farrar's family. Her mother and grandmother painted with oils. Farrar's daughter is also creative.

"My mom put me in a lot of art classes growing up, and I've always been artistic," says Ryan Day, Farrar's daughter. "I've just been brought up with it for so long."

Day is a freshman at Seminole State College and will major in either art or photography. She says she sees her mom as "Wonderwoman."

"My mom is strong and really intelligent," Day says. "A lot of women are gentle, but she always makes her goals happen. She enjoys life and lives it to the fullest."

Farrar describes herself as a modern-day pioneer woman.

"I'm a country-city mix," she says "Once I get all dolled up and I'm walking around Manhattan, you would think I fit right in. But little do they know I'm the pioneer in Oklahoma riding around on my lawn tractor, pulling weeds and scratching chigger bites."



Jennifer Lynn Farrar makes glass art inside her make-shift studio

Farrar is also a dreamer.

"Sometimes people tell me to take off the rose-colored spectacles, but I am just doing what I feel I am compelled to do," Farrar says. "I am an artist before I am anything else. I am always trying to figure out ways to move my art, my life and myself forward, but the ways I do it go by the beat of my own drum."

You can view Farrar's art, along with Curry's and other artists' work, at In Your Eye Studio and Gallery, located at 3005 A Paseo, Oklahoma City, OK, or visit [www.inyoureyegallery.com](http://www.inyoureyegallery.com). Reach Farrar directly at [lynnskyrd@mbo.net](mailto:lynnskyrd@mbo.net). **OT**

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