



*FATA ADVOCATES FOR EXPANSION OF ACCESS TO PROFESSIONAL ART THERAPISTS & LEADS THE STATE IN THE ADVANCEMENT OF ART THERAPY AS A REGULATED MENTAL HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES PROFESSION. WE PROVIDE INFORMATION, RESOURCES, AND MEANINGFUL NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES TO ITS MEMBERS & THE PUBLIC.*

## NOT A BIRD, NOT A PLANE, WHAT'S IN THE SKY? IT'S STARS OF HOPE FLORIDA!

**You may have noticed** colorful stars popping up across the county—hanging on trees, fences, mailboxes, and gazebos in parks, along the streets, and at damaged houses and neighborhoods where residents are in need of hope.

Some of the stars are from people around the country who wanted to send messages of hope to Hurricane Michael survivors—including employees of Guardian Life Insurance, Payne West, McDonald Smith, Riverstone, David Potter and Maple Logistics. But most of the stars were created by fifth graders from the eighteen Bay District schools who participated in the Stars of HOPE program on February 1.

“When Stars of HOPE came to Bay County, they brought stars, paint, and even art therapy students from FSU. But more than anything, they brought a sense of calm and can-do attitude that was a real comfort,” – Jennifer Jones, Executive Director Bay Arts Alliance.

“They go to disaster sites around the world. Right before coming here, they were actually in Paradise, California, paying it forward with 800 Stars that had been created for them by the San Bernardino community.



They’ve seen it all and have helped bring hope to communities everywhere, so working with them on this project was a wonderful experience.”

Painting Stars of HOPE to comfort other disaster survivors gave participants a break from worrying about everything that still has to be done, and let them focus on helping others. The act of doing something for others—of paying it forward—gave them a sense of empowerment and hope for their own lives as well.

The students even learned a few new skills, while reflecting on the healing of the community and their chance to help others through art.

“Hopefully the students strengthened their confidence as artists and I saw many who were improving their skills

with blending, mixing and brush strokes.

Of course, underlying it all is the hope that students felt reassurance as we discussed that we are all recovering in unique ways following the disaster and that each day holds the potential for improvement,” said Susan Wise, Tommy Smith Elementary Art Teacher, “It was a great opportunity for students to give of themselves to help others who are suffering and to realize that they were part of a county-wide effort to convey encouragement.

**Emi Illig described her experience with Stars of Hope,** “I worked with 145 5th grade students in painting Stars of Hope. It was incredible to see how resilient the kids were, and I was amazed to see the support the teachers provided despite losing some of their homes. The teacher I spent the day working with shared that she had been housing one of her students since he lost his home in the hurricane. On Saturday, I had the incredible



The stars offered us the opportunity to display the community's hope, resilience, and bravery. "Just as the students are encouraging all of us to continue hoping, dreaming, and doing the hard work of recovery, all of us can send encouragement back to them.

"In the pre-lesson to painting the stars, all the classes had a brainstorming session on who needs hope in our community and what kinds of messages they may need to hear. Many of the children raised their hands and said that they, too, needed



hope," said **Dixie Clough, the program lead at Bay Arts Alliance.**

"It was wonderfully selfless for them to use their creativity to create these beautiful stars to help people across

the county," continued Dixie, "and I know they really enjoyed using their artistic skills for such a good cause, but how wonderful would it be, if we sent hope back to them? If you see a star that touches your heart, consider sending a thank you note to the art classes who painted the stars."

Each star has the name of the school and usually the artist's name on the back as well, so you know to whom you should address the note. There are also Facebook albums of each school's stars on the Bay Arts Alliance Facebook page.

There is more information about how to send hope back on the Panama City Center for the Arts website at: [www.pcccenterforthearts.com/stars](http://www.pcccenterforthearts.com/stars).



Bay Arts Alliance also hosted a free event at the Panama City Center for the Arts on February 2, so community members could paint a star to comfort future disaster victims. Once again, the Stars of HOPE

program, past disaster survivors from Texas and Tallahassee, FSU students, and nearby art therapists combined forces to ensure the program went off without a hitch. **Stephanie Wray-Program Manager and Art Therapist with Stars Of HOPE, USA** spoke of her experience in Bay County,

"Spending the day last Friday with the students and teachers creating beautiful symbols of HOPE and Saturday with the community members of Panama City was inspiring. Seeing the resiliency in the participants who were painting stars to keep within the county and the stars that will be paid forward means so much to our mission and to the greater healing of the community."

Over 100 stars were painted by Bay County residents throughout the day with beautiful images and messages to be sent on to a future site in need of hope. "We were touched by the response to the public program at the Center for the Arts. Community members really embraced the program and were excited to have the opportunity to help others in need.

Over 100 stars were painted by Bay County residents throughout the day with beautiful images and messages to be sent on to a future site in need of hope. "We were touched by the response to the public program at the Center for the Arts. Community members really embraced the program and were excited to have the opportunity to help others in need. Entire families came in to 'paint it forward,' and we were amazed by the beautiful stars that were created. I know that the whatever community gets the stars, they will be touched by the care that went into painting them.

"We do have about one hundred blank stars left," Jayson continued, "We may end up doing another public program, so we can send more stars out to other in need. Stay tuned for more information on that!"

Both the public program and school paints were made possible by the generosity of sponsors who supplied funds to purchase stars, paint, brushes and more. Thank you to **Bay Arts Alliance, New York Says Thank You Foundation, American Art Therapy Association, Florida Art Therapy Association, Colart and KPMG.**



**Stars of HOPE ® Stars of HOPE ® USA is the world's largest and fastest growing healing arts program.**

They are a unique disaster response and community-arts program empowering people to transform communities impacted by natural and human-caused disasters by creating and displaying colorful art and messages of hope and healing.

In 2007, *Stars of HOPE* ® started with two families – the Parness family in New York who wanted to pay-it-forward for the love New York City received from people all around the world following 9/11 and the Vincent family from Groesbeck, Texas who wanted to pay-it-forward for the support they received when *New York Says Thank You* volunteers rebuilt their home following a deadly tornado. Today, with the help of over 90,000 volunteers, **Stars of HOPE** have transformed 220 communities in 26 countries impacted by disaster and tragedy with messages of hope, healing and resilience.

Marathon Key. **FATA** also has provided art therapy interventions to the surrounding community of the pulse nightclub tragedy the Stoneman Douglas shootings and the Yoga shooting in Tallahassee Florida.

### Bay Arts Alliance

Since 1978, **Bay Arts Alliance** has served as the local arts agency for Bay County and provides opportunities for A recent impact study conducted at Florida State University about the **Stars of HOPE** program found 84% of participants felt supported and hopeful, 75% felt comforted and connected to others. 92% of participants agreed they felt more optimistic about the future and 100% of participants agreed that **Stars of HOPE** positively impacts peoples lives, helps affected communities recover emotionally from disaster and tragedy. survivors of hurricanes and mass violence. **FATA** has provided art therapy to displaced families in the aftermath of hurricane Maria, in Puerto Rico and Hurricane Irma in Naples and on **The Florida Art Therapy Association** has worked to support devastated communities providing art therapy support to cultural enrichment through broad based educational experiences, music & arts programs, exhibitions, and events. Its mission is to inspire a lifelong appreciation of the Arts. We are committed to responding to the ever-changing needs of the community, supporting innovation, and connecting endeavors of all arts organizations.



FATA member, Andrea Sutrick, MA-AT, RMHCI, Milton, FL

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Membership

The FATA Board of Directors would like to invite you to attend our next open-member meeting, which will occur online in April. Stay tuned for date and time.



## A Letter from the President

Dear Members,

It's been a productive year so far for FATA. We were active with our trauma relief efforts this past February in Mexico Beach working with the survivors of Hurricane Michael (you read more about it in this month's newsletter). We are working diligently towards licensure and continue to reach out to our state representatives and senators. But there's still lots to do: we have several chairs and committees open and we are looking for nominations. If you or someone you know would be interesting in joining our dynamic and dedicated team, please email us for more information ([floridaarttherapy@gmail.com](mailto:floridaarttherapy@gmail.com)). This is an exciting time for FATA, come join our board and help shape the future of our state chapter!

I'd also like to remind our members that if you have any events, workshops, job opportunities, news etc. you would like us to share, please email us. Let us know what's going on in your part of the state!

Kelly Burns, President

### Call for Submissions!

This year our newsletter will undergo a few exciting changes. First, we are moving toward a bi-monthly structure so that we can keep our members apprized of all of the fabulous happenings in the Florida Art Therapy Community! One way we hope to achieve this is by including a featured artwork section and a featured member section.

We want to hear from you!

If you have something exciting going on, specialize in a particular population or technique, or you have some other topic to share with our community please contact us!

We also want to feature our member's artwork!

Submissions can be made at any time via e-mail to

[Catherine@artaffectsfl.com](mailto:Catherine@artaffectsfl.com).

## MEMBER EXHIBIT



Andrea Sutrick, *They've Gone to Plaid*

Oil Sticks



Catherine Rich, *Womb*

Acrylic