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MEDIA NOTE: [Click here](#) to view the 30-second public service announcement about this art project.

‘The Observer and The Observed’ art display brings new meaning to culture and diversity

The public is invited to a free viewing of an art display, “The Observer and The Observed,” that will debut from 5-7 p.m. Thursday, July 22, at the Art Center Sarasota, 707 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota. The paintings, sculptures and photography depict 16 artists’ interpretation of four different families with young children who are experiencing emotional and behavioral challenges from different perspectives to provide a fascinating insight into the uniqueness of culture.

The exhibit will be on display throughout the summer, and will include workshops and other community events surrounding this exchange of culture.

The Sarasota Partnership for Children’s Mental Health and the Art Center Sarasota are collaborating on this art project as a way to increase awareness and acceptance of the needs of children and families impacted by mental illness.

“Every person has an ‘observer’ -- the place from where we observe, react and interact with the world, a unique lens which is a product of our personal history and the culture we have lived in,” said Anne Ferrier, cultural and linguistic competency coordinator for the Sarasota Partnership for Children’s Mental Health.

In this display, artistic expression illustrates that through the human experience, we are all active participants in the world, creating our world every moment through the lenses that we use. The hope is that residents will see how their own personal lens --beliefs and life experiences-- color the way they perceive and then interact in the world.

“Because we all use a unique and very personal lens, we are always dealing with diversity,” says Ferrier added. “Diversity and culture is not in the color of our skin; it is in the way we see, listen, touch, speak and move.”

The 16 artists represent different cultures, age groups and backgrounds, allowing for a unique, enlightening exchange between the artists and families.

The Sarasota Partnership for Children’s Mental Health is a network of community partners, agencies and families working together to change the way children with social

and emotional issues are helped and understood. Services and support systems are family driven, culturally sensitive and individualized for each child and family.

For more information, contact Anne Ferrier at the Partnership for Children's Mental Health by calling 941-861-1427. A website is currently under development.

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