

Burning Bush Art Gallery presents *The Awakenings Project*

Burning Bush Art Gallery is proud to present its latest show: **The Awakenings Project**. The Awakenings Project is an outreach effort to help persons with psychiatric disorders awaken to their inner selves through art in all forms. The show will feature the work of several regional artists. The show will recognize National Mental Illness Awareness Week and is part of Gary United Methodist Church programs to raise awareness to the effects and impact of Mental Illness.

The Awakenings Project was first conceived in 1996 when Glen Ellyn resident Robert Lundin observed that many “consumers” of mental health services were also artists. Lundin decided to organize a group show, expecting a dozen artists to participate in the first exhibit. The response Lundin received was overwhelming, over 50 artists participated in the first exhibit. Needing help, Lundin enlisted Irene O’Neill as co-director, and several other artists as the production crew. Since then, the organization has grown tremendously and is now an independent Illinois Not For Profit Corporation. In February of 2000, The Awakenings Project opened studio space in Glen Ellyn after well-known local artist Trish Evers, upon her death in June of 2000, bequeathed her studio to the project. The studio moved to Elgin in July 2008.

Irene O’Neill states “The mission of the Awakenings Project is to assist persons with mental health issues in developing and enhancing their creative abilities through art in all its forms, and to raise public awareness of the creative talents and contributions of people living with psychiatric disorders. We hope that we and our contributors will benefit in our recovery from this activity, and our viewers will better understand the creative capacity and overall potential of persons living with mental ill health.” Tony Asta, co-director of the Gallery said, “We are excited about the depth and breadth of this show and proud to use this venue for such dynamic and profound works.”

The show will open on September 8th. Regular viewing hours are scheduled on Sundays, from 10am to 12:30pm, Wednesdays, from 5:30 to 7pm, Monday through Friday 9am to 4pm. Special viewing arrangements for individuals or groups can be made by calling 708-705-8669.

The Awakenings Project exhibit will host an Artist’s Reception with light refreshments on **Sunday, September 8th from 1 to 4pm**. Many artists will be on hand to meet the public and talk about their work. Also, there will be an evening of Poetry, Music and Readings by members of the Awakenings Project on Friday, September 27th from 6 to 9pm. The show will end on Sunday, October 6th.

For more information about the show and/or the Burning Bush Gallery, contact Tony Asta tonyasta@ameritech.net/708-705-8669 or Bill Austin bau5142277@aol.com/630-336-3352. Information on the Awakenings Project can be viewed on their web site; www.awakeningsproject.org. The Gallery is located on 216 N. Main St. Wheaton, Ill 60187. The Burning Bush Art Gallery is a ministry of Gary United Methodist Church.