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The Help Group Announces a Student Art Exhibit in Recognition of Autism Awareness Month

The Help Group kicks off Autism Awareness Month with a Student Art Exhibit

Artwork by students of The Help Group's Village Glen School will be on exhibit as an effort to build autism awareness

To increase awareness of autism spectrum disorders, artwork by the students of The Help Group's Village Glen School will be on display in Santa Monica Gallery

March 6, 2012 (Sherman Oaks) – In recognition of National Autism Awareness Month, The Help Group is proud to present *Through Our Eyes: A Celebration of Young Artists*, a premiere exhibit featuring art by the students of The Help Group's Village Glen School. Sponsored by Bear Givers, in association with James Gray Gallery, a special opening night reception will be held on Saturday, March 20th from 6:00pm to 9:00pm.

The exhibit will feature more than 60 canvases created by young artists who range from primary school age to high school students. One hundred percent of all proceeds from student art sales will benefit The Help Group's Village Glen School. The exhibit will run until April 16th and is free and open to the public.

"Art is an effective tool for self-expression, and at The Help Group we emphasize a strong arts curriculum to maximize learning opportunities for students with autism spectrum disorders (ASD)," says Dr. Barbara Firestone, President & CEO, The Help Group. "Given the recent announcement by the CDC that 1 in every 110 children is affected with an autism spectrum disorder, and the momentum to intensify autism awareness efforts, this exhibit provides a unique occasion for the public to get involved by supporting our young people and to increasing public awareness of ASD."

To encourage student involvement in the community beyond the art exhibit, ?# teddy bears donated by Bear Givers will be presented to each participating Village Glen student on opening night. Students will then donate the bear to an individual or organization of his or her choice. Diane Lempert, President, Bear Givers says, "This is a wonderful chance for students to feel a sense of pride in their artwork, and to develop a sense of caring for those they can inspire through giving back."

With campuses located in Sherman Oaks and Culver City, Village Glen serves children and adolescents with social and communicative challenges, including Asperger's Disorder, high-functioning autism, and nonverbal learning disabilities and offers a unique, individualized education with an emphasis on social skills in a nurturing, therapeutic environment.

Location - James Gray Gallery, Bergamot Station Art Center, 2525 Michigan Ave, Building D4, Santa Monica, California 90404. **RSVP via email to artgallery@thehelpgroup.org or for more information call 818.779.5212.**

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ABOUT THE HELP GROUP

Founded in 1975, The Help Group serves children with a wide range of special needs and is the largest and most comprehensive nonprofit of its kind in the United States. Recognized as a leader in the field of autism, it offers extensive special education, residential programs and therapeutic and assessment services. The Help Group educates more than 900 students on a daily basis in its innovative autism day schools. www.thehelpgroup.org

ABOUT BEAR GIVERS

Bear Givers is a nonprofit organization dedicated to bringing joy to the lives of children and adults with the symbolic gift of a loveable Teddy Bear. Bear Givers believes that the altruism of some can exponentially affect the lives of many. Its programs facilitate an environment where "givers" are "empowered" by bringing joy to others and by enabling young people with special needs, like the students of The Help Group, to feel the satisfaction of being able to give back to others. www.beargivers.org