



# MISSISSIPPI STATE HOSPITAL

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## **For Immediate Release**

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### **FLOWOOD LIBRARY HOSTS 'SERENDIPITY' SNEAK PREVIEW**

WHITFIELD — The G. Chastaine Flynt Memorial Library in Flowood is hosting a special preview of this year's "Serendipity," Mississippi State Hospital's annual art show and silent auction.

The preview will be on display throughout the month of July, and the full show will be on display at Mississippi State Hospital on Thursday, September 4, 11:30 a.m. until 6 p.m. An annual event, this year represents a milestone for the show – the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

"It's hard to believe it's been 25 years since we began doing this," said Evelyn Bates, Director of the Art Services Program at the hospital. "We've been fortunate enough to be able to continue doing it, and that's thanks to the remarkable support we've received from our local communities as well as the art community.

"We would like to invite everyone to come and join us on the first Thursday in September as we celebrate this milestone."

Serendipity is an annual highlight at Mississippi State Hospital, with hundreds of visitors typically visiting and bidding on the work each year. All of the work on display is created by patients and residents at the hospital who take part in the Art Services program there. The show typically contains ceramics, pencil drawings, paintings in various styles and formats, and other mixed media.

The show is held each year on the first Thursday in September, with bidding taking place via silent auction. Bidders don't have to be present to win, but if individuals see any pieces they are particularly interested in, they would be encouraged to stay until the close of bidding. The lights in the display room will flicker, announcing only one minute left to place bids and usually setting off a scramble as those in attendance try to guarantee the pieces they're hoping to win.

"The enthusiasm that's evident in the bidding is a testament to the creativity and ingenuity from our patients and residents whose work is up for our visitors to see," Bates said. "It is very therapeutic for them to work on these pieces, but what they create is consistently surprising and expressive, whether they have had any previous formal art instruction or not."

The actual auction and show itself is additionally beneficial and a further boost to participants' self-esteem, as they get a chance to see their work framed and presented, with people bidding against each other for the right to take it home.

“It helps them see the value in themselves as well as the value other people place on their work,” Bates said.

Many visitors return to the hospital for the show year after year. Anyone is welcome to visit the campus and view the show, and all of the pieces on display will be available for bidding through silent auction. Bidding will take place from 11:30 a.m. until 6 p.m. on September 4.

“Anyone and everyone is welcome to join us in September, and please visit the Flowood library for just a taste of what’s to come,” Bates said.

*MSH, a program of the Mississippi Department of Mental Health, was founded in 1855 and facilitates improvement in the quality of life for Mississippians who are in need of mental health, chemical dependency or nursing home services by rehabilitating to the least restrictive environment and utilizing a range of psychiatric and medical services that reflect the accepted standard of care and are in compliance with statutory and regulatory guidelines. The hospital is accredited by the Joint Commission.*

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**PHOTOS ATTACHED: A special preview of “Serendipity,” Mississippi State Hospital’s annual art show and silent auction, will be on display at Flowood’s G. Chastaine Flynt Memorial Library throughout the month of July. The show, which contains work created by participants in the hospital’s Art Services Program, will be Thursday, September 4 at Mississippi State Hospital. The pieces pictured here will be a part of the show.**