

# Threshold

Rehabilitation Services, Inc.

## PRESS RELEASE

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Illuminating HOPE: Threshold Plans Rededication of Hope Blossoms Mural for Sept. 19**

**Reading, PA – September 12, 2023** – [Threshold Rehabilitation Services, Inc.](#) in collaboration with the [Berks County MH/DD Program](#) and the [Berks County Suicide Prevention Task Force](#) are excited to announce the rededication of the Hope Blossoms Mural on Tuesday, September 19, 3:30 to 5 p.m. at the Mosaic House Clubhouse, Cherry Street Parking Lot, Reading.

The rededication serves to recognize the newly installed overnight lighting set to illuminate the artwork designed by Gregory Didyoung, a Berks native, Reading Area Community College (RACC) graduate and Kutztown University alum that was originally revealed on October 21, 2021. The mural, with panels painted by members of the Berks County Suicide Prevention Task Force and numerous other community members and organizations, acknowledges those persons experiencing mental health challenges, as well as those who may be contemplating suicide. It is also a visual nod to those family members, friends and acquaintances that may be impacted by the suicide of someone they know. The mural is a physical and necessary reminder of the selfless dedication shown by first responders, social workers, counselors, physicians, nurses, and direct support professionals supporting and caring for persons facing mental health challenges.

At the time of its original dedication, Didyoung explained that the mural is a reflection of his love for Berks County and his passion for helping one another.

Also integral in the mural's creation and serving as Mural Coordinator was Michael L. Miller, a Kutztown University graduate who also earned his MFA from the Maryland Institute, College of Art in Baltimore, Md. A teacher of arts in Berks County for 30 years now, Miller originally became interested in community-based art through the Mural Arts Program in Philadelphia. He now runs the community-based public art studio at [Total Experience Learning®](#) at [Albright College](#), where he is Artist in Residence for the program.

Total Experience Learning® recently forged a partnership with [Masterpiece AR](#), an international team pioneering in the field of augmented reality, and AI art, based out of Toronto, CA, and New York, NY. The company was founded on a simple but powerful vision: to transform the way we experience and interact with art through technology. With this vision in mind the Hope Blossoms Mural has been taken to a new level by integrating Generative AI art experienced through augmented reality. For the end user, the process is simple. One scans a QR code and the mural virtually comes to life. Reading is the third

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location to showcase Masterpiece AR's art.

"We chose the Hope Blossoms Mural to be showcased with Masterpiece AR because the message of the mural is so impactful and important. By integrating this new technology it will give even more people access to the mural and ruOK Berks which will in turn help more individuals in Berks County," said Miller.

As for access, labels with the Hope Blossoms Mural QR code will be on the street light poles that line Cherry Street and throughout the Cherry Street municipal parking lot.

"To me, and to the team of individuals and staff at Threshold, the illumination of the mural serves as an enduring beacon of hope, which lights the path of a person's recovery and transforms it from darkness to light. My wish is that everyone who has the chance to experience this mural, whether in person or through the visual effects of the QR code, will gain that same sense of hope and the ability to keep going, no matter their circumstances," Dr. Edward B. Michalik, Jr., President/CEO, Threshold Rehabilitation Services, Inc.

Present at the rededication will be Didyoung, Miller, City of Reading Mayor Eddie Moran, Berks County Commissioner Lucine Sihelnik, other County officials and members of the Threshold community. All participants and representatives are listed in the attached program.

Threshold Rehabilitation Services, Inc., is a leading nonprofit human services agency for Berks County that provides various services to persons with disabilities in four areas of need, including intellectual and developmental, mental health, residential treatment for adults, and vocational training and employment through business partnerships.

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