

## 'Bob's Burgers' Illustrator Teaches Cartooning To North Beach Seniors



*PACE center member and artist Sirron Norris*

Many senior centers offer diversions like card games, water aerobics and movie nights, but at one North Beach center, members are learning about cartooning with an artist who's familiar to many San Franciscans and animation fans.

Thanks to a chance encounter, Sirron Norris, original lead artist for Fox Network's "Bob's Burgers," teaches a cartooning class at On Lok Lifeways' PACE center in North Beach.

PACE activity director Nick Sager was walking his dog in the Mission when he came across Norris as he was touching up one of his murals. "He told me about his work," said Sager, "and that he often collaborates with other artists as well as youth."

A fan of Norris' work, Sager asked the artist if he'd be interested in introducing our seniors to cartooning, "and he seemed open to the idea."

Norris said this is the first time he's done anything like this. "It's such a relaxing environment," he told Hoodline. "I love seeing the look on everyone's faces as I take them through the steps of the drawing."

Program of All-inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE) is an adult day-care program for seniors who wish to live at home or with family. Members have daily access to medical care, meals, workshops and social interaction with other seniors.



*One Of Norris' murals in San Francisco*

Barnaby Hall, Activity Therapist at Powell PACE Center, said the class has been a hit. "It's great to see our participants so focused on the project when he's teaching," he said.

"First and foremost, it's for the participants to enjoy themselves and have a good time trying something different," said Hall. "It's also a great way for self-expression. We've noticed many whom we've never thought would be interested in cartooning draw and actually create some great work."

Sager said the class does more for seniors than just keep them busy or teach them a new skill. "It boosts cognitive reserves and creative thinking," he said. "It builds dexterity and visual-spatial skills, lowers anxiety and depressive symptoms, and it helps reduce isolation and connects with others through visual communication."

Sager said PACE programs also create community for participants while keeping them active. With options like senior ballet, a Moroccan dance workshop, drumming as music therapy and Tai Chi, members can keep pretty busy, he said.

"I feel that I have a responsibility as an artist to give back to my community," said Norris, who plans to facilitate PACE classes again. "I get these great reactions out of the participants without me even speaking. The communication is done solely through art."