



Projections

HOPE, DIGNITY AND SUPPORT FOR PEOPLE EXPERIENCING MENTAL ILLNESSES

Summer 2005

Art Calendar

Be sure to visit Project Return's new art gallery, The Lobby Gallery, a multi-expressive art space, located at 304 W. Waters Ave., in Tampa, inside The Center for Lifelong Education, Training and Development.

View and purchase mixed media artwork by talented Project Return member artists.

Gallery Hours are Sat. & Sun., 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m., Sun. noon - 4 p.m. or by appt. Mon. - Thurs. by calling (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.

A RETURN TO LIFE...

ART FOR LIFE GALA SET FOR OCT. 1!

Florida's premier art experience, Art For Life, will continue to build upon its triumphant return last year Oct. 1, at Higgins Hall on the campus of St. Lawrence Catholic School.

Raising more than \$1 million in the 1990's, Project Return brought Art For Life back to Tampa Bay's social calendar last year, attracting more than 150 artists and 500 patrons to support those experiencing mental illnesses. Again, to remain true to the original vision of Art For Life, Project Return will donate a portion of the proceeds to an HIV group. This year's recipient will be the HIV clinical research work of St. Joseph's Comprehensive Research Institute.

The Art For Life poster artist is Duncan McClellan, a world-renowned glass artist



who has claimed top honors at the Gasparilla Festival of the Arts, Melbourne Arts Festival, Chicago Old Towne Festival and Coconut Grove Arts Festival.

Major sponsors to date include Decipher Media, MAGIC 94.9FM, *The St. Petersburg Times*, Raymond James, Mise En Place, Tonya & Matt's Ice Creamiest, Higgins Hall, Michelob Light, Pro Audio Systems, Fine Wine & Spirits, *Tampa Bay Metro*



Full Circle. Art For Life's first title piece (above) was Jane Murray Lewis' *Kindred Spirits* in 1991. The marquis event grew for ten events in 13 years, coming to Project Return last year with Theo Wujcik's piece *Return* (left).

and Neiman Marcus.

Honorary Hosts include American Outsourcing Group, Jimmy Baumgartner, Lair Decker & Frederick Johannessen, DeLotto Construction, Andrea Graham, Howard's Electric, Ed Lally & Phil Dinkins, Victor Leon, MalBrig & Associates, Serendipity and Stanton Storer.

For information, call (813) 990-8981 ext. 1 or e-mail artforlife@projectreturn.org.

PARTNERSHIP WITH NAMI ENHANCES SERVICES

Project Return recently embarked on an exciting collaboration effort with our local NAMI affiliate, NAMI Hillsborough, the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill.

We will be offering new prevention services designed to provide Project Return members with the information and support needed to help them recognize the symptoms of mental illness more quickly, help promote recovery and provide com-

panionship that will help prevent isolation.

For example, we will be working with NAMI to help individuals take the next step in their recovery depending on the individual's life plan, i.e. going back to school, getting a job, spending more time out of the house, or developing a hobby or cause that they are passionate about.

In addition, we will encourage people to keep their homes and apartments

in a condition that promotes health and recovery, along with giving individuals a chance to spend a few hours in a safe environment outside of their homes such as at malls, movie theaters, parks, etc.

We will also help people to acquire services such as medical appointments, job interviews and classes.

For more information on prevention services, please contact George Thomas at the local NAMI office at 813-989-2410.



Q
&A



VICTOR FIGUEREDO

WHY DID YOU START ART FOR LIFE?

Back in 1991, I had a dear friend who had been taken by AIDS. I was sick about the loss and when I would share my pain with friends, they were at a complete loss about this disease.

At that time, all HIV fundraisers were at gay sponsored events. I wanted to involve the ENTIRE community and make everyone aware of HIV's impact.

When approaching several arts organizations and businesses for support, I was overwhelmed by the positive response. Everyone wanted to be on board. A committee was formed and the rest is history.

YOU SUPPORTED HIV/AIDS BECAUSE OF THE IMPACT IT HAD ON YOU PERSONALLY; HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT MENTAL ILLNESS?

HIV does not discriminate, as does mental illness ... both can affect anyone. Both can and will affect every living person by its impact on friends and family. I recently had a friend affected by mental illness and was devastated by how quickly his life was turned upside down.

Thank goodness for programs like
Con't Next Column

TEACHER SPOTLIGHT

FINDING YOUR GROOVE THING

TEACHER IMPACTS MEMBERS THROUGH MUSIC & DANCE

What in the world does music and dance have to do with Project Return?

It's actually one of the classes, and lately the most popular class, offered to participants in our education program.

In the Dance Party class, a classroom is quickly transformed into a mock disco club, with dimmed lighting, multi-colored holiday lights, and open space.

The atmosphere and disco music enables members to lose enough of their inhibitions to get on the floor and dance.

Michael Hilson, otherwise known in the Dance Party class as "DJ Mike," is the Program Specialist for the Education Program and leads the class, among many others. Michael states, "It is amazing to see people that ordinarily might not appre-



Get Your Groove On. Michael Hilson leads one of his foot-tapping sessions for Project Return members at The Center.

ciate doing other forms of exercise, suddenly get the urge to get up and really shake it."

For three years, Michael has been instructing classes at Project Return, including Film Study and Drum Circle to Music Appreciation and Fitness. He also offers ways to keep participants active by leading community outings.

For example, once a week, he leads a group of members on a short walk to the local K-Mart.

For some members, it gives them an opportunity to do some shopping, which may not be otherwise available to them.

"A trip to the store makes me feel empowered and more connected to the local

community," explains a member, as he expresses his appreciation to Michael.

"One of the things that makes Project Return so unique, is the flexibility and multiple talents of our staff," says Michael.

"The staff at Project Return wear many different hats and I think that adds a *human touch* that is sometimes lacking in the mental health care system.

"We can readily put together an art show or perform an impromptu jazz concert within a moments notice."

Michael has been a great asset to our staff and we congratulate him on his creative efforts in helping Project Return members learn more about the arts.

PROJECT RETURN ART GALLERY OPENS

Colorful, creative, and unique! Project Return member artwork that is. In celebration of Mental Health Month, Project Return opened a brand new art gallery, The Lobby Gallery, a multi-expressive art space, featuring original works of art by Project Return member artists.

The opening reception was held May 20 at the gallery, inside The Center for Lifelong Education, Training and Development.

Attendees browsed the exhibit of original works of art, custom made pins, note cards and t-shirts, all available for purchase. Music was generously provided by Ace McVey, with the sounds of his electric guitar. The Lobby Gallery is an extension of the art



Happy Hosts. Hugo G., Robert D. & Kim P. greet patrons at the recent Project Return art gallery opening.

program, and its mission is to promote Project Return artists in the creative community and to educate visitors about mental illnesses. All sales benefit Project Return artists as well as our art program. See the art calendar on the cover for location & hours.

FMI, contact Angela Dickerson at 813-933-9020 or adickerson@projectreturn.org.

Con't From Previous Column
Project Return who can assist the individuals and

families of such victims. Mental illness is a serious matter and I am grateful to

see the proceeds of Art for Life benefit such an important organization.

Success Story

Members Find Love & Support Through Project Return

The sun was shining, there was a light breeze, more than 80 smiling faces and even a few tears ... happy tears that is.

Project Return members Ron C. and Tammy R. were joined together in marriage, in a beautiful outdoor ceremony at the Project Return Center on Sat., April 16.

From reciting their vows to the first dance, the emotional sight of the newly married couple was enough to melt your heart.

It's hard to imagine the difficulties Tammy and Ron went through prior to life with each other and Project Return.

About three years ago, Tammy moved from her life in Massachusetts to Florida. Living with her boyfriend, who often took drugs, she herself started the addicting habit.

A few months later, she became pregnant.

Worried about the health of her unborn child, she made the decision to get clean and went through intense withdraw symptoms. During that time, she also lost contact with the baby's father.

She had the baby, and when her daughter was a year old, the stress of caring for her alone began to weigh on her heavily.

The stress combined with her history of schizoaffective disorder with borderline personality, and post-traumatic stress disorder, resulted in her hospitaliza-



Wedded Bliss. Tammy R. (left) and Ron C. celebrate their marriage.

tion at Tampa General.

Her daughter went to live with Tammy's mother, and after a few weeks of mental health treatment, Tammy moved to Gulfoast Adult Family Care Home, a foster home for adults. Shortly after, she began attending classes at Project Return. That's where she met Ron.

ing complex.

He became very involved in the community, made friends with other residents and participated in various activities. Having a roommate also helped him stay positive.

Ron states, "Project Return is my family. It's the reason why I am a success today!"

The newly married couple now lives together in Project Return's supportive housing complex. Tammy has been working at the Center as a receptionist, and Ron, who is

a talented artist, does matting and framing for the art program.

Their main goal is to work on getting Tammy's daughter back in her life.

"We are so thankful to Project Return staff for their continued encouragement and support. We couldn't have done it without you!" said both Tammy and Ron.

Their success is an example of how the mental health system in Florida is working for people experiencing mental illnesses.

THANK YOU!

TO EVERYONE WHO VOLUNTEERED TO HELP MAKE RON & TAMMY'S WEDDING A SUCCESS. SPECIAL KUDOS TO PASTOR MIKEY JONES FROM CHURCH OF GOD OF PROPHECY FOR PERFORMING THE CEREMONY & ZHIVAGO & ROMEIKA ADDERLEY, DAWNETTE LINDO & OTHER ANONYMOUS VOLUNTEERS WHO DECORATED & PREPARED THE FOOD. LAST, BUT NOT LEAST, THANKS TO PROJECT RETURN STAFF & MEMBERS FOR ASSISTING WITH EVERYTHING FROM DECORATING TO STUFFING MANICOTTI. YOU EACH PLAYED AN IMPORTANT ROLE.

Ron found himself at Project Return as a result of a long time battle from schizoaffective disorder.

After living on the streets for some time, he became determined to improve his life and took the steps to get into adult foster care.

He had been receiving services from Project Return, when his caregiver, who had been like a mother to him, passed away in 2003. Ron decided he was ready to live independently and moved into Project Return's supportive hous-



MICHAEL ROSS, PROGRAM MANAGER

WHAT TYPES OF EDUCATIONAL SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE AT PROJECT RETURN?

Project Return offers a variety of classes such as computer training, GED preparation, adult basic education, art, music, visual and performing arts, horticulture and personal enrichment opportunities.

Members can also participate in support groups, join in social gatherings and community outings or utilize our Resource Room to access other community resources.

HOW MUCH DOES IT COST TO ATTEND?

Our services are absolutely free, other than a 25 cent lifetime membership fee, which was a tradition started by our founder, Rhoda Zusman.

HOW CAN I OR SOMEONE I KNOW BECOME A MEMBER?

To schedule an orientation or for more info. about membership, please contact me at 813-933-9020 or mross@projectreturn.org.

WHAT COSTS THE U.S. MORE THAN \$1 BILLION EACH YEAR?

THE ANSWER IS UNTREATED MENTAL ILLNESS*

WITHOUT TREATMENT, THE CONSEQUENCES OF MENTAL ILLNESS FOR THE INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIETY ARE STAGGERING:

- UNNECESSARY DISABILITY
- SUBSTANCE ABUSE
- INAPPROPRIATE INCARCERATION
- SUICIDE
- UNEMPLOYMENT
- HOMELESSNESS
- WASTED LIVES

WITH A COMBINATION OF MEDICATION AND PSYCHOSOCIAL TREATMENTS AND SUPPORTS, BETWEEN 70 TO 90 PERCENT OF INDIVIDUALS WITH SERIOUS MENTAL ILLNESS HAVE SIGNIFICANT REDUCTION OF SYMPTOMS AND IMPROVED QUALITY OF LIFE.

***LEARN MORE AT WWW.NAMI.ORG**

**SPONSOR
THANK
You!**

WE'D LIKE TO EXTEND A SPECIAL THANKS TO BARROW'S GOURMET DELI FOR THEIR CONTINUOUS SUPPORT OF OUR ART PROGRAM BY DISPLAYING AND SELLING MEMBER ARTWORK IN THEIR RESTAURANT. PLEASE STOP BY AND VIEW NEW ONGOING & REVOLVING GROUP ART BY PROJECT RETURN MEMBER ARTISTS WHICH WILL BE ON DISPLAY THROUGH DEC. '05. PROCEEDS FROM ARTWORK SOLD BENEFIT THE PROJECT RETURN ARTIST AS WELL AS OUR ART PROGRAM.



PROJECT RETURN

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On The Internet

www.projectreturn.org

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