



Liz Bashore
Oil on Canvas



Greg Latza
Photograph



Susan Geissler
"Puddle Jumper"
Bronze Sculpture

Investing in the Arts as a Powerful Healing Experience

BY IVY OLAND

POWERFUL HUMAN EMOTIONS EXIST IN HEALTHCARE FACILITIES AMONG patients, families and caregivers for the sick and injured. Investing in healing arts can positively impact these lives in a very real and profound way. Carefully and appropriately planned and coordinated arts programs can be an essential and effective part of creating a healing experience and a healing environment, yielding great rewards.

A knowledgeable healthcare arts consultant will understand the healing environment and with the benefit of current research, will assist organizations and key stakeholders in selecting appropriate visual images to enhance the healing process and impart the appropriate messages – hope, dignity, joy, comfort and concern. The arts encompass imagery, color, light, sound and performing arts and art therapy options. When you choose to work with the appropriate arts coordinator, you allow yourself a great range of possibilities.

The consultant will also provide professional guidance for which areas of

the hospital require specific images or art pieces, appropriate color palettes to provide distraction, reduce pain and entice viewers to connect with the imagery.

Incorporating the arts can be an effective tool in reinforcing the mission, vision and values of your hospital, serving as a source of community pride, supporting your organization's brand, creating potential for new fundraising efforts, and showing your patients, staff and visitors that you value their well being.

The role of the arts in a hospital setting is multifaceted, but most importantly the arts promote healing and facilitate a more



Mary Kline-Misol "The Secret Language of Birds" Acrylic, Charcoal on Canvas



Mary Groth Oil Pastel

positive medical outcome. For patients, the arts serve as a source of motivation or empowerment and as a path of escape, offer a positive distraction, and reduce stress and anxiety. These, in turn, shorten patient stay, reduce the need for pain medication, and provide a more favorable patient experience.

The use of arts in healthcare focuses on both the patients and caregivers, offering a much needed respite in a stressful and intense environment. Incorporating patient and staff in the decision-making process expresses concern for them and demonstrates that

you value their welfare. Research shows that the arts can reduce stress in patients, thereby reducing pain medication and reducing stress among staff, creating a better work environment and improved staff retention. The arts can provide them with the opportunity for relaxation, escape and rejuvenation.

The arts also help create a positive experience and image of your organization for families and visitors. They can become a wayfinding landmark to reduce the stress of an unfamiliar environment. Arts can provide a positive distraction as they wait for loved ones during times of

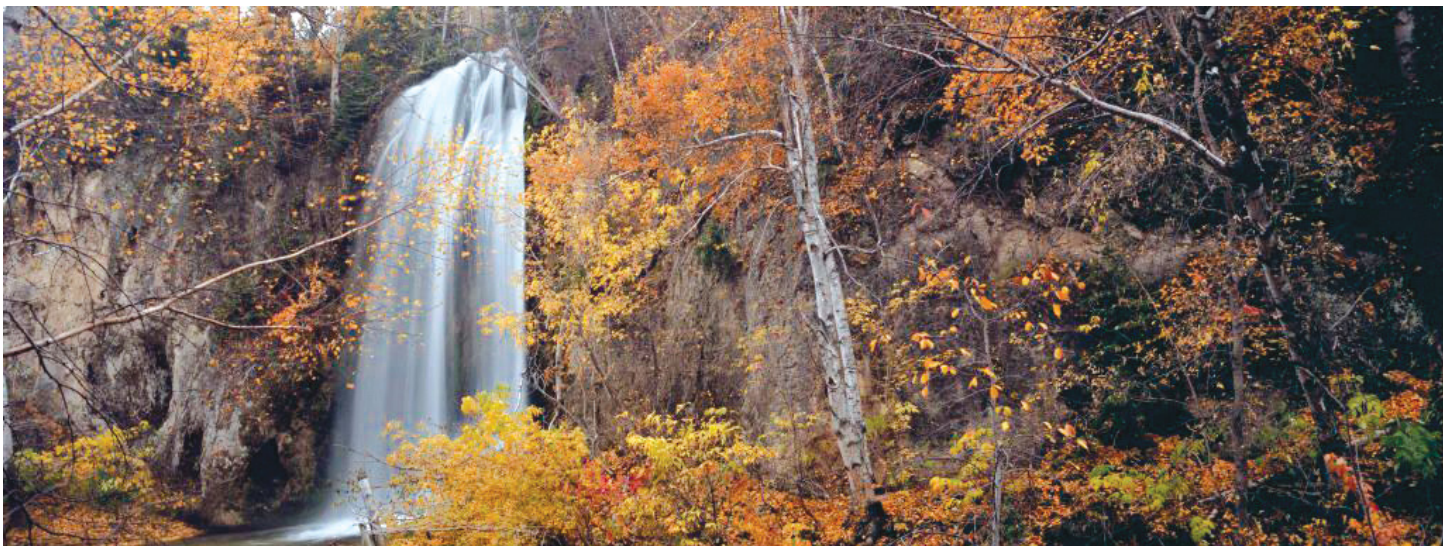
uncertainty. And they can create a sense of peace and calm at a chaotic time in their lives.

With the right team and proper planning, the benefits of the arts are many and the returns are great. Investing in the arts as a powerful healing experience will provide the positive outcomes that your healthcare facility seeks.

Ivy Oland is an independent arts consultant located in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. These pieces are by a few of the many regional artists with whom she works. Ivy can be reached at **Oland Arts Consulting** by calling 605.376.0704 or via e-mail at olandarts@gmail.com © 2008



Gregory Johnson "Jack's Story Time"
Bronze Sculpture



Paul Schiller "Autumn Falls" Photograph