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Lawrence High art department head David Meehan looks through one of Terry Bastian's art pieces during the Festival at the Island's Edge in Lawrence yesterday.

Festival alive with spirit

◆ More than 250 people came to Pemberton Park yesterday to fly kites, listen to music, watch dancers and see interesting works of art.

By Rosemary Ford
Eagle-Tribune Writer

LAWRENCE — Ten-year-old Christine Baltimore of Lawrence had never flown a kite before, but yesterday she and her big sister Jerline, 12, raced around Pemberton Park flying their newly-made kites like pros.

"It's like it's me flying or something," Christine said. "But I don't like it when it crashes."

They were two of the more than 50 children who came to Pemberton Park yesterday for the Festival at the Island's Edge. Sponsored by the city as well as Groundwork Lawrence, the aim of the day was to build public excitement for the group's plans to expand and improve the Pemberton Park area on West Island.

"My goal with the event was to bring people down and let them know (Pemberton Park) is a great resource," said Marianne Paley, program manager of Groundwork Lawrence, a program associated with the Merrimack River Watershed Council that works with communities to build parks, open spaces and community gardens.

The day featured kite making, kite flying, salsa music,

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Sisters (from left) Elizabeth Cortez, 12, and Elsa Maria Cortez, 11, daughters of Isidra Arias and Aurea Cortez of Lawrence, make kites during the Festival at Island's Edge in Lawrence yesterday.

Festival: Art by the river

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Peruvian dancers and Irish step dancers, as well as an art installation by the environmental art group, the Reclamation Artists.

Thomas E. Rajotte came down to fly kites and enjoy food with his daughters Melodie, 15 months, and Cynthia, 2. He was glad to hear about plans to expand and improve Pemberton Park and thought a picnic area would make a great addition.

"I think (the festival) is a great idea for the family. I would like to see more of it," he said. "You get enough people together here like this, and it shows we care for the environment."

The Reclamation Artists are a Boston-based group of architects, educators and artists who create outdoor exhibits at places that are underutilized, neglected or abused.

The exhibit features about a dozen pieces of modern art, many made with objects found in or related to Lawrence.

The group's work is designed to call attention to the West Island and to have fun in a place people do not usually turn to for fun. The artwork will be up through Aug. 8.

"I'm just absolutely thrilled about this place. In every way," said Vivienne Metcalf of Newbury, one of the Reclamation Artists. "I don't even want to go home. I love it here."

The installation began with Ms. Metcalf's silver and neon-green tubes that took various incarnations

during the day, from drums to the border around an improvised dancing stage.

Other artists in the exhibit, including North Reading environmentalist Terry Bastian's telescopes, pointed to Ayer Mill Clock Tower, one of Lawrence's smoke stacks and a view of the river.

"I wanted to show a view of the past, present and future of the site," Mr. Bastian said. "Instead of making an object for people to look at, I wanted to make (something for) people to see."

Somerville sculptor Bill Turville built seven lumineres, tubelike works lit from within. Boston artist Jeremy Liu hung canoe-like boats from the rafters of the bridge closest to the Great Stone Dam. Dorchester artist Laura Evans created a path linking the pieces in the show with shoes donated from Cardinal Shoe Corp., New Balance Athletic Shoe Inc. and shoe forms found in Everett Mills.

"Everyone loves shoes, and it's a way to draw people down the path," said Ms. Evans, who has with the Reclamation Artists for three years. She joined the group because she wanted to do more interactive artwork.

"The dam is such a striking area. A lot of people don't even know about it. They don't even know how beautiful it is down here," said Alexandra Jacobson from the Lawrence Planning and Development Office.



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Christine Baltimore, 10, daughter of Elvita Baltimore of Lawrence, passes the time by flying a kite at the Festival at the Island's Edge yesterday.