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SAMA-JOHNSTOWN EXHIBITION HIGHLIGHTS MUSEUM'S HEALTHCARE PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

Johnstown – The Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art at Johnstown is pleased to announce the opening of its latest exhibition, *The Art of Healing Exhibition: Reflections 2015*. On view March 27 through June 5, the exhibition features more than 70 works created by patients during SAMA's Museum/Healthcare Partnership Program residencies at the John P. Murtha Neuroscience and Pain Institute.

The works in *The Art of Healing Exhibition*, now in its fourth year, were created during residencies with SAMA directory artist Marcene Glover. A resident of Johnstown, Glover is a well-known portrait and courtroom artist whose representational portraits have been commissioned by U.S. Members of Congress and are represented in the collections of museums, universities, and federal courtrooms.

In the residencies, Glover led participants in zentangle and bibliotherapy activities. Zentangle is a form of drawing that uses repeating lines to create stylized designs. While the end result yields beautiful works of art, the process itself is lauded for its therapeutic benefits. Bibliotherapy uses poetry and literature to explore aspects of well-being.

The Art of Healing Exhibition will showcase a number of self portraits and other designs in the zentangle style, as well as poems and other bibliotherapy works that will be framed and hung in the gallery. Also on view will be two portraits by Glover, including *Through Dana's Eyes*, a collaboration between Glover and a young paralyzed patient, Dana, who communicates through blinking. The two worked together for several months, during which time Glover demonstrated techniques for achieving various textured effects in the paint. As Dana learned the techniques, she let Glover know which she preferred for her portrait. Dana also made color, medium, style and subject symbolism choices that are meaningful to her.

With nine healthcare residencies under her belt, Glover has witnessed the benefits the program offers firsthand. "Working in this field, I am continually rewarded and amazed by the benefits to participants," she said. "The particular methods we're using heal neuron dendrites (cell nerve endings) by stretching them to grow in new

directions, forming new neural pathways. I've seen times when a participant was completely debilitated by migraines, until she focused on our rhythmic techniques to gain control over it. This enabled her to function again. Several participants tell me this is making a difference in their lives, to directly reduce daily symptoms and increase quality of life. Medical studies support these observations. I have worked on a lot of very interesting and important projects through the arts, but I have to consider this among the most meaningful.”

SAMA's Museum/Healthcare Partnership Program debuted in 2003 in an attempt to help area residents suffering from mental and physical disabilities. Through the program, SAMA's trained artists and educators work with health care providers to develop residencies and workshops aimed at providing relief for patients dealing with physical pain and discomfort. In recent years, the program has been expanded to include working with disabled veterans and children with autism spectrum disorder, as well as place a greater emphasis on citizens with mental handicaps. In 2014 alone, the program benefitted approximately 1,000 individuals throughout central and western Pennsylvania.

The Museum will host an opening reception from 6 to 8 p.m. on Thursday, March 26. The reception is open to the public free of charge, though reservations are requested by March 23. For reservations or more information, please call the Museum at (814) 269-7234.

The Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art at Johnstown is located in the Pasquerilla Performing Arts Center on the campus of the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown. Hours of operation are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. The Museum is a handicapped-accessible facility and is open to the public free of charge. For more information, please call the Museum or visit www.sama-art.org.

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