

# The Creative Forum

June 2019

A Monthly Publication of Creative Wellness Opportunities

First Friday Artist : Mike Benvenuti



This is my fifth art show at CWO. One was a show just of cartoons. I love coming to CWO and wish I could come more often. My experience with creativity has contributed to my own wellness journey. Drawing is a form of therapy for me because it relaxes me, puts me in a good mood, and is a coping skill to deal with my anxiety. Being able to work at the CWO Studio with other artists has made me serious about my artwork.

My interest in arts began in high school and grade school. Along the way, my friends have encouraged me. Other artists at CWO and their artwork influence me. I am also drawn to the work of artists Frank Franzetta, Boris Vallejo, Norman Rockwell, Rembrandt, Van Gogh, Frederick Remington, and N.C. Wyeth.

Preparing for the show I did a variety of pictures this year. I like to draw a variety of things in a variety of materials. When I see a picture that I think I can draw, it kind of inspires me in a way to draw it. The main medium I use is pencil, but I love to experiment with other types of materials and I love to experiment from realism to abstract. In my work, I try to make something I think someone would like.

CWO has been a real lifesaver, it's made me feel like a real artist. The drawings I still have that I won't part with are my giraffe, because I love the picture, and a picture of Jimmy Page I did in high school for a show at Sibley's downtown. I submitted the piece and received a gold key award. - Mike

**Please join me at my First Friday show from 5:30PM to 8:00PM on June 7th, 2019 at Creative Wellness Gallery.**



## Community Circle Conversation - "Healthy Relationships"

By Evelyn Cammarano

CWO recently held a Community Circle with Lisa Nolan, Prevention Education Coordinator from Willow Domestic Violence Center. She had an innovative approach to self-reflection and contemplation of what elements constitute a healthy relationship by having participants of the event share personal understandings. Lisa had us take an index card and write everything we like about ourselves on it. On the back she asked us to write "I am enough. I am worthy. I love me." Then she told us to squish the card up into a ball and hold on to it. We talked about what makes a healthy relationship. I thought about it and said that I believe that to be in a healthy relationship you have to first love yourself and have a healthy happy relationship with yourself before you are able to have one with someone else. I have come to learn through my own experiences with abuse, that I have to take responsibility for everything that I have been through and know that it was my own choice at the time. There's respect, communication, agreeing to disagree when arguing, the independence of being able to make your own decisions, have your own opinions, to wear what you want to wear, go where you want to go, trust, fun and love. I am learning that we teach people how to treat us with the boundaries we set or do not set. It doesn't help to blame, even if the other person is imposing physical, emotional, and economic abuse. On the flip side, unhealthy relationships do happen to healthy people. Unhealthy relationships develop in increments, like that frog in a pot of water with the heat gradually being turned up until it actually boils to death.

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## Community Circle Conversation (continued)

### “Healthy Relationships”

A lot of the time, an abuser is very charming and well thought of by others. It’s hard to tell who is going to lie, cheat, have secrets, not communicate, be one-sided, unsupportive, make it all about how you behave and what is right or wrong about your behavior while the abuser feels free to put down, control, manipulate, criticize, hurt, and or use up the energy of the abused. It’s not always easy to leave, especially if it escalates to physical violence, financial control, and the corroding of the abused self-esteem from constant attacks. You are not here to take care of them nor are they here to take care of you. Verbal abuse, sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse, economic abuse, electronic leashing (aka always texting asking where you are and what you’re doing) and relentless stalking behaviors are all signs of a bad relationship that is basically all about gaining and maintaining power and control over the abused. Sometimes not wanting to be judged by outsiders as flawed or less than could protect the abuser at the expense of your own life and will. Thinking that telling a lie to outsiders to cover for what is happening so you can survive until you can figure a safe way out is a thought that is unsafe. **“Once abuse starts, the more frequent it becomes and the worse it gets.”** (Willow)

No doubt that relationships can be complicated. I know this from my own experiences. I also know that birds of a feather flock together, and if you work on being your full potential, then you become healthier and happier with positive energy. People will be drawn to you with a similar vibration of healthiness, self-love, self-awareness, mutual appreciation and support and enjoyment of each other’s company with no expectations of changing who the other person is. Thinking you have to rescue someone or help them realize the truth about this or that is codependency, not mutual independent sharing of the experiences of life with a kindred spirit.

Our meeting closed with each of us opening our ruffled index card and observed that the understandings, **“I am enough. I am worthy. I love me.”** remained as true as when we wrote them and what we liked about ourselves also remained even after the squishing. **We are not alone!**

**We are enough! We are worthy! We are loved!**

“You have the personal right to a healthy response to an unhealthy relationship, which is to break up and move on.” (Willow)

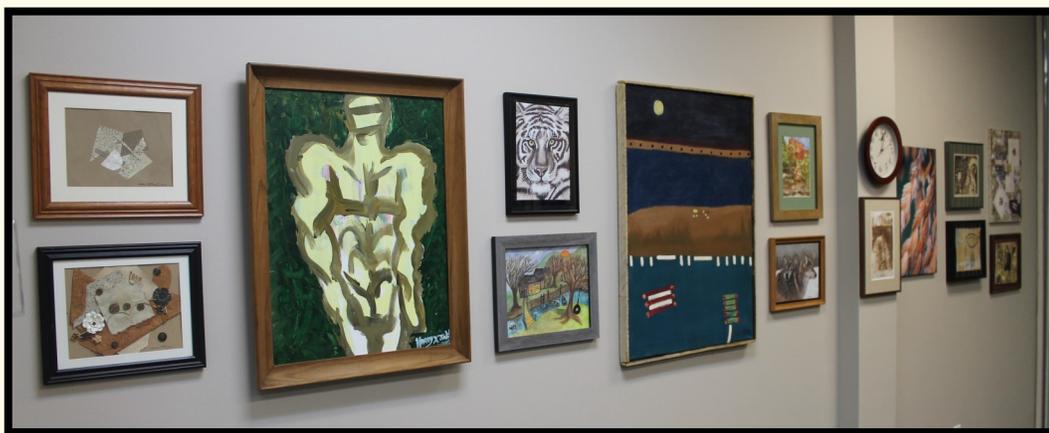
I encourage you to reach out to the services of Willow’s Center @ (585) 222-7233 (SAFE) if you need guidance or support (it is healthy, free and confidential). You are not alone! - Evelyn

YOUR JOURNEY IS NOT THE SAME AS MINE, AND MY JOURNEY IS NOT YOURS, BUT IF YOU MEET ME ON A CERTAIN PATH, MAY WE ENCOURAGE EACH OTHER.



## Illumination 2019

This year’s Creative Wellness Opportunity (CWO) Annual Art Exhibit held on May 3rd, 2019, brought together artists, friends, family and community in a celebration of creativity and the healing power of art. The theme



“Illumination” was selected to recognize the inner luminescence we can experience during creating that can move us toward healing in a transformative way. Thirty-eight peer artists presented over one hundred pieces for the show and all were showcased and curated. The evening was filled with a sense of connection, creativity, and community while soothing live music was provided by violinist Ann Fox and cellist Tina Costanza. The grazing table was a popular addition to the festivities and was put together with the support of a number of the artists for the show. The event was definitely a mutual effort by many peers pitching in to make the evening such a success.

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# Illumination 2019 (Continued)



Members of the Rochester arts and mental health communities were invited to jury the show during the evening. The works selected by the jury from this year's exhibit will be showcased at the last documentary of the **Reel Minds Film Festival on Tuesday, June 18th, 2019 at 6:00 PM**, at the Jewish Community Center (JCC). Tickets for the documentary event are \$8. *All are invited to celebrate and attend the art exhibit before the film without cost.*

A team of peer artists spoke with attendees during the exhibit, asking them if they would share their impressions of the show. Many people expressed their enthusiasm and appreciation for the event.

*"I am very impressed with the diversity and quality of many works of art. The curators did an excellent job of organizing the works. I am moved by art that entices and stimulated the psyche and invites inquiring. Love "Silent Wisdom" for its sensitivity, beautiful composition and use of color. Kudo's to everyone who participated in the show."*

*"Very diversified! Beautiful colors and techniques! Very interesting show because of the varied artwork, the manner and which it was hung is excellent!"*

*"Eclectic, creativity at its best! Because of the depth of the artists participating."*

*"Awesome as always! I just like art."*

Others shared how much they enjoyed the sense of fellowship and creative atmosphere:

*"I heard many positives from listening to folks walking through about the company, the food, the display and the music."*

*"I like the music! The paintings are really good. The atmosphere is very artistic!"*

*"I like it how everyone comes together & chats and all the artwork is beautiful."*

*"I was proud to take people through the show. There is so much talent here!"*

*"Very well done. Love the mixture of art and textures and turnout."*

*"It's beautiful and well thought out! Art it's visually stunning. The people are lovely, and the art is reasonably priced."*

Some attendees felt a connection with the work exhibited, and expressed feeling an emotional connection to the artwork:

*"Wonderful show! A wonderful mixture of artistic styles and expressions. Overall impressed by the talent demonstrated throughout the gallery. I feel inspired and uplifted in experiencing the artist's work."*

*"A lot of different materials and depth and meaning. Very emotional work. I felt like I could connect with the art."*

*"Nice, have a wide variety of art. It's a great opportunity to show or express art given an outlet. So therapeutic!"*

The exhibit will be available for access throughout the MHA space for most of the coming year with replacement pieces being an option after the June 18<sup>th</sup> Reel Minds event at the JCC for those pieces that have been sold. Thanks to all of the supporters of our creative adventures!



# MHA PEER COMMUNITY OUTREACH



## Anatomy of Wellness

Learn how to be well and also how to determine the differences in healthy or not so healthy foods. Learn how the body works and how we fuel it with our attitudes.

**Ogden Baptist Church** - 585-352-1077

721 Washington Street, Spencerport, NY 14559

*Every other Thursday @ 7-8 PM starting May 23rd*

## Find Your True Self

### Building Your Self-Esteem

A safe, caring, non-judgmental group to facilitate finding and building ones' own voice both inside and out.

**Out Alliance** - 585-352-1077

100 College Ave #100, Rochester, NY 14607

*Meeting every 1st & 3rd Mondays @ 6 - 7PM*

## Healthy Connections

A group that uses the 8 Dimensions of Wellness to build and cultivate connections and strengthen ties.

**Pinnacle Place Apartments** - 585-442-9440

1919 S. Clinton Avenue, Rochester, NY 14620

*Every Thursday @ 9:45 - 11:15 AM*

## Fairy houses for Corn Hill Festival

June 13th 1-3pm &

June 15 11am-2pm

In this two day special event collaborate in creating a fairy house or create your own to display in the 2019 Corn Hill Arts Festival 7th Annual Fairy Houses Tour.

Fairy Houses are small structures for the fairies and woodland creatures. Ranging from simple to intricate 'Fairy Mansions', these whimsical habitats are built by children, families, gardeners and nature lovers reflecting their creativity, joy and pride. Creating fairy houses offers a connection with the natural world, nurturing care and respect for the environment.

Do you know why birds sing just before dawn? Scientists believe it's to tell their mates that they made it through the night, as a way of saying, "I'm still here." Maybe that's why we sing, too, why we create art- as a way of saying, "I made it. I'm still here."

- Jeff Goins



**Mental Health Association's  
Drop-In Center  
539 South Avenue  
Rochester, NY 14620  
(585) 454-3530**



*Need to talk to someone but your therapist's office is closed?*

*It's not an emergency room situation yet, but if you don't find someone to talk to it could be?*

**The Drop-In Center may be just what you need!**

**The Center is open seven (7) days a week  
5:00PM - 9:00PM**

**No referral or appointment necessary.  
SIMPLY DROP-IN!**

**#5 South Avenue Bus will bring you right to our door at the corner of South Avenue and Hamilton Street**

**Support is provided by individuals who have overcome mental health concerns and now offer support to others as they find their own path to mental wellness.**

## CWO's ARTIST'S FELLOWSHIP

*Come together to share and provide constructive insights on pieces of work that are still "works in progress" or "completed"!*

**June 20th @3:00**