



SYNERGY ART FOUNDATION

A National Heritage Foundation

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SYNERGY ART FOUNDATION DISTRIBUTES \$20,000 TO ARTISTS SEVERELY IMPACTED BY FIRESTORMS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Close to three hundred people attended Synergy Art Foundation's art auction on December 14, 2003, at the San Diego Firehouse Museum. The event was a tremendous success not only because of the diversity of donated artworks but also because of the positive energy and genuine caring that seemed to pervade the event that Sunday afternoon. The event included an energetic performance by Capoeira Brasil as well as a sensitive and articulate recitation of Jim Milner's poem about the love of his life who perished in the firestorms. The silent auction boasted over seventy items. The live auction, undertaken by Joan Seifried was exciting and educational. The event raised just over \$20,000.

Over the past six weeks, Synergy Art Foundation has been gathering names of artists severely impacted by the firestorms. This list of names was collected primarily from electronic surveys, mass distributed by COVA and Synergy Art Foundation throughout San Diego County. Four of the 35 artists on the list had no useful contact information. The remaining 31 were sent a grant application specifically to determine the degree of need of financial assistance for each artist. Of the 31 applications sent, 14 responded. The organization's steering committee reviewed each application on a case-by-case basis. The primary determining factors were the overall losses incurred by the artist, the impact on earning income because of the disaster, insurance and other payouts received to date, and overall current circumstances and conditions. Out of fourteen applicants, only one was not granted because of an extraordinary large insurance payout. Three artists were deemed most needy and were given \$3,000 each. As the needs decreased, so the grant payout decreased proportionately. One applicant who was desperate for money before Christmas was given \$500 immediately and the balance will be issued along with all others.

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Art is a catalyst for personal empowerment, creativity, community building and positive social change.

Some of the artists who received less than \$1,000 had reasonable payouts from insurance and various state and federal agencies, but the committee felt that a small amount of money should be given to these artists to assist them buy new tools, materials or equipment.

Synergy Art Foundation's event fetched a total of \$20,000 all of which has been designated to fulfill grant applications for artists who qualified. The disbursement of funds is:

3 artists received	\$3,000 each
1 received	\$2,500
1 received	\$2,000
2 received	\$1,500 each
1 received	\$1,000
2 received	\$ 750 each
1 received	\$ 500
2 received	\$ 250 each

The organization is planning a special event for all impacted artists so that they can meet and share experiences. Co-founder Kathy Harvey says, "We believe connecting these people will be healing and cathartic for each of them. Maybe they can even share studios or homes, when they are ready to do so".

Synergy Art Foundation is also proposing an exhibition of these artists' work at the end of the first quarter, believing that getting these artists back into doing their art is one of the best therapies out there to facilitate recovery from this disaster.

Synergy Art Foundation is a philanthropic organization that falls under the umbrella of The National Heritage Foundation, a 4.3 billion dollar foundation based in Falls Church, Virginia. It is open to all artists, including visual and performing artists, writers, poets, and filmmakers, as well as arts organizations. For tax deductible financial donations please issue checks to "Synergy Art Foundation" and mail to: Synergy Art Foundation, Naomi Nussbaum, 251 Barbara Avenue, Solana Beach, CA 92075. For more information, please check out our website at www.synergyartfoundation.org.