

JOE HERMITT / OF THE PATRIOT-NEWS
Pieces of red thread are tied by artist Julianne Swartz.

THREAD/Artist targets tolerance

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image of exile and displacement.

Swartz's project, called "Link/Line," is strongly reminiscent of a custom called eruv, in which a string marks off an area of Jewish population. Wandering and the color red, too, have deep connotations in the Jewish faith.

"People look for opportunities to connect but don't know how," VanDyke said as he waited in the cold wind for Swartz to emerge from St. Stephen's Episcopal School.

"She's facilitating that process," VanDyke said. "The connections it's making are really enriching and far beyond our expectations. That's the sign of a good project."

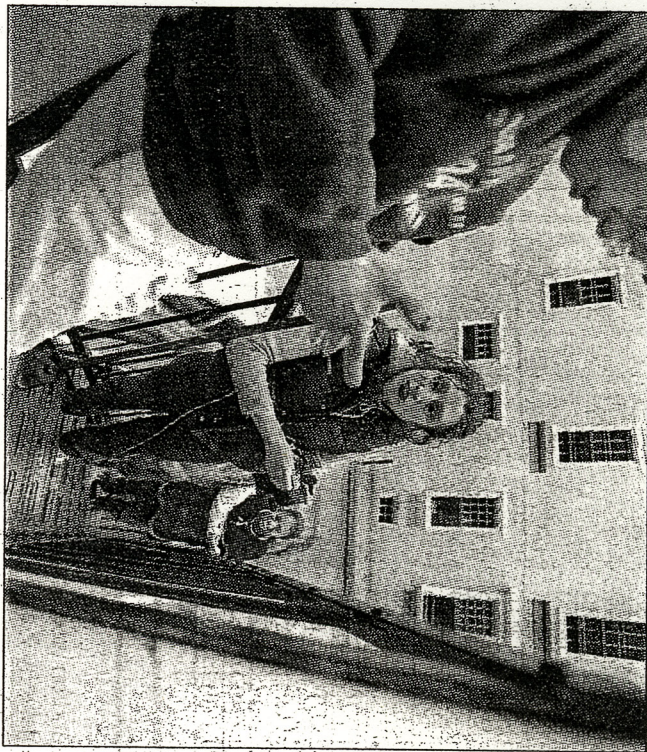
Sooner or later, the line will be damaged and blow away. But the participants will be left with a powerful symbol.

Inside St. Stephen's, school director Carol Lopus oversaw a class of fifth-graders as they strung thread through the hallways and out the cathedral's front door. They were one of more than a dozen groups to accept the task described by Swartz's motto: "Keep the Link. Thread the Thread."

"We really like to be involved in arts events and to take advantage of downtown opportunities," Lopus said. "This sounded like something a little bit different, but we emphasize the need to tolerate people of all faiths and ethnic heritage. This fit in perfectly with our mission."

Zachary Lewis may be reached at 255-8266 or zlewis@patriot-news.com.

New York City artist Julianne Swartz, center, gets help from Zachary Messersmith, left, a fifth-grader, in running the red thread up a fire escape at St. Stephen's Episcopal School.



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A thread of tolerance

Artist's thin red line makes connection with faiths, races

BY ZACHARY LEWIS
OF THE PATRIOT-NEWS

The material is, practically invisible, but the statement it makes can hardly be missed.

A 4.5-mile, continuous line of thin red sewing thread was strung yesterday from the Susquehanna Art Museum to the Jewish Community Center on Front Street. Holding the thread, Julianne Swartz dodged traffic and asked for help from volunteers as she ran down sidewalks, and streets and through churches, synagogues and private homes.

Passers-by with puzzled looks were handed fact sheets or told about the

project. The gesture is a symbolic unification of people from all faiths, races and backgrounds.

Swartz is one of three artists, all of Jewish faith and based in New York City, invited by museum curator Jonathan VanDyke to spend time with the Jewish community in Harrisburg. The artists were called on to create work based on their experiences as part of the museum's "Imaging Judaism" exhibition.

Tomorrow, an artist will release 200 gourds filled with items of personal value in the Susquehanna River as an

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