



## ***NEW PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN LOFT ARTISTS ASSOCIATION AND KIDS IN CRISIS ANNOUNCED***

### ***Gallery show will present artwork of Kids in Crisis residents***

**April 3, 2009 (Cos Cob CT)** ...In a unique, new partnership, Stamford's Loft Artists Association (LAA) will team with Kids in Crisis to present **“Loud & Clear: Art Provides A Voice,”** an exhibit of the artwork of the teen residents of the temporary shelter at Kids in Crisis. The exhibit, which will be open to the public May 7 – May 17, 2009, will showcase the teens' work created through the Kids in Crisis therapeutic art program. The art therapy program is conducted in partnership with Open Art Studio, NYC, a non-profit arts organization dedicated to offering participants of all ages and backgrounds a creative outlet to foster individual choices and to provide a safe space for personal transformation.

“Loud & Clear: Art Provides A Voice” will feature dozens of different pieces by the Fairfield County children impacted by abuse, neglect and severe family conflict who seek refuge at the comprehensive Kids in Crisis campus in Cos Cob. While children are temporarily in residence at Kids in Crisis, they receive a full spectrum of support – medical, educational, and therapeutic care, including the innovative program directed by Open Art Studio and generously supported by an anonymous private donor.

Open Art Studio, NYC recognizes the uniqueness of each individual's psychological, spiritual and emotional needs. Participants are exposed to an artistic process that can serve as an emotional outlet and as a means of self expression. “Creating art offers the comfort of touch, the freedom of expression, the reduction of stress and the opportunity to exercise control,” said Mandy Weil, founder and director of Open Art Studio. “The introduction of art materials and activities fosters individual

choices that help build self-esteem, a vital element of the care and support provided to the residents of Kids in Crisis.”

The mission of each of the two art organizations is closely aligned. “The Loft Artists Association (LAA) is comprised of a group of men and women who, almost more than anything else, passionately believe in the power of art,” said Alissa Siegal, President of the LAA. “Art as a declaration of one's self, as a way to connect with those you have never and may never meet, art as able to express what words cannot. This life giving and life sustaining act of expression becomes more deeply meaningful when shared with others. The LAA is honored to display the work of the youth of KIC, and completely excited to partner with these children to make art. This act of joint creation and self expression brings empowerment to all involved.”

The new relationship between Kids in Crisis and the LAA is a powerful one. In addition to hosting “Loud & Clear: Art Provides A Voice,“ members of the LAA will begin working individually this month with Kids in Crisis residents to provide an additional opportunity to experience different artistic techniques and styles and offer the chance to create new pieces amidst the LAA environment. The LAA studios and gallery have been located in a warehouse in the South End of Stamford for the past 25 years.

“Giving our children the ability to see their work prominently displayed, to acknowledge the hard work they put forth in healing themselves and their lives is a meaningful gift,” said Shari Shapiro, Executive Director of Kids in Crisis. “We are most appreciative of the support provided by the Loft Artists Association and the attention and care they are providing to families and children in crisis.”

Kids in Crisis is Connecticut’s only free, round-the-clock agency providing emergency shelter, crisis counseling and community educational programs for children of all ages and families dealing with a wide range of crises – domestic violence, mental health and family problems, substance abuse, economic difficulties and more. Since its founding in 1978, Kids in Crisis has helped more than 89,000 Connecticut children and families; in 2008, more than 9,200 children and families received assistance from the organization.

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