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JAMAICA PLAIN

Home for Little Wanderers to host youth writing, art exhibit at JP campus for 22nd, final year

Posted by Matt Rocheleau May 16, 2012 01:37 PM

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By Matt Rocheleau, Town Correspondent

Children from The Home for Little Wanderers' residential program will soon unveil the creative art and writing projects they have been working on for the past year.

On Thursday -- for the 22nd and final time -- the Voices & Visions Creative Writing and Art Exhibit will be on display at the nonprofit's most well-known facility, the 98-year-old Knight Children's Center in Jamaica Plain. The child and family service agency [plans to sell](#) that campus to a housing developer.

Many of the youths who participate in the annual project have experienced abuse and neglect, according to the organization; many struggle with behavioral issues and low self-esteem. Nearly all are in emotional turmoil.

The project is intended to teach positive means of self-expression through writing and art, officials said.

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This year's theme, "Celebrating Heroes," provides moving insight into how the children have interpreted that concept, according to Brian Barresi, an art teacher at The Home's campus in Walpole.

Among the work the youth will display at the exhibit are a life-size comic book depicting adventurous made-up characters along with pieces honoring 9/11 heroes and a local foster mother.

"When children have been through traumatic events, creative expression can be quite therapeutic," said Annah Jordan, an art teacher at the nonprofit's campus in JP. "Learning how to use different mediums of art like clay, paper mâché and writing can be a valuable tool in the healing process for the children."

The exhibit will be held Thurs., May 17 from 4 to 7 p.m. and on Fri., May 18, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Knight Children's Center Gymnasium, the organization said. This year's exhibit will be the last at the Jamaica Plain facility. The agency will search for a new site for next year's event.

The project will also be displayed on May 23 at the Seaport World Trade Center during the "Voices & Visions" gala, which is now the signature fundraiser for the 213-year-old agency. The event regularly raises more than \$1 million.

"Staff at The Home recognize the benefits of art and that it plays an important role in a child's development," the nonprofit's president and CEO, Joan Wallace-Benjamin, said in a statement. "Through the community's support, many children have benefited from our art program and will continue to for years to come. The Voices & Visions project is helping us paint a brighter future for youth."

For more information, [click here](#).

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