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Addressing the Silent Battles: Drinking Gourd Gallery Presents Exhibition Spotighting Men’s Mental Health in Civilian and Veteran Communities

(Raleigh, April 24, 2024)—To highlight the pervasive, but often overlooked issue of men’s mental health, Drinking Gourd Gallery proudly announces its upcoming exhibition, “The Weight on My Shoulders.” This group exhibition seeks to shed light on the unique challenges faced by men coping with mental health issues, particularly within the context of civilian and veteran life. The exhibition will run from June 1 through June 30, 2024, at the Southeast Regional Library in Garner, North Carolina, commemorating Men’s Mental Health Awareness Month.

Men across all walks of life frequently grapple with mental health concerns, yet societal stigmas often prevent open dialogue and hinder access to support. Against this backdrop, “The Weight on My Shoulders” aims to spark conversation, promote understanding, and provide a platform for healing.

Featuring more than 30 objects, including paintings, drawings, photography and video, the exhibition delves into various aspects of men’s mental health experiences. Through poignant narratives and evocative imagery, visitors will gain insight into the complexities of these challenges and the pathways to resilience and recovery.

One of the exhibition’s central focuses is on the intersection of mental health and military service. Veterans face unique psychological stressors stemming from their service experiences, yet many struggle in silence due to societal norms and systemic barriers. “The Weight on My Shoulders” hopes to amplify their voices, honoring their sacrifices while advocating for increased awareness and support.

Moreover, the exhibition invites visitors to explore the broader societal factors that influence men’s mental health, including cultural expectations, gender norms, race, ethnicity, and systemic inequalities. By confronting these issues, “The Weight on My Shoulders” seeks to dismantle barriers to care and foster a more compassionate and inclusive society.

“It’s an honor to be presenting artwork at the Southeast Regional Library. We believe that by shining a spotlight on men’s mental health, we can catalyze positive change and create a more supportive and resilient community,” said Carol Torian, founder of Drinking Gourd Gallery. “At its core, “The Weight on My Shoulders” is not just an exhibition—it’s a call to action to prioritize mental health and break the silence surrounding men’s struggles.”

Nicole Lambert, Regional Library Manager said, “Southeast Regional is excited to partner with Drinking Gourd Gallery to host the Men’s Mental Health Exhibition. We welcome the opportunity to increase awareness of an important topic and bring art to one of the most accessible free community spaces, the public library.”

In conjunction with the exhibition, Drinking Gourd Gallery will host educational workshops led by mental health professionals, an artist talk, a poetry performance, comedy show, and a musical performance—all aimed at deepening understanding and bringing about meaningful change.

"It is an immense pleasure to be a part of “The Weight on My Shoulders” exhibition. I am proud to share in presenting artwork from across the state in a community setting such as the Southeast Regional Library,” said artist Barbara A. Outterson. “This exhibition has become a beautiful collaboration to bring awareness to mental health issues that men often suffer through alone. It is my sincere hope that bringing our labor of love to a diverse audience will aid in providing men a platform for expression and healing, without shame or stigma."

Drinking Gourd Gallery is presenting the exhibition in partnership with Camilla Y. Black, M.Ed., LCMHC of Spectrum Counseling Services, PLLC, Maria Tavarez of Moonchild, LLC, Barbara A. Outterson, Southeast Regional Library and the Wake County Public Libraries system.

Maria Tavarez, founder of Moonchild, LLC said, "As artists, our work has the power to communicate emotions, provoke thought and raise awareness about important social issues like mental health. This exhibition will serve as a source of comfort, inspiration, solidarity, and support for those who may be struggling with similar challenges. I see this as the gateway for community involvement towards improving how mental health is discussed."

Follow the gallery on social media to join the conversation about the exhibition and associated programming. Use @dggallerync and #theweightonmyshoulders. Visit the Drinking Gourd Gallery website at <https://dggallerync.com/> to learn more.

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About Drinking Gourd Gallery

Established in 2018, Drinking Gourd Gallery is a Raleigh-based virtual art gallery focused on developing and supporting early to mid-career artists. Looking back and ahead, the gallery is dedicated to artistic freedom and committed to showcasing diverse voices and perspectives. Known for its eclectic, ever-changing collection, Drinking Gourd Gallery offers some of the finest contemporary art in the Triangle. The gallery is also proud to present exhibitions, book and film discussions, artist talks, lectures, classes, and performances to inspire and engage.

About Southeast Regional Library

In 1928, the Garner Woman’s Club oversaw the formation of a public library in Garner, operating and staffing it with community volunteers. Today, Garner's public library is the Southeast Regional Library, which is a regional facility operated by the Wake County Public Libraries system. The Southeast Regional Library is located at 908 7th Avenue, and it is just minutes from historic downtown Garner and downtown Raleigh. Southeast Regional Library offers innovative programming, relevant collections, and technology resources that foster literacy, education, and lifelong learning within the community.