

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Children's Institute for Learning Differences students express themselves through art in the Bellevue Arts Museum Exhibition, "Shadow+Light"

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Mercer Island, Washington – August 19, 2013 – Children's Institute for Learning Differences (CHILD) will present a student art exhibit, "Shadow+Light" in the Community Education Gallery at Bellevue Arts Museum (BAM) from September 20 – December 1, 2013. This exhibition showcases student pieces discovered during their experiments with photography, drawing, imagination and movement.

For the students at CHILD, art is used to provide a critical route to communication when other means are difficult or unsuccessful. CHILD's Director of Education, Dominic Jimenez, noted "I can't imagine a program for children with special needs that is not fully integrated with the arts. What better way to connect and communicate for children who struggle with both?" Parent, Samantha Zanelli, agrees that the art program at CHILD provided a crucial pathway of connection for her son, "The art program at CHILD was really the key to reaching my son because it gave him a sense of safety and success."

BAM's Community Education exhibitions celebrate and nurture the community by featuring artworks that promote educational enrichment and cultural awareness," commented Stefano Catalani, Director of Art, Craft & Design. "We are honored to partner with CHILD arts program for the cultivation of creativity and innovation and are pleased to feature the works of these bright and talented young artists."

The Community Education Gallery is open during regular Museum hours and is free to the public.

In this exhibition, the student artists were able to create dramatic images, telling a story that is uniquely their own. The results of their work often surprised even the artists themselves. "It is the most effective route to increase self-awareness and give a powerful voice that allows others to discover the creativity within each child." said Barbara Piscioneri, Senior Arts Specialist.

"In this initiative to honor diversity, the Bellevue Arts Museum is showcasing some of the community's least known and now discovered child artists. The joys of creative exploration, discovery, and performance are all too often completely missing in the world experience of children with special needs", said CHILD's Executive Director, Carrie Fannin. Trina Westerlund, who founded CHILD in a church basement in Bellevue in 1977, reflected that "Our original commitment to full participation for every child is the essence of the work that continues today at CHILD".

CHILD is a regional center committed to providing innovative school programs and therapies that promote social, emotional, behavioral and academic supports for children with special needs. CHILD has emerged as a recognized leader in the arenas of sensory processing and social-emotional development. CHILD, a non-profit organization, partners with 20 school districts, from Olympia to Camano Island, to serve their most complex and challenging children.

Bellevue Arts Museum is a place that ignites the mind and fuels creativity. With its unique focus on art, craft and design, BAM connects people of all ages and diversity with extraordinary works by Northwest

artists while bringing national and international exhibitions to our community. We are dedicated to conversation and helping connect with art and artists; past or present, experimental or established.

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