**Survivor Quilts & Photography Exhibit**

Exhibition Statement

The *Survivor Quilts & Photography* collection features twelve collaborative hand-crafted quilts and seventeen framed photography and writing pairings presented by the Anton Art Center and Turning Point Macomb.

Art is an expressive medium that can be used as an outlet for survivors to communicate, overcome stress, and sort through feelings and thoughts about trauma. The works on display are a vivid reflection of those affected by sexual violence, containing messages written by survivors at different stages of healing, ranging in levels of anger, depression, and forgiveness.

The tradition of the quilts began in the mid-1990s, when a dedicated group of women created ‘Jane Doe’, a figure of a woman dressed in white symbolizing the survivors who are not with us, either those who are isolated from support or those who did not survive sexual violence.

Each year, Turning Point hosts events to raise awareness and provide safe places for survivors to express themselves. The organization provides attendees with cloth swatches as an opportunity to write whatever sentiments they wish to share with ‘Jane Doe’ by attaching them to the figure. The swatches are later used to create a quilt to share these thoughts.

Each color has particular significance: yellow represents a message from a survivor of sexual violence, red for survivor of child sexual assault, purple for survivor of sexual assault as a hate crime, and blue for a significant other.

The photography and writing pairings are the products of a youth survivor art therapy program offered by Turning Point in 2009. Led by a professional photographer, the students studied the principles and elements of art, and were later given disposable cameras with instructions to create their own photographs. Once the film was developed, one photo was selected from the set to be accompanied with a handwritten caption, which are matted and framed together.

Some of these works have been on display at Turning Point’s offices in Mount Clemens and St. Clair Shores, but this is the first time that these compelling works are presented together in a professional viewing space, alongside the youth survivor photography project. The works in this exhibit are made with purpose and care to aid survivors and spread awareness.

*Stephanie Hazzard, Anton Art Center Exhibition Manager*

*August 2019*