Art Exhibit and Art Bazaar

This November and December, the Circle Gallery of Creative Wellness Opportunities will exhibit artwork from a collective of CWO artists and artisans. Works by Michael Benvenuti, Dorian Bonilla, Belinda Brasley, Brianna Kilpatrick-Grant, Evelyn Cammarano, Cynthia Iannacone, Liesl Gaessler, Michael Kolb, Sheri Treadwell, Karin Staples, Ron Suppe and Kevin Yost will be showcased and celebrated either on a First Friday and/or a Second Saturday or both! Diverse in art medium, style and technique, the artists and artisans in the collective are a reflection of how community and creativity can play an important role in healing and wellness.

Art works can be purchased directly from the artists at the Collaborative events!

Tables of goods and handmade wares will be available on the Second Saturdays only along with the art exhibited from the First Fridays.

See you there!
Dorian Bonilla: “...we are all made of stardust, and what greater community is there than that of the universe?”

Karin Staples: “My acrylic paintings reflect a desire to interact with the viewer, even when I am not physically present.”

Belinda Brasley: “Art offers me a safe place to explore the beauty and pain in the world and in my heart.”

Cynthia Iannaccone: “I have to be creative everyday & use my hands to make things. I work on a piece until it feels right.”

Evelyn Cammarano: “I have been coming to the Creative Wellness Opportunities at MHA since about a decade ago. I have always loved the sense of community and trust here, and each of us encourages and support each other.”

Liesl Gaesser: “Some are fantasy; some are reflective of life. All depict a certain emotion the viewer can identify with.”

Ron Suppe: “Watercolor painting employs both vibrant colors in discerning ways exploring many facets and forging new boundaries with endless possibilities.”

Sheri Treadwell: “As one who recently discovered the healing nature of art, I am constantly amazed at how grounded I feel when I settle in to paint a picture”

Michael Kolb: “CWO has helped me to develop my untapped creativity in the field of art.”

Mike Benvenuti: “I have a variety of work in pencil on display. I get inspired by other’s artwork. It makes me feel more creative. I love doing art, I love being here. People inspire me.”

Kevin Yost: “...attended a lecture by the Community Design Center of Rochester and Temple Br’ith Kodesh. This included their gallery of Hanukkah menorahs...I was particularly inspired by the one of Disney characters manufactured by the Disney company and decided to make ones of Warner Brothers characters.”

Brianna Kilpatrick-Grant: “My art is most inspired by ethical causes and the cultural contributions of People of Color and other marginalized communities. I enjoy creating art that demonstrates allegory regarding issues that can’t always be articulated by words alone.”

Reflections on an Annual NYAPRS Lived Conference Experience

When I first started coming to CWO 4.5 years ago (after my 2nd hospitalization) I had no idea it would lead me to the NYAPRS Conference with the friends I had made in the intervening years. As I came to CWO I continued growing and maturing, to the point where this year the desire to become more involved in other aspects of CWO had grown very strong. One of the best places to learn about all aspects of mental health journeys is at the NYAPRS conference, so when the conference was announced I took advantage of the opportunity and signed up.

I found the conference to be exactly what my soul needed, and was much more than what I had anticipated. When I was not running off to workshops I found the tables put up by various organizations, and more importantly, the book dealer. In the end I bought 3 books, which will probably become workshops at CWO. Workshop themes ran the gamut from working together to Family dilemmas, to stories of how people went “From Surviving to Thriving,” and ending up with “A Candid conversation about Mass Shootings.”

- Mike Bowen
NYAPRS Conference Reflections (continued)

(A reflection on “Food as Medicine” presentation.) One of the presenters spoke of a story about an individual, a woman who purposefully self-harmed herself. I think she said that it was the woman’s first time cutting herself or anything. The person knew it was wrong. Then, after just a little while, the woman attended a presentation class about healthy eating and the positive results it has on a person’s overall health. Instead of cutting herself again, she started eating a lot of junk food as a way to cope with whatever pain she was feeling. Eventually she worked her way to eating healthy and drinking healthy and was able to actually experience her own health improvement. - Sabrina Carter

I particularly enjoyed the peer support presentations so much that I will be working toward a peer support certification. I hope to become a peer support specialist in the future. I am grateful that I had the opportunity to attend the conference. - Dan Buckner

During the Cultural/Racism and LGBTQIA workshops, I’ve learned that everything you are or what makes you who you are is and/or can be connected to something that makes someone else who they are. Also, with both Cultural and Racism topics, it sparks desire and passion with people, as it resonates different emotions for folks. Personally, since I have people in my family who are part of the LGBTQIA community and are of a different race than I am, I understand the drive that makes someone so passionate about either topic during a conversation. With that being said and understood, it makes my perspective of a small little world just that much smaller. We are all connected. - Monica Blogget

I was really inspired by the “Life By Our Own Design” session with Sara Goodman from the Baltic Street program in Brooklyn, NY. I enjoyed how she shared her own experience with “activating hopefulness.” She also gave some ideas about how we can do this in our lives. In her handout, she shared: “Reflecting on the positive and on the things you are grateful, appreciative and thankful for will put you into a more empowered state-of-mind.” I experience hope as an essential part of my recovery journey. - Lorin Alder

My favorite workshop was “Self-care and Self-love” with Angel Serrano and Katie Hewlett. Self-care means different things to different people. While varying from person to person, self-love is involved with creating new and more positive experiences leading toward promoting wellness and improving the quality of one’s life. It encourages longevity, reduces anxiety, increases productivity and mindfulness; inspires creativity, increases quantity and quality of sleep. While increasing self-confidence and self-respect. In addition, self-care/self-love provides us with tools overcome traumatic events and reduces stress and depression.

As Angel revealed decades of trauma and self-loathing, he declared: “Self-Care isn’t selfish, Self-Care is an act of love.” He went on to say that not only is it necessary, but a responsibility to nurture our personal growth in becoming the unique individuals we are meant to be. I asked Google “What do you call a person who helps promote and encourage the best attributes in someone? “ Google responded simply “a leader.” Angle Serrano is truly a leader. - Ron Suppe
Mental Health Association
Rochester, NY 14620

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!

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.

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

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

MHA Peer Community Outreach
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
919 S. Clinton Avenue, Rochester, NY 14620
Every Thursday @ 9:45 - 11:15 AM

CWO Community Circle

Tools & Takeaways from NYAPRS Conference

November 21st 12-1 PM
In the Circle Gallery

A community circle about some of the impactful ideas that we learned about at the NYAPRS Conference.

We will reflect & share how they inspired us.

Artwork by Akhogramziah