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...Because every child deserves a childhood

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**Astor Opens Student Art Show: Paint What You Feel**

**Rhinebeck, N.Y.** – On Sunday, May 20, 2012, from 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM, a one-of-a kind Art Show will open at Astor's Residential Programs Student Art Galley, at 6339 Mill Street Road, Rhinebeck, NY. Seven emerging artists, ages 8 - 13, will present a group show of 32 pieces entitled, **Paint What You Feel**.

Astor's Residential Programs serves children, ages 5 – 13, with serious behavioral and emotional difficulties. Currently, there are 70 children in residence, who receive intensive treatment. They attend the Astor Learning Center, an award-winning school cited by the U.S. Department of Education. Most of the children have or are in the process of overcoming severe emotional trauma and art is an important outlet for expressing their emotions.

The title of the Art Show, **Paint What You Feel**, emerged from the frustration many people have when trying to draw something and it did not turn out the way they wanted. Astor's students are often faced with that dilemma. A famous German painter, Gerhard Richter, gave seven young Astor students a brand new solution to that age-old problem: Throw away the brush and pick up a squeegee.

"Sheila Doherty, Psy.D., Assistant Executive Director, Astor's Residential Programs said, "our task at the residence is to help the kids learn to identify and manage their emotions as best they can. Art plays a critical role in this process."

"I was frustrated with their frustration," said Patrick Madden, Recreation Specialist, and painter. "It drives you nuts when the idea in your head does not materialize on the canvas. And then, I remembered Richter." For the students' next art class, Mr. Madden had huge sheets of paper and canvas spread out everywhere on the floor. Brushes were replaced with paint rollers, scrapers, and squeegees.

Madden told them, "don't paint a bird, paint what it feels like to fly. No more rainbows, instead paint what it feels like when you see a rainbow." Then I showed them Richter's squeegee paintings. They got it. An hour later there were paintings and paint everywhere. Zack was the first one out of the gate. I asked him, "Zack, what do you think?" and for the first time he looked up at the six paintings he had just made and said, "These are awesome!"

Responding to the students' work, Caroline Gates Anderson, a Brooklyn-based art dealer and consultant said, "These are really quite amazing! Influenced by Frankenthaler and yet they have no idea who she is! The emotions captured on canvas are so powerful, beautiful -- clearly some of these young people have real talent."

If you are unable to attend the opening reception, contact Pat Madden at (415) 254-0204 for an appointment. The paintings can be viewed and purchased at:

[http://astorservices.smugmug.com/Art/childrens-artshows/art-show-paintwhatyoufeel/22889335\\_RtbwDG](http://astorservices.smugmug.com/Art/childrens-artshows/art-show-paintwhatyoufeel/22889335_RtbwDG).

Archival prints, signed and numbered by the artist are also available. All proceeds will benefit Astor's Residential Programs.

*Since 1953, Astor Services for Children & Families (formerly The Astor Home for Children) is providing behavioral and educational services in a caring environment where children and their families find strength, healing, hope and trust. Now serving over 6,000 children and families annually, Astor's current range of services to families in the Mid-Hudson Valley and the Bronx include: Residential Treatment, Therapeutic Foster Family Care, Early Childhood Programs, and Community-Based Behavioral Health and Prevention Services. For additional information about Astor Services for Children & Families, please visit their website at [www.astorservices.org](http://www.astorservices.org) or call Astor Services for Children & Families: Home for Children Foundation at (845) 871-1117.*

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