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Cathedral Arts Project opens *County Missives* exhibition

Expressive Works by Incarcerated Juveniles Adjudicated as Adults

On March 30, 2017, the Cathedral Arts Project will host an opening reception for its exhibition *County Missives – Expressive Works by Incarcerated Juveniles Adjudicated as Adults* at the University of North Florida Lufano Intercultural Gallery. The reception will be held from 5 to 7 p.m. and is free and open to the public.

County Missives is an exhibition of work by incarcerated juveniles in CAP's visual arts program at the John E. Goode Pre-Trial Detention Facility, taught by local artist Tony Rodrigues. The student artists are 12- to 17-year-old boys who are jailed while awaiting trial and, due to the severity of their charges, are being prosecuted as adults. The exhibition will also feature a short documentary about the program and its impact on the students involved.

The driving force behind all CAP programs is the belief that the arts matter – they provide essential skills, like creative thinking, perseverance, teamwork and self-discipline, that benefit all people in all areas of their lives. Through immersion in the visual arts, this program provides a creative outlet for these incarcerated students that builds their artistic skills while also emphasizing improved communication and social skills, nonviolent self-expression and new avenues for coping in difficult situations.

The class focuses on Abstract Expressionism – a free-form style that encourages the students to convey mood and thought through color, line and scale, while also learning how to “break the rules” without negatively impacting others. They also learn behaviors to help them reintegrate into society and are given the opportunity to consider larger possibilities in the world outside their walls.

The pieces in *County Missives*, which will be on display through June 30, 2017, are a collection of individual and collaborative works by 10 students – some of whom have been in the class for one or two years and some of whom have aged out of the program or been sentenced. Fledgling and sometimes powerful works of humor, absurdity, sadness and beauty emerge from these students who previously had little or no experience or interest in the arts.

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Now in its third decade of service, the mission of the **Cathedral Arts Project** is to enrich the quality of life in Northeast Florida through unleashing the creative spirit of young people. Our vision is for every child to benefit from a well-rounded education that includes dance, media arts, music, theatre and the visual arts. By providing direct instruction to students and teachers, facilitating partnerships and advocating for expanded access to arts education, the Cathedral Arts Project empowers children and youth to succeed in all areas of their lives. Learn more at capkids.org.