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***I AM ABLE™* ART AWARDS HONOR STUDENT ARTISTS WITH DISABILITIES IN LARIMER COUNTY**

April 22, 2008 Fort Collins, Colorado -- **The Able Kids Foundation** was proud to sponsor the second annual **I AM ABLE™** Art Extravaganza!, a Colorado art contest for student artists with disabilities. This annual recognition was given to creative student artists who represent the true spirit of **"I AM ABLE."**

"We believe the I AM ABLE Art Extravaganza! is a wonderful opportunity to showcase student artists' abilities. Student creativity and their inspirational work truly personify "I AM ABLE," stated Able Kids Foundation CEO and Co-Founder, Dr. Joan Burleigh.

The entries in each area were judged on expression of ideas, originality and creativity. Judges for the event were Ann Wilmsen and Anita Chacon, nationally recognized artists, and Jo Waldron from the Able Kids Foundation.

The **Best of Show Award** was given to artist Nick Reyes, age 15 whose piece was entitled **"Have a Heart."** It was an intricate mosaic made with glass pieces that he spent many hours creating at Respite Care. He explained that the big heart in the middle of the mosaic was his "Mommy's," and the other hearts in his art were the ones he had to give away.



Award winning artist

The **People's Choice Award** voted **"Tomato Soup Bowl!"** pottery by artist Sally Valenzuela, age 13, from O'Dea Core Knowledge Elementary School. Sally plans to eat tomato soup from her award winning pottery.



Watercolor created by the young student artists at Respite Care.

"The expression of art is often based upon life experiences or from a unique way of looking at the world. This insight visualized by students with disabilities can open a new window of artistic expression and this simply must be recognized," stated Jo Waldron, President and co-founder of the Able Kids Foundation.

Event sponsors and donors are The Griffin Foundation, Woodward, High Country Beverage, Austin Korshak Hach Memorial Fund, Karen Richardson-Sculpture Depot, The Square Shopping Center, RC Special Events, Leave a Legacy, Tortilla Marissa's North of the Border Café, Linda Hopkins, and Frances Ford.

The Able Kids Foundation is proud to announce the **2008 I AM ABLE™ Art Extravaganza!** Award winners are:

Outstanding Elementary School Artists:

1st Place: "Amazing Paint" fabric design painting by artist Poetry Green (Age 10) McGraw Elementary School

- 2nd Place:** “Cloud Strike” pencil drawing by artist Abel Maki (Age 12) Tavelli Elementary School
3rd Place: “The Dragon” sculpture by Liam Burk (Age 10) O’Dea Core Knowledge Elementary School

Outstanding Middle/Junior High School Artists:

- 1st Place:** “Have a Heart” glass mosaic art by artist Nick Reyes (Age 15) Respite Care of Larimer County
2nd Place: “Doodle Pad” foam art by artist Besa Haise (Age 14) Boltz Junior High School
3rd Place: “Fish” watercolor by artist Jessica Sutherland (Age 14) Respite Care of Larimer County



Best of Show Award, glass mosaic art by artist Nick Reyes of Respite

Outstanding High School Artists:

- 1st Place:** “Jack Sparrow” oil pastel drawing by artist Kelsey Thomas (Age 18) Mountain View High School
2nd Place: “The Wild” oil pastel drawing by artist Brian Donohue (Age 17) Mountain View High School
3rd Place: “Untitled” tempera art by artist Colin Sutton (Age 15) Respite Care of Larimer County

Outstanding Post-Secondary Artists:

- 1st Place:** “Kindred Spirit” acrylic painting by artist Shelli Ingle (Age 19) Community Connections
2nd Place: “Untitled” tempera art by artist Patrick Ham (Age 19) Respite Care of Larimer County
3rd Place: “Sunrise” watercolor by artist Emily Hartinger. (Age 19) Respite Care of Larimer County

Best of Show Award:

“Have a Heart” glass mosaic art by artist Nick Reyes (Age 15) Respite Care of Larimer County

People’s Choice Award:

“Tomato Soup Bowl” pottery by artist Sally Valenzuela – O’Dea Core Knowledge Elementary School (Age 13)



The Able Kids Foundation **2008 ABLE SPIRIT™ I AM ABLE™ Art Extravaganza!** Awards Program is supported by Poudre School District, Thompson School District, and Respite Care of Larimer County.

The **Able Kids Foundation** is a non-profit organization that is a research-based, solutions-oriented non-profit that partners with local, national, and international organizations, eliminating barriers and expanding opportunities for individuals with

disabilities. The “**I AM ABLE**” **Public Service Initiative** was established to provide opportunities to enhance and maximize abilities of children and adults with challenges. This Initiative strives to create life-changing events through programs which target research, education, outreach, evaluation, diagnosis, management and assistive technologies. Royal Arch Research Assistance, a philanthropy of the Royal Arch Masons, International, is the primary sponsor of the Able Kids Foundation’s research program.

1st Place Award winning art by artist Poetry Green from McGraw Elementary School

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