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News Release

CONTACT: Todd Crum
Public Information Representative
Behavioral Health Services
301-600-3285
TTY: Use Maryland Relay
TCrum1@FrederickCountyMD.gov

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“MAKING IT WORK (FOR ME)” ART EXHIBIT HIGHLIGHTS VIRTUAL CONNECTION SUCCESS

FREDERICK, MD -- The Seventeenth Annual Kids Like Us Art Exhibit, “Making It Work (For Me),” will be on display on the Community Art Wall at the Delaplaine Arts Center from September 5th through September 27th and in the auditorium of the Frederick County Health Department from October 2nd through April 30th, 2021. The artwork featured in this exhibit was created during the 2020 Kids Like Us Virtual Summer Art Adventure Camp. The summer camp is a component of the Kids Like Us Program which supports children and adolescents in grades 4 and above who are impacted by familial substance misuse. While school is out of session, the camp provides Kids Like Us participants the opportunity to receive support and connection amongst each other and Kids Like Us counselors during the summer months.

During the school year, Kids Like Us functions as a multi-year, multi-strategy program. The Program is offered by the Frederick County Health Department’s Behavioral Health Services Division and relies on a close collaboration with Frederick County Public Schools.

This year’s exhibit is titled “Making It Work (For Me)”. Due to COVID-19, we moved our summer camp sessions to a virtual platform and despite the uncertainty of this, many positives came from our time spent “together.” Campers and Kids Like Us Counselors pushed past technology issues, problem-solved art

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Barbara A. Brookmyer, M.D., M.P.H. ▪ Health Officer

350 Montevue Lane ▪ Frederick, MD 21702

Phone: 301-600-1029 ▪ Fax: 301-600-3111 ▪ MD TTY: 1-800-735-2258





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“mistakes,” and formed new friendships all through their computer screens! The campers created art based on prompts provided by Camp Counselors as well as participating in a virtual ‘open studio,’ where participants could create in whichever way they chose. Campers inspired and encouraged each other, as they would in an in-person open studio, despite the distance created by their computer screens.

Because of the willingness of Kids Like Us Summer Campers to try the virtual platform, form relationships and create art, our sessions became a safe place to ask questions and share new ideas. The artwork displayed in our show is the result of the campers’ dedication to themselves and their own wellness. They pushed past uncertainty and isolation to find the time and space to create and connect with others. Their unwavering ability to do this during these ever-changing times is continually inspiring.

The artwork created by the campers is represented here in photographs taken by the artists themselves or by family members. While the virtual platform may have created some barriers, it also proved that physical distance does not prevent strong emotional connections and creativity.

The artwork is first exhibited at the Delaplaine Arts Center during the month of September, National Recovery Month, and then at the Frederick County Health Department’s Auditorium, beginning in October. Kids Like Us artists self-selected which artworks they wished to have on display. Although we have offered a Public Art Reception in the past, we are not able to safely offer one this year.

For more information about the art exhibit or the Kids Like Us program, contact Mia Zarro at 301-600-3185. For information about substance abuse recovery services in Frederick County, contact the Frederick County Health Department, Behavioral Health Services Division at 301-600-1755, or visit www.FrederickCountyMD.gov/BHS.

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