

AWA Artly News

"Promoting Micro-enterprising, Providing Opportunities, Creating Independence"™

Volume 2

Fall/Winter 2017

Breaking Barriers—The Exhibit An Exploration into the autism art world

The City of Boynton Beach, Art in Public Places hosted "*Breaking Barriers—The Exhibit*" at the Boynton Beach Civic Center with an open reception on July 29, 2017. Twelve members of Artists with Autism, Inc. (AWA) displayed over 60 pieces of artwork and more was made available during the "Art Market" where each participant offered art, reprints, greeting cards, t-shirts and other handmade crafts. The artists interacted with the guests at their booths, and also spoke a few words about their techniques in front of the audience.



Aaron Poliwooda, Author



David Rodriguez, Artist

Book-signing with several self-published authors with autism were in attendance as well. As members of AWA, the artists retain all the proceeds from the sales of their art and books to re-invest in their micro-enterprise business. Inclusion in the Arts, this exhibit and others provided by AWA offers opportunities for these aspiring and emerging artists to be recognized as self-employed professional artists and helps to demonstrate a need to embrace diversity among us.



Andres Pola, Artist with his sister Alex



Keith Rebarber, Artist

Artists With Autism, Our Story

Artists with Autism Inc is a nonprofit established in Florida in May 2012. It was the vision of the founder, Cynthia Drucker, to promote the artistic abilities of her son with autism and others like him. During the first two and half years, our four "founding members" shared a booth or table at local venues such as outdoor farmers markets, craft fairs, and bazaars selling their artwork and learning the basics of building an art business. In our first three years, we participated in many exhibits local galleries, nature centers, universities, book stores and assorted festivals. Those first experiences would prepare the artists, to manage and maintain the first retail art gallery specifically created to promote artwork created by those on the spectrum. The Artists with Autism Gallery and Gift Boutique opened its doors on January 16, 2015. The AWA Gallery is run and maintained with 100% volunteer efforts and public donations. We believe supported self-employment is a viable alternative for individuals with autism and is a very real option for independence. By focusing on their abilities we created a social venture that is not only providing an income for those individuals, we hope to make an impact in our community by dismissing many of the myths about autism. The AWA Gallery and Gift Boutique provides the platform the artist with autism needed for their art business start-up, and gives that individual the opportunity to engage with the world on a topic they have created and understand.



Founding members; L to R: Jayson Halberstadt, Brandon Drucker, Michael Vidal, Andres Pola



Our Programs

The AWA module provides free programs for those aspiring artists who identify as being on the autism spectrum and desire to become professional artists.

The Micro-enterprise Program allows members to participate at the Entrepreneur Training Gallery located inside the Festival Marketplace. It is designed to provide vocational assessment for post graduation students with disabilities. The Gallery features artwork created by aspiring artists with autism and provides the opportunity for the artists to develop their desire to own and maintain their own micro-enterprise art business. In the first year of operation, the Gallery boasts over 100 pieces of artwork from 15 different artists, most from the South Florida area. The Gallery also receives handmade craft items produced by individuals on the autism spectrum. All the consignors are expected to maintain their own inventory with strong parent involvement. The Program shares resources and ideas that will help market and promote the artwork of the members such as websites and companies that will create merchandise with their artwork imprint. Those artists who are able to spend time in the Gallery often work side by side with volunteer mentors who evaluate their performance and may provide individual instruction to minimize any deficits. The vocational assessment activities at the Training Gallery give the artist the opportunity to learn in an actual retail setting and will help prepare the artists develop marketable skills they can use in all areas of their lives. We believe supported self-employment is a viable alternative to traditional employment and helps to destroy the stereotypical attitudes people may have towards those with developmental disabilities. This opportunity would not be possible without the support of the Festival Marketplace gifting us with a generous booth space for the Artists with Autism Gallery and Gift Boutique.



Jason H at El's Center Entrepreneur Market

The ARTy Party is a fun, social art class designed for all students with special needs and is often taught by a professional artist who volunteers their time, and is hosted at the location of a local business or organization who serves the special needs population. The ARTy Party module provides families the opportunity to become familiar with a valuable community resource and allows social interaction for the students.

The AWA Mentor Program The mentor may suggest art styles and techniques that enhance the artists current skills and may assist the artist in his/her daily business activities during the operational hours at the Gallery. Those activities may include helping the artist with money transactions, suggest selling techniques, and discuss appropriate customer interactions. Our mentors help our gallery artists by evaluating their performance at the Gallery to recognize their strengths and are assessed for vocational readiness and measured in areas of accounting, time management, safety, work performance, and other employable skills.



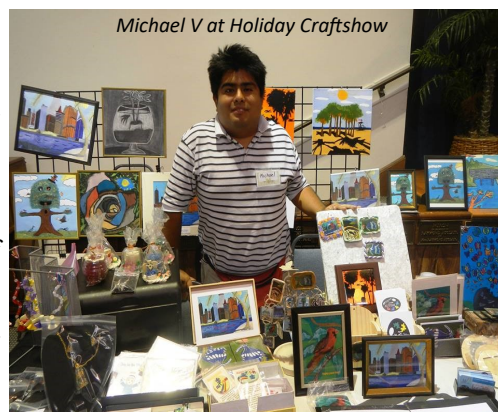
Keith R at Artserve

The Collaboration Program We help support schools, organizations and other non-profits that serve the special needs community. Currently our Gallery is providing a retail outlet for the handmade gifts and jewelry created by the students enrolled in the micro-enterprise programs of Atlantic Technical College and Taravella PASS Program, Saddle Up Equine Therapy, and Crafters For Life. The Gallery also offers greeting cards made by the athletes of the Special Olympics Broward County Alpine Ski Team. The collaborating organizations receive the proceeds from the sale of these items to help support their programs.

The AUTrepreneur Workshop provides an interactive hands-on approach for aspiring artists with autism with a desire to become self-employed. Attendees learn the basics of being a professional artist. Topics discussed include marketing, promoting, taking effective photos, building a website and alternate income streams as an artist.

Inclusion in the Arts provides opportunities for the members to participate in local art and book exhibits. Members have been invited to have their art displayed at public and private offices, hotels, galleries and government establishments. This helps us to spread autism awareness as well as form lasting relationships with our community. The personal one on one experience with the public and fellow artists helps our members to develop appropriate social skills and exposes them to different art styles, and earn respected for their talents.

The Virtual Gallery is an online portal website that allows all local member artists and distant members, the opportunity to show and exhibit their talents to the world and receive compensation for their artworks. The Virtual Gallery offers print-on-demand for



Michael V at Holiday Craftshow

A year in pictures

Marino WalkAbout
Awe in Autism Conference at Els Center
disAbilities Expo at NSU
Jaco Park Wine Fest at Oakland Park
Different Not Less, AWA Exhibit at ArtServe
Butterfly Festival at Coconut Creek
Autism Society Broward Family Day
Great American Beach Party
FAU Autism Leaders Breakfast
Breaking Barriers, AWA Exhibit at Boynton Beach



Arty Spotlight News

Featuring the Four Founding Members of AWA



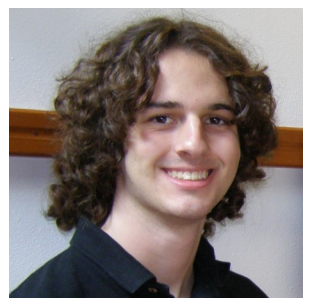
Brandon Drucker became a professional artist at 18. His acrylic painting style can best be described as Whimsical Fauvism. At 26 he had his first Solo Exhibit and his first Live painting in public for a charity. AWA has provided him a springboard to future opportunities including a collaboration with Internationally known Interior decorators and endorsed engagements with social and civic organizations. His book ; " The diary of an autistic kid" and others are available on Amazon. www.BrandonDruckerArtist.com



Andres Pola works with acrylic and mixed media. His twin sister and family are very involved to help him as he pursues his future goals. As an accomplished artist he has illustrated the book, "What's wrong with Papa". Andres graduated from the Marino Campus in 2017 with a certificate in IT. As part of the program Andres completed an internship in computer repair and passed an industry exam on IT fundamentals. Congrats Andres on another step towards independence!



Michael Joseph Vidal received his BA in studio Arts from Florida Atlantic University. He has been able to utilize the techniques and concepts that he learned and continues to gain knowledge and self-confidence while working at the Autism Gallery. "The more that I understand about art, the bigger my personal art collection grows" Michaels portfolio includes acrylics, watercolors, graphic art and custom logo designs. "I am very grateful for this organization that gives me the opportunity to practice social skills and to learn business skills. "



Jayson Halberstadt was diagnosed at age five with autism/ aspergers. He studied the art of cartooning under the direction of former Disney Animator, Al Baruch. His art has been published in Virge Magazine, Asperkids: Not Your Average Coloring Book and Uncommon Minds and has been exhibited in several South Florida galleries, as well as The SOHO Gallery for Digital Art in NYC. He's created logos, advertisements and Art for various charitable organizations and has received recognition from some of his heroes such as Derek Jeter and Geddy Lee. Jayson is pursuing a career in Animation and Illustration and currently resides in South Florida.

Check our Calendar of events at www.ArtistsWithAutism.com

How can you help?



You can help support us with your internet shopping. By choosing Artists with Autism as your favorite charity on shopping websites such as iGive.com, Amazon Smile, or Ebay you can help us to receive a donation every time you shop. You can also give us rave reviews on Great Nonprofits. If you are a business owner, you can display one of acrylic donation boxes at your business. Financial donations can be made payable to Artists With Autism, Inc. 2900 West Sample Road #B1519 Pompano Beach, Florida 33073 Your donation is tax deductible.

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Order your Calendar \$10 each
Business sponsorship available



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GALLERY: Located inside the
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