



Art with a Heart
in Healthcare

2024



FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear friends of Art with a Heart in Healthcare,

2024 has been a year of incredible growth and meaningful patient interactions for our organization. One of my favorite moments happened in Pediatric Behavioral Health, where a child who initially struggled and wasn't recommended for an art session became fully engaged and revealed remarkable artistic talent after being introduced to AWAHIH.

We see these transformations every day—whether it's a child who refuses to speak with the hospital staff but opens up to an Artist-in-Residence, a sibling who finds comfort making art in the playroom, or a parent who rediscovers the joy of creating.

These profound experiences are made possible because of your support. Thanks to you, patients and their families find moments of relief and healing during some of the most difficult times in their lives.

Warm regards,

Christy Ponder

Christy Ponder
Executive Director

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OUR STORY

Art with a Heart in Healthcare (AWAHIH) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that brings the healing power of art to patients and their families. Since its founding in 2001, AWAHIH has enriched the lives of more than 150,000 individuals across Jacksonville, Florida, through personalized fine art experiences. Six days a week, our Artists-in-Residence, along with volunteers and interns, provide art sessions tailored to the unique needs of patients, offering moments of joy, creativity, and comfort on their healing journeys.

OUR PROGRAMS

- Bedside art sessions
- Group art sessions
- Music sessions
- Support group art sessions
- Special event art sessions
- Virtual art sessions
- UNF internship program

Learn more at www.awahih.org

"If I could choose any superpower, I'd have telepathic abilities that allow me to spread kindness, creativity, and positivity to people all over the world."

Cover art: Captain Ayden by Ayden, age 8

In 2024, AWAHIH provided more than 14,000+ individuals with a fine art experience — a 40% increase from 2023!

WE ARE THANKFUL FOR OUR HOSPITAL PARTNERS



AND OUR GRANT FUNDERS, SPONSORS, AND PARTNERS

- Arbus Magazine
- The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida
- Cultural Council of Greater Jacksonville and the City of Jacksonville
- Florida Blue Foundation
- Hall-Halliburton Foundation
- MOCA Jacksonville
- Share MD
- Tom Coughlin Jay Fund Foundation
- Ponte Vedra Beach Rotary Foundation
- Woodcock Foundation

This year, we expanded services to Baptist South and increased support in Wolfson Children's Outpatient Behavioral Health. In 2025, AWAHIH will extend services to UF Health Proton Therapy Institute and Volunteers in Medicine Jacksonville.



THE TRANSFORMATIVE POWER OF THE ARTS IN HEALTHCARE

Arts programs enhance patient care by creating uplifting distractions, fostering a comforting sense of normalcy, and encouraging social connections. Studies suggest that integrating art into healthcare environments provides measurable benefits not only for patients but also for caregivers and staff. Research underscores four major benefits of incorporating the arts into healthcare settings:



1. Improved care environment for patients, caregivers, and staff

3. Better outcomes, including reduced anxiety and pain, and shorter hospital stays

2. Enhanced effectiveness in health communication

4. Greater emotional and physical well-being

Source: National Organization for Arts in Health

For hospitalized children, making art is one of the few empowering activities available to them when everything else seems beyond their control.



SPECIAL EVENTS

- **Baptist MD Anderson Cancer Center:** Survivorship Week
- **Mayo Clinic:** National Nurses Week; Culture of Safety Fair & Open Enrollment Expo; Fall Festival
- **MOCA Jacksonville:** *The Power Within* patient art exhibition opening reception
- **St. Vincent's Medical Center:** Kids Together Against Cancer support group
- **Tom Coughlin Jay Fund:** Caring for Caregivers event and Remembrance Weekend
- **University of Florida:** 2 artists attended UF Center for Arts in Medicine's Arts in Health Intensive Program
- **Wolfson Children's Hospital:** Pediatric Remembrance Gathering, Wolfie's Spooky Spectacular, Annual Lunch and Learn with Family Support Services

SPECIAL PROJECTS

- **Baptist Health:** Window Painting for National Nurses Week
- **Onecall Building:** Christmas tree featuring 1,000 origami cranes installed in honor of patient/ AWAHIH volunteer, Gillian Vaughan
- **Wolfson Children's Hospital:** Banners for patients and staff; bereavement artwork; holiday art projects with patients; holiday cards for auxiliary; art projects with chaplaincy



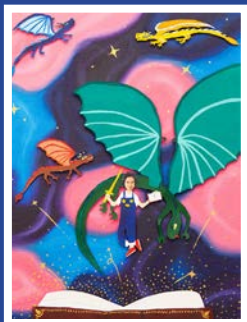


"THE POWER WITHIN" PATIENT ART EXHIBITION

This year's annual patient art exhibition, *The Power Within*, celebrates inner strengths like compassion and courage as true superpowers. Guided by AWAHIH Artists-in-Residence, sixteen Wolfson Children's patients reimagined themselves as superheroes, highlighting qualities beyond their diagnoses.

The project empowered pediatric patients to express themselves, enhance their artistic abilities, and build confidence, all of which contributed to their healing process. They tapped into their inner strengths to inspire themselves and others.

Showcased at MOCA Jacksonville and sponsored by the Florida Blue Foundation, the exhibition underscores art's healing power and provides a platform for these young artists to share their work with the community.



See this exhibit at MOCA Jacksonville through January 12, 2025, then at FSCJ North Campus until March, and Jacksonville International Airport from April to July. Follow us on social media for updates on future locations!

FUNDRAISERS AND SUPPLY DRIVES

The demand for art supplies has never been greater! We are truly thankful to everyone who hosted fundraisers, organized supply drives, and purchased items from our Amazon wishlist. Your generosity has brought immense joy to patients, providing them with hours of creative expression, relaxation, and enjoyment.



With your help, we were able to gift patients and their families with approximately:

- 9,000 paintbrushes
- 1,000 boxes of crayons
- 1,000 packs of colored pencils
- 700 boxes of markers
- 2,500+ packages of model magic clay
- And more!

A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO

- Baker County Christian Co-Op
- Brooklyn Brant and Landrum Middle School NJHS
- Cabana Life
- Christ Church Academy
- Episcopal School of Jacksonville St. Mark's Campus
- First Coast Cultural Center
- Hillary Whitaker Gallery
- Jax Woodworkers Club
- Kerri Carter (Catie Cares)
- Lily Pulitzer
- Lisa Ullmann
- Professional Artists of St. Augustine (PASTA) Fine Art Gallery
- Teresa Graham
- Voyage Chiropractic





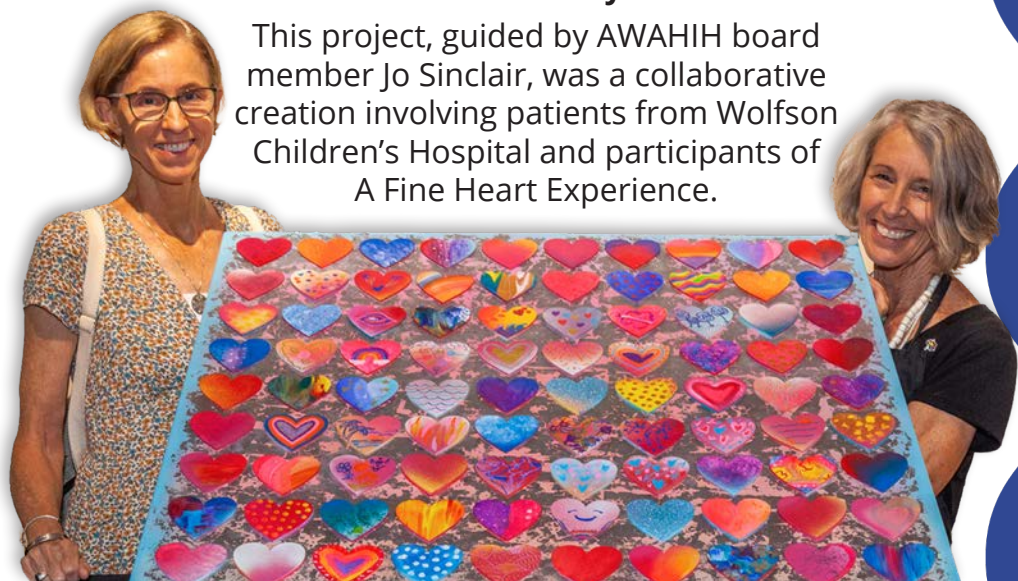
A FINE HEART EXPERIENCE

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who made AWAHIH's fundraising gala, A Fine Heart Experience, on September 14 at MOCA Jacksonville such a tremendous success! We are deeply grateful to all who helped bring this memorable event to life, to our inspiring speakers, and to those who attended and generously contributed to support our mission.



"100 Hearts of Art"

This project, guided by AWAHIH board member Jo Sinclair, was a collaborative creation involving patients from Wolfson Children's Hospital and participants of A Fine Heart Experience.



THANK YOU TO OUR EVENT SPONSORS

Friends of Maximus, Ferguson Inc, Hillary Whitaker Gallery, Danielle Hardner, Lauren Baker, Friends of Art with a Heart (x3), Duval Ford, Fickling Construction, Jill and Jed Davis, Fishman Pediatric Dentistry, PASTA Fine Art Gallery, Big Daddy Properties, Lisa Ullmann, Sight & Sound Productions, Fisher Tousey Attorneys at Law, Dr. Tom Hilton, One Call, Dream Finders Homes, First Horizon

AND OUR EVENT COMMITTEE

Kacey Roache (Co-Chair), Heidi McLeod (Co-Chair), Teresa Graham (Co-Chair), Ana Tari (Co-Chair), Bebe Alexander, Taylor Horne, Jennifer Guthrey, Colleen Makey, Jackie Olmo, Jennifer Collier, Marie Legène, Margo Klar, Jessica Ryals



TYSON'S STORY

"Last year, my son suffered a massive stroke, leaving him nearly unresponsive. We were searching for anything that could reach him. That's when I met Matt with his hand pan, and knowing my son's love for drumming, I asked if he might play for him. Matt spent an incredible hour connecting with my son, artist to artist, through music. This powerful moment became a milestone in Tyson's healing journey. I am deeply grateful for all AWAHIH does—not just for the art and music, but for the heart they bring to each child. It's so much more than providing art supplies; it's about creating connections and bringing light in difficult times."

– Tanika, mother of Tyson, WCH patient



KENNEDY'S STORY

"Kennedy has always been a light in this world, so when she was diagnosed, it felt like a nightmare for all of us—including her. She would hide under the covers in her dark hospital room, processing the overwhelming reality of being a 7-year-old with leukemia. AWAHIH kept visiting, gently inviting her to create. Over time, they helped her emerge and blossom again; now, she's leading the way in the art room! AWAHIH gave us hope and joy during dark times, offering Kennedy—and all of us—comfort and purpose during long hospital stays. It's been an incredible encouragement throughout her treatment."

– Melanie, mother of Kennedy, WCH patient

OUR TEAM

ARTISTS-IN-RESIDENCE

Christy Ponder -
Executive Director
Dylan Bauer
Bob Drost
Heidi Drost
Kianna Godoy
Jaycee Guttormson
Alondra Hernandez
Amy Irizarry
Brooke McKinney
Lisa Miyares
Matt Richards
Abigail Santos
Jill Swanson
Micaela Yates

VOLUNTEERS

Perri Funk
Mary Lane
Helen Meatte
Larry Milford
Patsy Moore
Laura Towne
Gillian Vaughan

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Emilia Horrath
Emily Chaves
Inthury Warren
Jaylene Cabrera
Jennan Norenberg

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Kim Karshner



GET INVOLVED:

1. Make a donation
2. Volunteer
3. Purchase art materials from our Amazon Wishlist/ host a supply drive
4. Engage with us on social media

Learn more at
awahih.org/get_involved

awahih.org

Call us at
904.306.0390

Social Media



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Donate



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