**CHIPPEWA COUNTY DRUG COURT**

**HEYDE CENTER FOR THE ARTS**

**PRESS RELEASE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 2, 2017

The Chippewa County Drug Court and the Heyde Center for the Arts are pleased to announce the celebration of ten years of Chippewa County Drug Court accomplishments on September 28, 2017 at the Heyde Center for the Arts, 3 S. High Street, Chippewa Falls, WI.

The national organization supporting drug courts acknowledges that treatment courts are one of the most successful programs for seriously addicted individuals, and that they represent true criminal justice reform in action. Drug courts restore lives, reunite families, and make communities safer. This is all done while saving money for taxpayers. Instead of having lengthy prison and jail sentences, these programs provide closely supervised life-saving treatment within the community.

The disease of addiction has no boundaries in regard to whom it affects. Addiction can plague the lives of anyone regardless of age, race, sex, financial status, or career. This is the case with Hugh Mandelert, famous artist from Chippewa Falls, who was an alcoholic. Through a generous loan from community members and the Mandelert family, an exhibit of Hugh’s work will be shown at the Heyde Center. This exhibit will serve as a catalyst for conversation about chemical dependency issues in the Chippewa Falls area.

“Many of us know and value Hugh Mandelert’ s paintings that raise-up the common place in both local architecture and the liquid depictions of our natural environment,” said Mark Ruddy, local artist. “Far fewer of us know of Hugh’s struggles with an addiction to alcohol, his life-saving awakening when he found himself detoxing in New York’s Bellevue Hospital, and his second chance return to Chippewa Falls with his supportive family and community.”

By celebrating both the artwork of Hugh Mandelert, and the successes of the Chippewa County Drug Court, the Heyde Center and Chippewa County Drug Court hope to decrease the stigma our society puts on people with chemical dependency; foster conversations that are too often kept behind closed doors; lift up the power of compassion, relationship and community support; replace castigation with rehabilitation; and explore ways to help each other artfully move forward one step at a time.

Events that will be planned throughout the month include a play at the Heyde Center, art exhibits by current and past drug court participants, guest speakers, a video presentation, and a performance by nationally recognized comedian and drug court advocate, Mark Lundholm.

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