



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**2011 "ART OF RECOVERY" SHOW – FEATURED ARTIST SELECTED
Art will be displayed during the month of May, National Mental Health Awareness Month**

Santa Maria, CA – Transitions-Mental Health Association (TMHA) in partnership with the Healing Arts Council of Santa Barbara County (HACSB) presents the sixth annual "Art of Recovery" show. This traveling art show features the expressions of people with mental illness. "Art of Recovery" will be held in Santa Maria and Lompoc during the month of May in support of Mental Health Awareness Month. The show will be open and free to the public.

The 2011 show will kick off with an opening reception on Friday, May 13th from 4-6 p.m. at Santa Maria Town Center Mall. The space is across from Tom's Toys and near the Red Robin Restaurant located at 142 Town Center E. The Santa Maria show will be open May 13th-May 20th from 11 a.m. – 6 p.m. daily.

The show then moves to Lompoc with an opening reception on Monday, May 23rd from 4-6 p.m. at South Side Coffee Company located at 105 South H Street. The show will be open from May 23rd-May 30th at the same location from 8 a.m. – 10 p.m. daily except on Sundays until 6 p.m.

Patrick Bergin, who is Founder and Chairman of HACSB, has been selected as the featured artist in 2011 and his piece "Inner City" will be showcased in all promotions. The mixed media piece was created in 2008 and uses oil and acrylic paint.

"When I have difficulty sleeping I get up and pick out three or four colors and just start to paint," Bergin explained. "My thoughts and strokes take shape on the canvas abstractly. I am never really sure when I am finished and am often guilty of over painting."

Bergin has been painting for over 40 years and prefers to use different media in his art. He says that acrylics are easier to work with but oils require more discipline. "I learned how to paint with oils at a mental hospital in the early sixties. The art teacher was beautiful and came in once a week to teach an art class. She asked me if I was going to come to the class and I couldn't turn her down."

Bergin believes that inspiration is a part of the human personality that most people overlook. "Inspiration to me is spiritual and comes from the soul. There is a piece of me on every canvas that I paint."

The event was first developed in 1995 to offer people in mental health recovery a way to express themselves and to provide a venue to share art, feelings, thoughts and messages with the general public. The goal remains the same today. TMHA and HACSB hope this year to help the community see

that people should not be defined in terms of their illness but by their strengths, gifts and by the contributions they make to society.

“Art can serve as the basis of a healing network of communications and play a vital part in recovery,” said Bergin. “This show is something that reaches the unreachable through the power of expression.”

Persons of all ages recovering from substance abuse, mental illness and their family members are invited to submit work in any art form. This show features artists from Lompoc, Santa Maria and San Luis Obispo participating, along with inmates from California Men’s Colony (CMC). Submissions are made in many artistic mediums, including jewelry, poems, music, stone, metal, clay, textiles, sketches and paintings.

“You will be inspired by what you see, read, and hear at the shows, and we invite you to support the individual artists by purchasing a memorable treasure or two,” said Frank Ricceri, Associate Director at TMHA – Northern Santa Barbara County.

For more information, please contact Crystal Gonsalves at (805) 928-0139 or cgonsalves@t-mha.org.

ABOUT T-MHA

Transitions-Mental Health Association is a non-profit organization that helps children and adults live, work and grow in our community. TMHA operates 27 programs at over 35 locations that reach over 2,000 people and 1,500 families in San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara counties. The emphasis of TMHA's many services is to teach vital independent living skills, and build a framework for community re-entry through personal empowerment and hands on experience. For over 30 years, T-MHA has been dedicated to providing housing, employment, case management and life-skills support to teens and adults with mental illness; and support, resources and education for their loved ones. For more information, visit www.T-MHA.org.

Philosophy and Mission Statement of HACSB

The human personality is earth’s greatest treasure. Art in its many forms can reach the unreachable. The Healing Arts Council is dedicated to providing artistic outlets to encourage the recovery of individuals with mental illness and/or addiction.

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