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ART EXPRESSION HONORED AS 2018 TOP-RATED NONPROFIT

GreatNonprofits.org Award is based on Positive Online Reviews

Pittsburgh, PA (September 12, 2018) - Art Expression Inc. announced today that it has been honored with a prestigious Top-Rated Award for the sixth year in a row by GreatNonprofits, the leading provider of user reviews about nonprofit organizations. Art Expression has been awarded Top-Rated status in 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018.

“We are honored to be named a Top-Rated 2018 Nonprofit,” said Angela Lowden, Art Expression Inc.’s Executive Director. “The Top-Rated Nonprofit award was based on the large number of positive reviews that Art Expression received - reviews written by volunteers, art therapists, donors and clients. People posted about their personal experiences with the nonprofit.

One reviewer wrote: “I have worked as an Art Facilitator for Art Expression Inc. for the past five years. I am lucky to work primarily with children in various homeless shelters throughout Pittsburgh and surrounding regions. I spend time with children developing not only their art skills, but, more importantly, their sense of self and sense of others. Art Expression Inc. thrives on creating a healthy, non-



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judgmental atmosphere where all are welcome. I continue to hold Art Expression close to my heart; as I experience, first hand, the **remarkable impact art can make in a person's life**".

Another reviewer noted, "I have been working at Auberle's 412 Youth Zone with young adults who are aging out of foster care and are striving to make their lives better. They look forward to Art Expression Inc.'s workshops.

Their facilitators get them to open up, express their fears and positives too. Some have a great passion for art and always walk away with pride and a new technique. What surprises me more is those who say "I'm no good at art" and walk away just as pleased, head held high, feeling uplifted that they accomplished something difficult. It's more than an art class - **it's a different way of thinking about how to express yourself**".

Another writer noted, "You know that expression "The proof is in the pudding?" In the same way, I feel like the proof of the effectiveness of programming for kids can be gleaned from how the KIDS perceive the programming. And, I can tell you, the kids always perceive Art Expression Inc. as a positive and meaningful experience. I have been an Art Facilitator for Art Expression Inc. for 5 years and I know this to be true.

This is evident in a myriad of ways. Like when they enthusiastically burst through the door, asking "What are we making today?!" And, at the end of the period, they don't want to leave. Last semester, a girl said to me that she just wanted to stay there overnight and continue making art. **And, a girl from another group said that when she woke up that morning and realized it was the last day of Art Expression Inc., she burst into tears.**

How they express that they value these components varies from one age group to another. A 13 year old boy told me "This is the singular most stress reducing time of my week!" While an 8 year old boy simply said "Art Expression rocks!' In any case, the vote is in - and Art Expression is clearly the winner".

While the Top-Rated Awards run through the end of October, Art Expression Inc. was part of the inaugural group to qualify for the year. It has been added to the #GivingTuesday Guide. Please refer to greatnonprofits.org/awards to see the reviews for Art Expression, Inc.

"Savvy donors want to see the impact of their donations more than ever," said Perla Ni, CEO of GreatNonprofits. "People with direct experience with Art Expression have voted that the organization is making a real difference."

Being on the Top-Rated list gives donors and volunteers more confidence that this is a

credible organization. The reviews by volunteers, clients and other donors show the on--the-ground results for Art Expression. This award is a form of recognition from the community.

Art Expression Inc. is a non-profit foundation established in 2001 by James and Angela Lowden as an expression of their passion for alleviating the social inequalities that exist among children of different abilities and backgrounds. The organization's mission is to provide social and emotional learning through the arts and provide academic enrichment in an inclusive setting. Art Expression Inc.'s programming fosters creativity and imagination and enhances self-esteem for children in schools, homeless shelters and community organizations. Art Expression Inc. is a two-time finalist (2017 and 2013) for the National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Awards, distinguishing the organization as one of the top 50 arts- and humanities-based programs in the country and for which it received certificates of excellence from the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities. Art Expression Inc. has been designated as a "Model Art Therapy Program" by the American Association of School Administrators & American Art Therapy Association in 2011. Since its founding, Art Expression Inc. has served over 10,000 children in Allegheny, Fayette, Greene, Washington, and Westmoreland counties.

About GreatNonprofits

GreatNonprofits is the leading site for donors and volunteers to find reviews and ratings of nonprofits. Reviews on the site influence 30 million donation decisions a year. Visit www.greatnonprofits.org for more information.

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Contact:

ANGELA LOWDEN

412-561-3006

amlowden@artexpressioninc.org

<http://artexpressioninc.org>