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Local Youth and Young Adults in Recovery Showcase Their Creativity at Expressive Arts Exhibition

Exhibitors Use Art to Fight the War Against Drug and Alcohol Addiction

ST. LOUIS, Mo., Sept. 18, 2017 — Local teens and young adults will gather Sunday, Oct. 1, at [ZACK](#) to display their artistic talents, ranging from paintings and poetry to pottery and original music. Besides their wares, these budding artists also hope to promote a message they've all come to believe: creating art is more fun than addiction.

The art show participants are all recovering addicts, once bound by the opioid, drug and alcohol epidemic that is sweeping the country. The statistics are especially staggering in St. Louis, which has a drug overdose death rate that is four times the national average.

In response to this crisis, Kathie Thomas — a local businesswoman and artist with more than 37 years of experience — founded [Hope Creates](#), a nonprofit organization that combines art, occupational therapy principles and entrepreneurial skills to support youth and young adults who are in recovery from addiction. Her personal experience compelled her to take action.

“I am the mother of a young adult addict,” Kathie explained. “My artwork became a form of therapy as I faced the daily struggles that come with navigating through the horrors of addiction. My daughter is in recovery. Art helped me heal, and I wanted to find ways to help my daughter and her peers discover that there are other highs in life that are safe, genuine and legitimate.”

Through [Hope Creates](#), teens and young adults with at least one year of sobriety create their original pieces, receive one-on-one coaching, and then host local gallery shows and concerts. The October exhibition is the group's second Expressive Arts Event. Participation rose from seven exhibitors in the spring to 21 exhibitors for the upcoming show.

EVENT DETAILS

WHAT: Hope Creates Expressive Arts Exhibition

WHERE: [ZACK](#), 3224 Locust, 63103

WHEN: Sunday, Oct. 1 at 3 p.m.

MISC: The art exhibition is from 3-5:45 p.m. Admission is free and open to the general public. In addition to youth and young adult participants, exhibitors will include the co-owners of the [Crossroads Program](#), an enthusiastic sobriety program for young people and their families. A concert featuring event exhibitors and the Crossroads band is from 6-7 p.m. Concert admission is \$11. Tickets are available at all MetroTix outlets and at the door. All proceeds go to [Hope Creates](#) to help fund future programs and events.

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ABOUT HOPE CREATES

[Hope Creates](#) was founded in April 2017. Its mission is to improve the lives of youth and young adults in recovery from addiction through the engagement of expressive arts and occupational therapy principles, and the development of basic professional skills. [Hope Creates](#) focuses on positive self-expression, building and maintaining self-worth, giving participants relevant business training, and making sobriety more fun and attractive than using mind-altering chemicals. The organization recently won Washington University's Social Enterprise and Innovation Competition (SEIC) for the Youth division. The SEIC is run through Washington University's Brown School of Social Work.