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**Family Residences and Essential Enterprises, Inc. (FREE)**  
191 Bethpage-Sweet Hollow Road, Old Bethpage, NY 11804  
Phone: 516-870-1600 Fax: 516-870-1660

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

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**CONTACT:** Patrice Radowitz, Tel: [516-870-1621](tel:516-870-1621)/Cell: [631-553-7432](tel:631-553-7432)  
Email: [pradowitz@familyres.org](mailto:pradowitz@familyres.org)

Andy Robles: 516-603-0447  
Email: [familyres.free@gmail.com](mailto:familyres.free@gmail.com)

**FREE AND PATCHOGUE-MEDFORD LIBRARY HOLD MEET THE ARTISTS  
RECEPTION HONORING ARTISTS WITH AUTISM AND OTHER SPECIAL NEEDS  
DURING NATIONAL AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH**



**Anthony, an artist from FREE, presents an award to Danielle Paisley, Director of Patchogue-Medford Library and Jennifer Bollerman, Assistant Director, Patchogue Medford-Library, for their continued support of FREE and the artists.**

**OLD BETHPAGE, NY** – Family Residences and Essential Enterprises, Inc. (FREE) recently held a **Meet the Artists Reception** to honor special needs artists participating in their Fine Art and Art Therapy Programs at the

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Patchogue-Medford Library. These artists currently have their latest collection of NEW abstract paintings entitled “DISRUPTION” on exhibit at the library, located at 54-60 E Main Street, Patchogue, NY. The exhibit will run through April 30, 2018. All are encouraged to view the works and perhaps purchase a piece. The proceeds of sales go towards supporting the artist and their program.

The collection on display is called DISRUPTION, a very special exhibition of artwork created by individuals with Autism and other Special Needs, participating in Fine Art and Art Therapy programs at FREE. More than simply interfering with a pattern that was already in existence, DISRUPTION challenged our artists to create a pattern, then disrupt it and transform the old pattern into a brand new one. It looks different, feels different and is different. To be able to embrace this new pattern, old thinking and memories had to shift. What was old had to be let go of as our artists immersed themselves into the flowing river of creativity; where healing resides and has the power to rejuvenate and transform life.

Throughout the seven months it took to complete the 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 and symbols.

DISRUPTION consists of wide ranging depictions of differing natural frequencies of life. Whether it is an internal neurological pathway or a winding path through the forest, the patterns on the paper display the artist’s personal reflection of their own connection to our worlds and the pathway to creativity.

While the artwork is beautiful to look at it is important to recognize the depth of emotional release, intellectual learning and work skills development that took place over months of work with all 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.

### **Family Residences and Essential Enterprises, Inc. (FREE)**

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 has a unique mission, vision and strategic goals that are aligned in purpose, and embody the spirit of the meaningful work we do every day. For more information, please call 516-870-7000 or visit [www.familyres.org](http://www.familyres.org).