**STUDENT ART BRINGS AWARENESS TO MENTAL HEALTH**

Schools Receive Financial Awards to Support Art Programs

**Indianapolis—** In May, to bring awareness to the unique mental health challenges that students can face, 132 students representing 18 high schools across Indiana, created and submitted artwork pieces in various mediums for the “*Your Health Matters*” student art competition and showcase. Three students were chosen for the top awards from New Albany High School and Mooresville HS, with each school receiving $3,000. The remaining schools were awarded more than $1,000 for their art programs with the purpose of promoting mental wellness and reducing stigma, through art.

Participating in the arts improves cognitive function and memory, reduces stress and anxiety, increases self-esteem, and helps people connect with their emotions. “*The student pieces were remarkable*”, said Becky Gee. “*For the second year, we had a group of Herron School or Art and Design students, led by Katherine Swartzendruber, panel the pieces* *and the committee had a challenging time choosing the winners because Indiana has some very talented students! We thank the art teachers who sponsored these students, and especially the students, for being vulnerable and creating such authentic and powerful pieces. Their art helped to raise awareness about and reduce the stigma surrounding mental illness.”*

The Children’s Mental Health Month Committee is comprised of representatives from Adult and Child Health, Family and Social Services Administration, Indiana Center for Children and Families, Indiana Arts Commission, Infancy Onward, Mental Health America of Indiana, Youth M.O.V.E. Indiana, and REACH for Youth. More information about metal health, and this art project, can be found at <https://www.in.gov/arts/3033.htm> .

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