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Cerebral Palsy of Westchester Celebrates First EXPRESSION THROUGH DIGITAL ARTS Artist Residency

RYE BROOK, NY – Twelve student artists from Cerebral Palsy of Westchester (CPW) celebrated their artistic digital creations on Wednesday at the *Expression Through Digital Arts Showcase and Exhibition*, concluding nine weeks of training and coaching with artist-in-resident Cornell “Lord Judah” Carelock. Participants from CPW’s special education BRIDGE School and Adult Day Habilitation program presented media artwork, music and animations they created using digital art software applications, applications chosen to allow the users to freely express themselves and explore the creative process. Throughout the residency, participants and staff were guided by teaching artist Cornell “Lord Judah” Carelock (Mr. Judah) on how to navigate these digital tools and create reflective art as a result. The *Expression Through Digital Arts* program and artists residency was made possible by ArtsWestchester with funding from Westchester County, and by major funding from the Mid Westchester Elks Lodge #535.



LEFT: Front, L-R: Artist participants Marissa T., Jon-Paul V., Jonathan R., Justin P., Ollie L., Robert Lee S. / Back, L-R: Jay Singer from the Mid Westchester Elks and Teaching Artist Cornell “Lord Judah” Carelock. RIGHT: CPW Program Specialist Kaireeka Vanterpool, student artist Leah M., and teaching artist Carelock. Photos by Honora Banks and Kaireeka Vanterpool

Many of the individuals that CPW serves at the David G. Osterer Center in Rye Brook are non-verbal or have limited spoken or written language skills. Many individuals living with disabilities face extensive communication challenges, frequently have difficulty expressing their needs, putting words to what they are experiencing, reading signs, being misunderstood or being heard. According to Joan Colangelo, CPW’s Special Projects Director, *“This in-depth artist residency program has made a significant impact, allowing people to express themselves through digital art, music, and storytelling, utilizing touchscreens, iPads, tablets, and groundbreaking software, including AI software. We were very fortunate to receive these grants, to have this opportunity, and to have Mr. Judah for so much time. It has broadened the horizons of the people we serve and has added so much more to their lives.”*

Tia Levinson, CPW’s Director of Development, expands on the impact of this program, *“For those who have limited use of their fingers for holding paintbrushes or handling a musical instrument, a stylus adapted to their personal situations can allow them to navigate a tablet or touchscreen. Providing*

individuals living with disabilities with opportunities to make art, compose music, and tell stories on user-friendly and adaptive platforms can help them to gain a sense of empowerment and solidify their communication, expression, imagination, and visual skills."

"I loved how I was able to bring my poems to life with music and pictures I made. I was able to express the love that I wanted to bring out to the world!" says Ollie Lowery, one of the artists, a resident of White Plains who has been attending CPW's Day Habilitation Program for over 28 years.

During the residency, new digital media art tools and skills were introduced to students, teachers and staff; participants enhanced their abilities to express themselves through digital and media arts, and were given a good grounding in these tools to continue to expand their new skills. The sessions with Mr. Judah strengthened the participants' self-confidence and social interaction skills, as evidenced by the eagerness for each class to begin, the engagement and teamwork as they worked on group projects, and the culmination of yesterday's showcase and exhibition.

About the Artist: **Cornell "Lord Judah" Carelock** is an ArtsWestchester teaching artist and student of Hip Hop and music culture. A long-time Westchester resident, he has over ten years of K-12, mental health, and adult age experience as a professional teaching artist, saying that he *"seeks to create a lively exchange of ideas among many different communities."* Working alongside civic-based organizations, schools, and community groups on projects regarding social justice and social action, he continues to develop creative strategies for translating positive proactive messaging into Art.

Now in its 74th year, **Cerebral Palsy of Westchester's** mission is to advance the independence, productivity, and full citizenship of people with all developmental disabilities including autism, neurological impairments, intellectual disabilities, epilepsy, and cerebral palsy. CPW's main campus, located in Rye Brook, NY, houses a special education school, an adult day habilitation program, respite and recreation programs. The non-profit organization also operates the United Preschool Center in White Plains and seven residential programs throughout Westchester. Through a comprehensive network of educational programs, day services, residential sites, therapeutic services, employment training, recreation programs and advocacy the agency helps thousands of children and adults in Westchester and Fairfield Counties live more productive and satisfying lives. The organization's motto is: *Realizing Tomorrow's Potential . . . Today!* For more, visit cpwestchester.org.



LEFT: Teaching Artist Cornell "Lord Judah" Carelock signing Certificates of Completion. MIDDLE: CPW Program Specialist Kaireeka Vanterpool, student artist Justin P., and teaching artist Carelock. RIGHT: Student artist Ollie L. and CPW Executive Director Linda Kuck

For more information and high-resolution Images, contact Tia Levinson, CPW's Director of Development and Public Relations, at 914-937-3800 ext. 353 or email tia.levinson@cpwestchester.org.

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