

# VILLAGE CONNECTOR Community News

Published September 6, 2010

## Collaboration Extravaganza!

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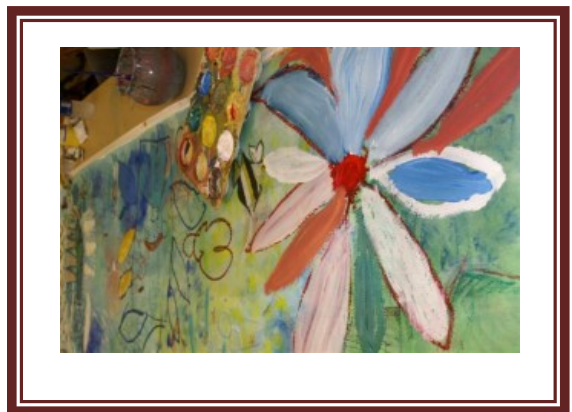


Whether tending to a houseplant, growing flowers or turning an outdoor garden space into a serene and relaxing retreat, plants have the power to heal our body and our soul. Gardens can be an important part of healing by providing hope and inspiration.

Three area non-profits have joined together with the generous donation from the Annapolis based, TKF Foundation. Artwalk, The Providence Center and Light House have joined together to create artwork for the “Open Spaces, Sacred Places” Healing Garden at the new

shelter location on Hudson Street, scheduled to open this Fall.

The TKF Foundation is a private grant-making foundation whose purpose is to inspire and create “Open Spaces, Sacred Places”. It partners with organizations to create sacred places which increase a sense of community and contribute to a deepening of human connections. These sacred places foster the development of human spirituality and are open and accessible to people of all beliefs, faiths and cultures. The mission of the TKF Foundation is to provide the opportunity for a deeper human experience by inspiring and supporting the creation of public greenspace that offers a temporary place of sanctuary, encourages reflection, provides solace, and engenders peace and well being. For TKF, an open space has two different meanings that work together to create sacred places that are inclusive and aware of any elements that may be exclusive to any potential user of the space. On one level, an open space is open to the public, meaning anyone of any race, faith, culture or belief is able to enter the space. The space is for use by a whole community of different people rather than just one particular group. On another level, an open space is one that feels welcoming and nonthreatening to those that spend time in it; it feels like a home for the soul. The design of the space and the placement of features such as portals, paths and universal symbols that have meaning across all religions, nations and ethnic groups, lend to the openness of the space by inviting those outside of the



space to enter it. The combination of a space being open on both a physical and spiritual level is what makes up “Open Spaces, Sacred Places.”

Creating an Open Spaces Sacred Places site at the new shelter has enabled Artwalk and its partners to introduce and celebrate the amazing contribution of two otherwise hidden populations. And the



project’s success comes in the form of highly contemplative, peaceful and reflective art benefiting the Light House. Residents of the Light House, clients of the Providence Center, together with the guidance of Sally Comport, co-founder of Artwalk and its Curator, and Chuck Walsh Chairman of the Board of Artwalk, are creating paintings that will become permanent displays in the garden.

ArtWalk is a non-profit organization incorporated as Annapolis the Beautiful. The ArtWalk organization is committed to bringing grand scale art to various sites throughout the Annapolis area and the nearby surrounding areas of Anne Arundel County. ArtWalk creates collaborative opportunities for artists and community organizations with well developed art programs to display their art in public locations. Every Thursday during the month of August, at Art at Large studio of Sally Wern Comport on West St, the group meets to work on the project. There are three to four residents/clients from Light House and the Providence Center

working together to produce the artwork. This collaborative effort between Artwalk’s partners, Providence Center’s Art Institute participants and Light House residents illustrates clearly the power of art to make valuable connections between the two very disparate communities. Ms. Comport explains...this project represents the path for a community at large to “meet” on level surface specific populations that they may not ever have crossed paths with other than through this wonderful Art. It allows understanding and appreciation in a wordless way as Art does on so many facets. Its creation forever captures the energy and spirit of these artists working together...

The mission of Providence Center is to provide opportunities for adults with developmental disabilities in Anne Arundel County. The Center’s goal is to encourage these men and women to focus on discovering their abilities rather than on their disabilities. At the same time, Center programs help them to enjoy increased self-determination in taking more independent and meaningful roles in society and to exercise higher levels of control over their own lives. The Providence Art Institute was founded in 1991. It offers its artists an exciting and successful art curriculum that includes introductory and advanced visual arts classes, various studio workshops, and a dance and drama program administered in cooperation with Maryland Hall for the Creative Arts. More than 150 men and women currently participate in the Art Institute programs. Artists take satisfaction in exhibiting exciting new artwork, selling many of their pieces, and affirming their growing self-esteem. Bart O’Reilly,



Manager of the Art Institute, is thrilled to be partnering with the Light House Shelter and Artwalk... ..this project not only gives our artists a chance to give back to their community, it also provides exposure for their talented work.

We hope visitors to the healing garden will experience the joy that went into these paintings and perhaps see the world through the eyes of these exceptional artists...Providence Center is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization providing supported employment, prevocational training, recreational, medical day care, and transportation services to nearly 500 individuals with developmental disabilities throughout Anne Arundel County. According to Elizabeth Kinney, President AAMI Board of Directors....as you walk down Hudson Street the first thing you will see at the new shelter is the Healing Garden. It has been an extraordinary collaboration from the very beginning of the project...from Graham Landscape Architects to the Providence Center, Artwalk and TFK Foundation...the Healing Garden will be a safe, sacred place for residents to reflect...



The Light House serves as a beacon of hope to Anne Arundel County's most fragile neighbors. For over two decades we have been steadfast in our mission of rebuilding lives with service and compassion by providing shelter, preventing homelessness and empowering people in Anne Arundel County as they work to become self-sufficient. The new Light House which opens later this Fall, will house four separate facilities in one 24,000 sq. ft. green, secure, and cost efficient building. An Emergency Shelter for men and women for 90 days as long as they remain employed, remain alcohol & drug free, and work

toward self-sufficiency. Transitional Housing, a Resource and Support Center and a Chronically Homeless Day Center will also be part of the new shelter.

Ms. Kinney continues to explain....the future of all non-profits' success is to work together – to build a community, conserve resources and promote ownership within the community....The Light House Healing Garden will be a sacred place, a separate space away from everyday life, which is meant to invite residents into a deeper and more peaceful relationship with themselves, the neighborhood and their surroundings. For more information, to volunteer or make a donation to the non-profits in this article, please visit their websites: [www.providencecenter.com](http://www.providencecenter.com), [www.annapolislighthouse.org](http://www.annapolislighthouse.org) and [www.artatlargeartwalk.com](http://www.artatlargeartwalk.com).