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UAMS Offers Free Art Therapy Classes for Parkinson's Patients

LITTLE ROCK — A free art therapy workshop for Parkinson's disease patients will be offered April 19 at St. Michael's Episcopal Church at 12415 Cantrell Road.

The Art for Parkinson's workshop is being offered by the University at Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS Health) Movement Disorders Clinic, in partnership with Arts Integration Services of Little Rock.

No previous art experience is necessary, and materials will be provided. Participants, including Parkinson's patients and caregivers, are urged to wear comfortable clothes that they don't mind getting dirty.

The April 19 workshop, held during Parkinson's Disease Awareness Month, is the second of five sessions. There will be a workshop May 17 in El Dorado and two more classes at St. Michael's in Little Rock on June 21 and July 19. Patients are encouraged to attend as many sessions as they wish.

All classes are held from 9:30 a.m. to noon, and a virtual component is available for those who cannot participate in person. Registration is required.

Participants can self-register at bit.ly/PDArt or can contact Suzanne Dhall, DrPH, MSH, a health educator in the UAMS Department of Neurology, at sjdhall@uams.edu or by calling or texting 602-635-0739.

Research has shown that drawing or painting may help Parkinson's patients improve their motor skills, and patients have said it relaxes them and helps them control their tremors.

Parkinson's disease is a progressive nervous system disorder affecting dopamine-producing areas in the brain. It is the second most-common neurodegenerative disease in the United States and affects about 6,500 people in Arkansas.

At the first session on March 29, painter Elly Bates of Arts Integration discussed how some prominent artists throughout history have used music to help them create their well-known works of art. She then played the music that had inspired some of those artists, while encouraging participants to let the music lead them as they applied watercolor colored pencils, oil pastels and acrylic paint to standard size sheets of light poster board. After some experimentation, class members were encouraged to use their favorite designs and materials to create a larger, more finished piece.

The creations varied dramatically from vibrant abstract pieces to calming landscapes. Participants could take their finished artwork home or leave it behind to be included in an art show consisting of work from all five sessions.

The classes are made possible through a donation to the UAMS Parkinson's Disease Fund from Barbara and David Hogg of El Dorado. Barbara Hogg obtained a bachelor's degree from the UAMS College of Nursing in 1995 but couldn't complete her master's degree because of a Parkinson's diagnosis, for which she has been treated extensively at UAMS. The Hoggs' support of the Parkinson's program includes funding specifically for art education.

"I'm so grateful for the Hogg family," Dhall said.

"We're excited to be working with UAMS," Bates said. While the focus of the March 29 class was music, she said the April 19 class will focus on light, and if weather permits, may be held outside on a deck overlooking a picturesque pond. Bates calls the series of classes "the muses of art," with each class having a different "muse."

UAMS is the state's only health sciences university, with colleges of Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy, Health Professions and Public Health; a graduate school; a hospital; a main campus in Little Rock; a Northwest Arkansas regional campus in Fayetteville; a statewide network of regional campuses; and seven institutes: the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute, Jackson T. Stephens Spine & Neurosciences Institute, Harvey & Bernice Jones Eye Institute, Psychiatric Research Institute, Donald W. Reynolds Institute on Aging, Translational Research Institute and Institute for Digital Health & Innovation. UAMS includes UAMS Health, a statewide health system that encompasses all of UAMS' clinical enterprise. UAMS is the only adult Level 1 trauma center in the state. *U.S. News & World Report* recognized UAMS Medical Center as a Best Hospital for 2021-22; ranked its ear, nose and throat program among the top 50 nationwide for the third year; and named five areas as high performing — colon cancer surgery, diabetes, hip replacement, knee replacement and stroke. *Forbes* magazine ranked UAMS as seventh in the nation on its Best Employers for Diversity list. UAMS also ranked in the top 30% nationwide on *Forbes*' Best Employers for Women list and was the only Arkansas employer included. UAMS has 3,047 students, 873 medical residents and fellows, and six dental residents. It is the state's largest public employer with more than 10,000 employees, including 1,200 physicians who provide care to patients at UAMS, its regional campuses, Arkansas Children's, the VA Medical Center and Baptist Health. Visit www.uams.edu or www.uamshealth.com. Find us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#) or [Instagram](#).

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