



Projections

HOPE, DIGNITY AND SUPPORT FOR PEOPLE EXPERIENCING MENTAL ILLNESSES

Spring/Summer 2006

Art Calendar

View and purchase art from all over the world at Lyssa Morgan Gallery, 4062 Henderson Blvd. Featuring Project Return artists Hugo, Kim P. and John Bisbee. Opening reception is June 23rd. FMI: (813) 281-1000.

Barrows Gourmet Deli, at 3660 Henderson Blvd. is featuring new art by Hugo, Diane M., John Bisbee and other new up and coming Project Return artists. Exhibit on display June 8th - Aug. 24th. FMI: (813) 933-9020.

Art Calendar is a regular listing of events supporting Project Return.

Mission Statement

Project Return, Inc., is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to improving the quality of life for people experiencing mental illnesses through educational, vocational and supportive housing services, so that they may lead productive and fulfilling lives in the community.

Painting Out Stigma

Project Return celebrates Mental Health Awareness Month with a Collaborative Art Exhibit at The Lobby Gallery

In celebration of Mental Health Month, Project Return hosted a collaborative art exhibit, called "Painting Out Stigma," at The Lobby Gallery, highlighting artists who all have something in common...they have a mental illness.

In addition to Project Return artists, participants included artists from Mental Health Care, Inc., Tampa Crossroads, and VSA arts of Florida.

The title of the event, "Painting out Stigma" was chosen to demonstrate that art can be used to help eliminate much of the stigma still attached to mental illness in our society.

With an estimated 22%* of Americans experiencing a mental illness in any given year, it is more important than ever that we care for not only our physical being, but our mental health as well.

Mental illnesses include such disorders as schizophrenia, schizoaffective disorder, bipolar disorder, major depression and obsessive-compulsive disorder.

Mental illnesses can affect persons of any age, race, religion or income. **MENTAL ILLNESSES ARE TREATABLE.** Most people with serious mental



THE LOBBY GALLERY AT 304 W. WATERS AVE.

illness need medication to help control symptoms, but also rely on supportive counseling, self-help groups, assistance with housing, vocational rehab, income assistance, and other community services to achieve their highest level of recovery.

* For more mental health facts, visit www.nmha.org.

Art for Life Returns for it's 3rd year with Project Return

Art For Life, Florida's premier art experience, will again unite the community to make a difference in the lives of those experiencing mental illnesses.

Now in its third year with Project Return, this spectacular fundraising event is set for Saturday, Sept. 30, at Higgins Hall on the campus of St. Lawrence Catholic Church (5225 N. Himes Ave.).

Doors open at 7 p.m. with the voice auction starting at 8 p.m. Tickets will be available in Aug. through Project Return's office

or the Art For Life web site.

Co-chairs Jeanne Lavette and Alicia Bardelli are leading a dedicated volunteer committee that achieved a major coup this year ... a Title Sponsorship with



To date, Platinum Sponsors include MAGIC 94.9FM, Misen Place, Gallery M, Raymond James and Vitality Foodservice.

This year's poster artist is folk artist Mr. B, who has a great affinity with the impact of mental illness. His piece will be

unveiled in late June at the corporate headquarters of Bright House Networks.

Artists are currently being asked to submit pieces. Drop-Off Sites are located throughout the Bay area to make entering a piece (or pieces!) an easy process.

The drive for sponsors is still in full swing. To see a full listing of those supporting Art For Life, to become a sponsor, or to view a listing of Drop-Off Sites visit www.artforlifetampa.org or call (813) 990-8981, ext. 1.

Q
&
A



JACK BEVERLAND,
MR. "B", FOLK
ARTIST

Why do you support Art For Life?

What I have learned about art over the years is that it is very therapeutic. It has saved my life.

When I began painting I was a victim of early retirement cutbacks. The situation had put me into a terrible depression, and I was extremely angry.

Painting gave me an escape whereby I could go into a world I created in paint. A safe, warm easy place to be.

Project Return gives me a chance to share my world with others, and in so doing, gives them an escape as well. What a joy it is to see others come into Mr. B's world where nothing can hurt them, and put a BIG smile on their faces.

MR. "B" IS THE
2006 ART FOR
LIFE POSTER
ARTIST.

Success Story

A GREAT PLACE AWAY FROM HOME

---Written By: Lydia B.,
Project Return Member,
4/6/06

I came upon this place, from the outside didn't seem like much, but inside was a completely different world. A place they call "Project Return" for people from every walk of life. A place to spend time with people who face the same daily difficulties I face. Would I like it? Only time would tell!

I found only minutes later that I blended in quite well and very quickly in this New World called "Project

Return." First, I was introduced to the staff, then the various classes that were held. People came up and greeted me as if I had been there a long time. There were people of different ages, different sizes, coming from different homes, but all, every single one of them had the most awesome talents.



LYDIA B., ASPIRING WRITER &
PROJECT RETURN MEMBER

The first place I came upon was the Art Room; it brought a smile on my face that I hadn't had in such a long time. "Come on," the Art Teacher said, "give it

a try!" I wasn't too sure about it because I had never painted before, but I gave it a try, and to my surprise I was commended by others at how great my first painting came out. I felt so positive.

It goes to show you that looks can be deceiving. From the outside, Project Return didn't look like much, but inside I realized this was a unique world. What my eyes took in my very first day was a magnificent place, a safe place, free from any harm and a close-knit group of people who were finding out just how creative and beautiful they can be.

Yes, this great place away from home is most definitely a place I'd like to call "*My New Found Family.*"

Project Return Members get a Surprise Visit from a Coffee Super Giant

How do you like yours? Decaf. With skim milk. Extra frothy.

The company offering 19,000+ ways to serve a cup of coffee, delighted Project Return members one morning as they came with a truck full of their famous coffee, cappuccino, espresso and frappuccino. Starbucks offered their full menu to Project Return members...at no cost.

Michelle Brooks, Starbucks Mobile Unit Manager, says, "We do those types of events a few times a week, and have been able to share the love with many local nonprofits. It is our simple way to say "thanks" to the unsung hero's of our community. Thanks for all you do."

Thanks for the great coffee Starbucks!



STARBUCKS
MOBILE UNIT
VISITS THE
PROJECT
RETURN
CENTER.

Project Return Vocational Mgr., Laurel Jorgensen gets Praised!

"You have demonstrated a genuine care for your clients that I haven't found in most others. I always appreciate you accompanying new applicants to their interview. I appreciate all the applicants you've brought to me in the past and look forward to working with you and Project Return in the future."

--Bill Dietz, Project Manager
Gulf Coast Enterprises

FORE!

Allen N. Reeves Golf Tournament Continues it's Success

Raising in excess of \$60,000, the 15th Annual Allen N. Reeves Memorial Golf Tournament, Project Return's major annual fundraiser, offered golfers a beautiful day for golf and a great way to help people experiencing mental illnesses.

On March 27th, Avila Golf & Country Club held the tournament for the third year in a row, and Sweetbay Supermarkets returned as the host sponsor donating a generous \$10,000!

Contests like closest to the pin, longest drive, and the chance to win \$10,000, provided by Reeves Import Motorcars, made the tournament even more exciting for players.

Another addition this year was the showing of the new Project Return video which allowed supporters of the tournament to learn about the vital services Project



BIG SUPPORTERS! SWEETBAY'S GOLFERS SMILE FOR THE CAMERA.

Return offers to people with mental illness.

Special thanks goes to long time supporter, Francesco Marchesini, this year's Tournament Chairman.

Executive Director, Natalie Mitchels and the entire staff of Project Return are very grateful and wish to thank all of the loyal supporters who return to make the tournament a success each year.

THANK YOU

Golf Tournament Sponsors

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PAPIA ROOFING

T-BIRD & KATHY SHANNON

USF Students Gain Real Life Experience

Project Return members share their stories with Psychology Class

Listening to real life emotional experiences from two Project Return members was more than the students of the University of South Florida had expected in their abnormal psychology class.

Mark M. and Heidi C. both agreed to share their struggles with mental illness in order to provide what a text book cannot.



Off To Work. Mark is dressed and ready to start the work day.

Mark talked about the onset of his illness, issues with medications, his family, and how this all led to homelessness. He went on to discuss

how the staff and the community at Project Return have turned his life around with shelter, helping him find and maintain a job and provide emotional support. He explained, "I came to Project Return almost 10 years ago. My work ethic has improved drastically and the continuous support from Project Return staff encourages me to continue every day. **Project Return has been a lifesaver for me!**"

Next, Heidi spoke about when she first started having symptoms of her illness and how it caused difficulties with her family and hardships with maintaining work. She went on to explain how after many struggles, her life is finally coming together. As a result of support she has received from Project Return, she is able to be there for her family, is working as a recep-



A Great Receptionist. Heidi distributes mail at her receptionist job.

tionist and doing very well in other aspects of her life.

Mark and Heidi both felt that speaking to others and talking about their struggles was very therapeutic. Dr. Gesten, professor and psychologist, said, "It was a great learning tool to have two people who've had real life experiences with schizophrenia, willing to share their experiences to educate others about what people go through every day when they are affected by mental illness."

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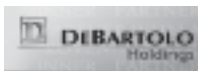


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** Donations as of 5/31/06*



PROJECT RETURN

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On The Internet

www.projectreturn.org

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