

Visual Arts Groups Celebrate Mental Health Awareness Month

The Art Guild invites the Long Island Community to "Meditate and Create," the first in a series of events, in recognition of Mental Health Awareness Month. The program at The Art Guild takes place on May 4, from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at Elderfields Preserve. The program is open to adults of all ages and high school students.

Mental Health Awareness Month has been celebrated during May in the United States since 1949. However, this is the first time Long Island's local arts organizations have developed programming specifically targeted towards providing mental health support.

The series, entitled "Art Soothes the Mindful Soul" is a collaboration between three Long Island arts organizations: The Art Guild, The Art League of Long Island, and Gallery North. By working together to offer parallel programs, the three organizations are better able to service the entire Long Island Community. Long Island residents are invited to attend any, or all, of the events. No previous art experience is required.

The partnership was the idea of Lisa Grossman, Executive Director of The Art Guild. Ms. Grossman observed, "Having

been at The Art Guild for five years, I've noticed many instances where we've helped people dealing with grief, physical disabilities, illness related stress, and anxiety. Art and artistic expression are wonderful healers." Numerous scientific studies confirm that creative activities can help relieve stress, arrest cognitive decline, and assist with other psychological challenges.

All three programs contain both a meditation and an art component. The meditation allows attendees to clear their minds and become more open to creative expression. Dena Vigilis, from Yoga Life, will kick off The Art Guild program with some breathing exercises. She will guide participants through some chair yoga movements. Participants can use the techniques they learn during the event to reduce stress and anxiety in their daily lives. The program is designed to accommodate people of all ages and fitness levels. Ms. Vigilis is a certified yoga instructor with more than twenty years of experience. The Art Guild values our community partners and is very appreciative of Yoga Life's programming support.

The second part of the "Meditate and

Create" event features Pamela Schindler-Thomsen. She is an experienced art therapist with a demonstrated history of working in the mental health care industry. Ms. Schindler-Thomsen is skilled in Group Therapy, Psychotherapy, Art Therapy, Mental Health, and Working with Adolescents. She will lead participants in an art therapy activity targeted at participants with varying levels of artistic skill.

"Meditate and Create" is a free event but space is limited. To register, visit www.theartguild.org or contact The Art Guild at 516-304-5797. The Art Guild is located at Nassau County's historic Elderfields Preserve at 200 Port Washington Blvd., Manhasset, NY 11030. The Art Guild offers classes and workshops for children and adults year-round.

The Art Guild of Port Washington, Inc., is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization dedicated to creating an inclusive and enriching home for the visual arts education, exploration and exhibition. It is an organization open to all people with a common goal to advance the visual arts. The Art Guild was voted best Art School and Art Gallery in Nassau County for the sixth year in a row.



Other events in the series include Art and Meditation on May 6, 2023 at 6PM at Gallery North, Getting Zen for children ages 5-11 on May 19 at 5 p.m. at Gallery North, Meditate and Create on May 25 from 6 p.m.-7:30 p.m. at The Art League of Long Island, and Sound Bowl Healing on May 26 at 7 p.m. at Gallery North. Representatives from the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Queens/Nassau will provide information on other mental health services available to those needing additional assistance.

—Submitted by The Art Guild