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**\*\*\*PRESS RELEASE\*\*\***

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**SPECIAL NEEDS ARTISTS WORK SHOWN AT PATCHOGUE-MEDFORD LIBRARY**



**FREE Artists were Honored at the Patchogue-Medford Library Where Their Work is On Display**

**OLD BETHPAGE, NY** – On April 5<sup>th</sup>, the Patchogue-Medford Library hosted a Meet the Artists reception to honor special needs artists from Family Residences and Essential Enterprises, Inc. (FREE) who have their works exhibited at the library. The artists participate in FREE's Fine Art and Art Therapy Programs. The

More...

exhibit, “Ascension” will be on display through April 30. The Patchogue-Medford Library is located at 54-60 E Main St, Patchogue, NY. All are invited to take the time to view all the works, perhaps purchase a piece, with the proceeds going to support the artist and his/her program.



Jessica Gallone, Ed Regensburg Present Danielle Paisley and Jane Drake with a Print from the Ascension Collection for their Continued Support of FREE's Artists

“Ascension” is FREE’s second Professionally Juried Competition of artwork created by the Artists of FREE. Over 40 paintings were submitted to this year’s competition! The artists represented are the finalists whose quality of work “rose high enough” to have garnered entrance into this glorious collection. Fifteen Tier One pieces were selected along with First, Second and Third place winners by our esteemed judge, Kevin Larkin, Director of the B.J. Spoke Gallery, Huntington and award winning artist.

You are witness to the enormous courage and strength needed to take on the challenge of creating a free form abstract painting. Throughout the eleven months it took to complete our process, weekly emotional and spiritual self-revelation spiraled our artists to ever mounting artistic heights allowing them to find their voices and “talk to us” through the mystical, hidden language of images, colors and symbols.

“Ascension” consists of wide ranging depictions of different elements of nature. Skies, land forms, water and other natural elements span across all of the canvases displaying the artists’ connection to our world and the pathway to creativity. We worked through nine stages of creation.... from beginning sketches in pencil to learning how to handle pastels, water colors and finally acrylic paints.

While the artwork is beautiful to look at it is important to recognize the incredible depth of emotional release, intellectual learning and work skills development that took place over months of work with all of our dedicated staff. It was their patience and unerring commitment to “stay the course” and believe that our artists could reach high to not only “see their healing image”, but also commit it to permanent form for all to share in their vision.

Much has been written about the healing power of Mindfulness Based Art Therapy and the creative process of spiritual self-expression, especially for individuals who may find it difficult to express their thoughts and feelings through spoken words alone. The images on view are a testament to this healing power, as our artists faced the challenge to “break through” familiar modes of expression and embrace feelings of trust, hope and peace, offering them an alternative to chaos, conflict and fear. This project in creativity has helped fortify the groundwork for our artists’ successful, ongoing contributions to our community through employment, volunteerism and cultural enhancement for us all.

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**Family Residences and Essential Enterprises, Inc.**

Family Residences and Essential Enterprises, Inc. (FREE), founded in 1977, benefits and proudly supports more than 4,000 individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities, mental illness and traumatic brain injury. It is the mission of FREE to assist individuals of all abilities realize their full potential. FREE provides a diverse array of supports and services including: housing; recovery services; transition to work; employment; day, community and family services; respite; crisis services; education and after school support; specialty health services; and advocacy.

FREE also collaborates with a variety of diverse 501(c)(3) nonprofit partners on educational, vocational, rehabilitative and a myriad of other creative initiatives to enhance the local communities and the lives of more than 25,000 people that reside within them. Each of the valued partners of the FREE Network have a unique mission, vision and strategic goals that are aligned in purpose, and embody the spirit of the meaningful work we do every day.

The Patchogue-Medford Library is a school district public library serving the residents of the Patchogue-Medford School District. The mission of the Patchogue-Medford Library is to provide resources and opportunities to empower, educate and entertain the community.

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT OUR WEBSITE: [www.pmlib.org](http://www.pmlib.org)

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