



# The Whole Person

People with Disabilities Leading Independent Lives

## PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Artists with Disabilities Featured at First Fridays Event The Whole Person hosts Free Reception Friday, May 4<sup>th</sup>, 5-9:00pm

**Kansas City, MO (April 20, 2012):** The Whole Person (TWP) will highlight ten local artists with disabilities at the second annual "Expressions" reception on Friday, May 4<sup>th</sup>, at the Jones Gallery (1717 Walnut, KCMO).

"Expressions" is a First Fridays Art Show, free and open to the public, featuring wine, cheese, and an opportunity to meet artists Andrew Rosenbarger, Roz Roush, Kay Celeste, and Jorge Castillo, as well as:

**Janice Atkins:** *"I use art to express my idea of beauty. I see beauty in the patterns I paint; I see beauty in bright colors."* Janice Atkins was born in Belmont, California and moved to Kansas City in 1966. At age 27, Janice was diagnosed with schizophrenia and became disabled. Janice graduated with an art degree from the University of Missouri-Kansas City, and has won numerous awards for her work. Seven of her paintings are in the permanent collection at the Spencer Museum in Lawrence, Kansas. *"At first, I used reflective objects to see myself in a new way... That is what my work is all about. Exploring new ways of seeing."*

**Dianne Dickerson:** *"How do I use art to express who I am? Recipe: I take a pen or a paintbrush, say a prayer, and begin in the present moment, add memories, and a splash of imagination."* Dianne has lived in the Kansas City area for over two decades and likes the vibrancy of the arts and the cultural diversity in Kansas City. She has taught art, special education and GED classes for 22 years. Dianne says her bi-polar illness, diagnosed in 1982, has helped her be a more accepting teacher and given her an appreciation of the capabilities of persons with physical, mental and emotional challenges.

"Last year, nearly 600 people attended Expressions and enjoyed photography, textiles, sculpture and paintings from a group of 14 artists with a diverse range of disabilities," says David Robinson, CEO of TWP. "This year, we hope even more people join us for this opportunity to celebrate the strengths, talents, and abilities of people with disabilities."

Accessibility options provided for the reception include copies of the event program printed in Braille, volunteer guides for descriptive audio tours, sign language interpreters, and an accessible restroom.

Expressions is sponsored by UMB with special thanks to the Francis Family Foundation. For more information, visit <http://support.thewholeperson.org/Expressions>. David Robinson is available for interviews about this event and other issues regarding persons with disabilities. Contact Christi Campos at the numbers above to schedule.

### About The Whole Person

The Whole Person is a Center for Independent Living founded in 1978 as a private, non-residential, non-profit organization providing a full range of community-based services for people with disabilities. For more than 30 years, TWP has been a leader in representing people with both mental and physical disabilities and providing independent living services to residents of Kansas and Missouri. TWP assists people with disabilities to live independently and encourages change within the community to expand opportunities for independent living.

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