



The Nicholas Center and The Art Guild put on its annual show, dedicated to showcasing the talents of individuals with autism.

# Artists with autism show off their work, abilities

## Nicholas Center, Art Guild join forces for art display

BY CASEY FAHRER

The Nicholas Center held its third annual Art Showcase in partnership with The Art Guild of Port Washington, celebrating the organization's commitment to supporting people with autism at its opening Sunday, Jan. 11, opening.

Hundreds walked through the free exhibit at The Art Guild, located at 200 Port Washington Blvd., with its walls decorated in artwork from over 75 students.

The Nicholas Center is a non-profit organization dedicated to supporting individuals with autism in leading full and productive lives in the community.

From vibrant paintings to mixed-media pieces, the art on display reflects three years of creative growth and the deepening bond between the two Port Washington organizations.

"Watching the artists has been a profound privilege," Tracy Lefkowitz, the art and program director at The Art Guild, said. "Seeing the confidence and pride in their eyes as they stand beside their work in a professional gallery is a powerful reminder of why we strive to make the arts accessible to everyone."

PHOTO BY CASEY FAHRER



Javari posed next to his own self-portrait that he created through the program.

The Art Guild puts on roughly 10 different art shows each year, where individuals can show themselves in various creative lenses, Lefkowitz said.

MaryKate Carroll, the creative arts coordinator at The Nicholas Center, said the partnership provides inclusion and opportunity to people with autism.

"This collaboration has provided a vital outlet for creative expression and a true sense of belonging," she said.

Lee Anne Vetrone, the director of The Nicholas Center, said the idea of the organization when it was founded 16 years ago was to

have it be folded into the fabric of the community.

"It's all about the community, it's all about inclusion, it's all about accepting differences, knowing that we all have something to bring to the mix and that makes the world a better place," she said.

Lisa Grossman, the executive director of The Art Guild, said that the art shows allow people to express themselves in a variety of ways.

The artwork will be displayed through Jan. 25, and The Art Guild is open on Saturdays and Sundays from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

# Village launches Jazz Festival at shops

BY J. CAV SCOTT

Sea Cliff will welcome music lovers and community members at its inaugural Jazz Fest on Sunday, Jan. 18.

The event will be free to attend, with shows held at venues throughout the village. Sea Cliff Daily Grind, Village Wine Merchant, Moonshot Emporium and Still Partners will host performances starting at 2 p.m. on Sunday.

The festival is the result of collaboration among the Sea Cliff Arts Council, the Love Your Neighbor Project and Will Winchester, a third-year student and bass player at Oberlin Conservatory in Ohio.

"We wanted to bring jazz to students, locals and anyone who might be interested, and also support local businesses," Winchester said.

He said Sea Cliff is a community full of artists and musicians, a fact that led him down the path of pursuing music himself.

"I was lucky enough to grow up in Sea Cliff," he said. "So I wanted to share the same opportunities that I was given with the next generation of musicians. This festival is a way that I can do that."

James Cammack, who has recorded and toured with legends Ahmad Jamal and Nancy Wilson, will headline the event, performing with his trio at 5:30

at the festival. Other performers, such as the Meridian Jazz Trio, online sensation Ruby Laks and Winchester himself, will be present to share jazz with festivalgoers.

The Sea Cliff Arts Council is an active community organization that aims "to support and promote the arts in all modes of artistic expression within one square mile," according to its website.

The Love Your Neighbor Project is a non-profit organization that empowers the community by organizing events, creating projects, and supporting accessibility, according to a statement from the organization.

"I don't see how I would have been able to do this...without Love Your Neighbor's support," Winchester said. "And all of the donations we collect on the day of the festival will benefit the Sea Cliff Arts Council."

Winchester said he is excited to give back to a community that inspired him to pursue music. He started playing jazz during his time at North Shore High School.

"Instead of people saying, 'Oh, you need a backup plan,' they said, 'if you want to do music, you should do music,'" he said. "I feel grateful to have grown up in a musical community where friends and teachers gave me opportunities to play and learn."

PHOTO PROVIDED BY WILL WINCHESTER



Organizer Will Winchester (L.) performing in front of the Sea Cliff Daily Grind, one of the venues set to host jazz in the upcoming Sea Cliff Jazz Festival.