



**COMMUNITY  
SUPPORT  
SERVICES**

# LIFE CHAT

A publication spotlighting CSS clients

May 2022

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Recovery



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## We want to hear from you!

Contact Danya Bailey at 330-253-9388, ext. 238, or Narkeetah Brazil, at ext. 165, for the next Recovery Advisory Council (RAC) meeting or to contribute your art-istry or recovery story to Life Chat.

(See back page for RAC information.)

## Art of Recovery returns in person New venue lends to excitement

It seems fitting that Art of Recovery 2022 happened on the heels of the first day of spring. The event's return to an in-person celebration was a breath of fresh air after two years of uncertainty, when concerns about COVID-19 resulted in the event being held virtually.

There was much new at this year's event. The online auction format remained, but it was the first year guests could bid on artwork they were seeing in person at the event. It also was the first Art of Recovery curated by new Expressive Arts Administrator Michelle Morton. Perhaps the biggest change was its debut at a new location - the Akron Art Museum.



The museum's first floor lent itself perfectly to the display of original artwork created by CSS' client artists. Many of the artists said having their work shown in the museum was "a dream come true." In addition, the artists had the chance to share their stories with the more than 200 guests who strolled through the museum, admiring the artwork and bidding on their favorites.

During the awards presentation, eight of the 20 featured artists were honored for their work, as judged by two local artists. Judge Christine Mehen noted, "The artwork in this show is fantastic. So much raw talent."

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*Fifty-seven works of client-created art were on display for Art of Recovery 2022, including the second-place winning "Self #2" by Stephanie Ijoma (pictured at right). Photos by Edward Vullo of Foremost Photography.*

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"Inward and Onward"

Taking home the top awards were:

- **LaHaynes**, who won **Best in Show** for *"Inward and Onward,"* a radiant oil painting of "an individual who has the ability to look into themselves, find their inner light and strength, and share it with the world."
- **Stephanie Ijoma**, who earned **second place** with *"Self #2,"* a vibrant self-portrait in charcoal and color pastel.
- **Simon Roman**, who took **third place** with *"Unity,"* a multi-faceted colored pencil drawing that displays "how I've always pictured the characters of myself like an internal council."

**Honorable mentions** were awarded for *"Who I'm Supposed to Be,"* a two-piece mixed media work by **Kerri Symes**; *"Colorful Cats,"* a printmaking piece by **Carol S.**; and *"Love is a Beautiful Bird,"* a creation of alcohol ink on ceramic tile by **Heather Brazil**.

The **Judge's Pick Award** from judge Christine Mehen was presented to **Melody Strull** for the acrylic painting *"Overwhelmed,"* and the **Judge's Pick Award** from judge Ted Lawson went to **Maryam Khalid** for *"Truth,"* a pencil drawing.

The guests were impressed with the art, too. By night's end, 43 of the 57 featured works had sold.



"Unity"

*Thank you to all of the artists for sharing your artwork and your journey to recovery!*



## RAC members excited to be part of Art of Recovery

"The Art of Recovery 2022 show was one of the most amazing and scary experiences I have had in my life. It was amazing because I'd never won first place for anything, let alone my art, and how happy so many people were for me. I admit also that I was a bit nervous to share with so many a bit of myself. I'm anxious a lot of the time, but participating in things like groups, art therapy and Art of Recovery is helping me to shed a good deal of that heavy anxiety. Going to the show and meeting so many wonderful people eventually helped me to not be so fearful, at least for the day. I hope to take these memories as a reminder of what can be done and achieved when following my treatment and coming out of my shell."

- **LaHaynes**



In my heart, I was so excited to be part of Art of Recovery this year. Art therapy has been an instrumental part of my own recovery. This was my third year participating, but due to COVID, this was the first year the event was held in person, which really caused my excitement to grow! I was so happy to be at the art museum with my fellow artists. When I saw my Zentangles framed, I was in awe! I am already looking forward to next year! - **Miranda Taylor**



"Colorful Cats" by Carol S.

"I submitted three art pieces to Art of Recovery. I received "Honorable Mention" for *"Colorful Cats"* and (it sold). I also sold *"Shimmering Season."* It's unbelievable I got to wear a tag that says "Artist." Someone calling you an artist and buying your artwork is an award for enjoying yourself. With a table of family, friends and my Visiting Nurse, I had so much fun ... two hours of sheer good time!" - **Carol S.**



**Angie Fawn with her piece, "Reflections"**

## Supported Employment Services Success Story

By Joel Voorman, SE Recovery Specialist

In early 2020, Supported Employment client Heidi Hanes had job offers from various employers in the community, including positions at the Akron Zoo and Canal Park (home to the Akron RubberDucks baseball team).

Enter COVID.

The jobs that had been offered to Heidi were no longer available due to the shut down.

Heidi went on hiatus from the Supported Employment program to focus on her mental health and obtaining stable housing. While volunteering at Habitat for Humanity, Heidi noticed the Amazon sorting facility



Heidi Hanes

nearby. Using skills she had learned through the employment program, Heidi submitted an application and completed a job interview at Amazon. Shortly after, she was a full-time employee!

“You want to enjoy what you’re doing so it’s not meaningless work. With COVID hitting, lots of people turned to Amazon to order household stuff,” Hanes said. “It was great being a part of having people get their essential items delivered to their homes.”

While working at Amazon, Heidi has taken advantage of the resources available to her at CSS. She met with Supported Employment benefits specialist Michell Montgomery, who helped her learn how to maximize her earnings and still maintain her Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Medicaid benefits. She also learned about the benefits of Social Security’s Ticket to Work program, which provides additional protections.

Heidi also worked with employment staff and her medical care team to obtain a disability accommodation at Amazon to protect her from working too many hours and jeopardizing her mental health or earning too much money and affecting her SSDI and healthcare benefits. Heidi is proof that benefits recipients can work and stay on benefits if they adhere to certain guidelines.

Heidi says her success at Amazon has boosted her confidence and helped increase her physical stamina and mental health.

“It’s a competitive workplace, and you have to meet certain rates. You’re always trying to motivate yourself to achieve a certain number goal,” she said. “I was in the 10 top for three consecutive months. They got tired of putting my name on the leader board.”

Heidi is eager to advance her career with Amazon. The company is paying for her tuition to attend the University of Akron this summer, where she will begin coursework towards an associate degree that will qualify her to be an area manager.

### “Change”

*Change comes in all shapes and sizes.*

*It travels far beyond the places we’ve ever been in.*

*It produces room for new seeds to be planted.*

*It reaches through every inch of darkness.*

*It comes to destroy what has been hidden.*

*It comes to wreck what has been given.*

*It enters into your soul, crushing every part of deception.*

*It causes your heart to open its deepest parts, for its own reflection.*

*There is no form of deception that can survive this correction.*

*You see, when the truth comes, it spreads in every direction.*

*There is no place a lie can survive.*

*There is nothing that can stop your desire.*

*To be with your father, in that consuming fire.*

*So when the world tries to take you, always remember who made you!*

– Tomika Torres, RAC member

### “Longing for Newness”

*Stained glass windows, vintage outlook*

*Walking with a stride that’s heavy, feels like the ground shook*

*Wind light across my face, sun beaming with radiance*

*Old buildings paint aged canvas, with the smell of outdated wood was the fragrance*

*Past events with thoughts of aged memories, longing for newness*

*I look to current atmosphere, feel the coolness against my movement*

*Sounds of birds chirping, the bustling of street life; fresh perspective, intuitive lessons and an insight that flows light*

*I can hear the old mother say, “Keep your eyes on the prize, keep moving forward.”*

*With a glare, I stay focused with my eyelids lowered*

*Goals of my future, keeps me on my toes*

*Recovery for me is a love battle down to the road; longing for newness*

– Shannon, RAC member



# COMMUNITY SUPPORT SERVICES

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## Kudos to the Art of Recovery team

This Life Chat issue captures the culmination of a successful evening. Congratulations to **Michelle Morton**, CSS Expressive Arts Administrator, for nurturing the talents of Art of Recovery client artists, and to **Angie Younessi** (CSS communications associate), **Michael Gaffney** (director of marketing and development), and Michelle for coordinating the event. Kudos to the CSS and non-CSS volunteers who helped out. Partnering with Angie to compile each *Life Chat*, I can attest to her motivation to have this issue released quickly to share Art of Recovery with the readers. We hope you enjoy it.

- **Danya Bailey**, RAC co-chairperson



## Mission Statement

Community Support Services: Helping you achieve a healthy mind and body while supporting you to live and work in your community.

## Recovery Definition

Recovery is the continuous process of empowering an individual so he or she may live a satisfying and contributing life. It is a shared responsibility among the individual, the treatment staff, family, friends, and the community to:

- Discover or rediscover strengths and abilities
- Pursue personal goals
- Develop a sense of self-identity that allows the person to grow beyond his or her diagnosis

**The Recovery Advisory Council** is a collaborative effort with clients & family members to continuously improve the satisfaction of services for all Community Support Services clients.

