



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

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**EXHIBIT AT LONG ISLAND MACARTHUR AIRPORT FEATURES
ARTISTS WITH AUTISM AND OTHER DISABILITIES**



**(L-R) Robert Schneider, Long Island MacArthur Airport Deputy Commissioner; Shelley La Rose-Arken, Long Island MacArthur Airport Commissioner;
Ed Regensburg, Director of Art Therapy, FREE; and Lynda Moran, Executive Director of the Islip Arts Council**

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OLD BETHPAGE, NY – On January 30th, Long Island MacArthur Airport hosted a Meet the Artists reception to honor special needs artists from Family Residences and Essential Enterprises, Inc. (FREE) who have their mixed media constructions exhibited at the airport. The artists participate in FREE’s Fine Art and Art Therapy Programs. The exhibit, “**Landscape Constructions**” will be on display through March 8 in the Islip Arts Council – Art Gallery in MacArthur Airport – in the Atrium /arrivals area. All are encouraged to visit the exhibit and perhaps purchase a piece. Proceeds from sales go towards supporting the artists continue their craft.



FREE artist Peter B., flanked by Robert Schneider, Long Island MacArthur Airport Deputy Commissioner and Shelley La Rose-Arken, Long Island MacArthur Airport Commissioner

“**Landscape Constructions**” is FREE’s first professionally juried competition of artwork created by the Artists of FREE. Over one hundred fifty pieces were vigorously created over a six-month period for this year’s collection. One hundred and six qualifying pieces were put before an esteemed panel of judges from the New York art and business community as the finalists. Fifty-Three Landscape Constructions were selected by the judges. The collection consists of two tiers of excellence, with Tier One containing the first through third place winners, seven pieces awarded with honorable mention and the next best fifteen pieces.

Tier Two contains the remaining twenty-eight works. The wide-ranging depictions of sky, land, water and other natural elements are interpreted through three styles of art. Realistic, impressionistic, and abstract multi- media constructions were created with some artists making up to six renditions to arrive at their final submission.

The artists represented are the finalists whose quality of work “rose high enough” to have garnered entrance into this prestigious collection. Their courage and strength led them down the challenging path of self-revelation and allowed them to “talk to us” through the hidden language of images, colors and symbols.

While the artwork is beautiful to look at it is important to recognize the incredible depth of emotional release 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.

Over the years much has been written about the healing power of art as 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 have embraced feelings of trust, hope and resolution, offering them an alternative to conflict and fear, which unfortunately characterizes much of the consciousness present in our world today.

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About 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 Family of 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. For more information, please call 516-870-7000 or visit www.familyres.org.

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