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Promoting the creative power in people with disabilities through the arts.

PRESS RELEASE

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Images of Maine at The Gallery at Park Row

BRUNSWICK, ME – VSA arts of Maine announces the opening of Images of Maine, a group show at the Gallery at Park Row, located at 185 Park Row, Brunswick, across the hall from Hattie's Ice Cream. The Gallery at Park Row showcases quality art by Maine artists with disabilities.

The opening reception will be held Friday, August 8, from 5:00 – 8:00 pm, during Brunswick's Second Friday ArtWalk. The exhibit runs from August 8 – Sept 9, and includes acrylics, watercolors, oil pastels, and photography. Artists on exhibit include Andrew Parker (Orrs Island), Frank Valliere (Gorham), Christine Lanier (Isleboro), Lisa Raven (Bangor), Brian Brigham (Windham), Emma Becker (Brunswick), and Charles Nelson Stratton (Gardiner).

The Gallery at Park Row is a new program of VSA arts of Maine. It provides space to exhibit and sell work by artists affiliated with VSA. The art includes work done in community facilities and, increasingly, by independent artists with disabilities. The artists come from a wide range of artistic training and backgrounds, and represent the spectrum of what it means to have a disability.

"Looking at these pieces challenges misconceptions you don't even know you had," says VSA volunteer Sarah Heinemann. "When I first came here, I assumed that the more sophisticated pieces had been done by artists with physical disabilities or mental illness. But that's not the case." In fact, some of VSA's most complex artwork is done by artists with cognitive disabilities, demonstrating that there really are many different kinds of intelligence.

Future plans for the gallery include an apprenticeship program that will give affiliated artists an opportunity to learn the business side of the arts.

For more information, contact Gracia Woodward at VSA Arts of Maine, 607-4016 or GraciaWoodward@vsartsmaine.org

For more info about VSA arts of Maine, go to www.vsartsmaine.org

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Photographs of the following pieces of artwork are available upon request:

- ? Charles N. Stratton, Gardiner, Independent Enterprise
- ? Andrew Parker, Orrs Island, Mother Osprey
- ? Lisa Raven, Bangor, Sun Through Clouds
- ? Brian Brigham, Windham, Buoy Wall
- ? Brian Brigham, Windham, The Lily Pond

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ABOUT VSA arts of Maine

VSA arts of Maine is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization providing innovative and inclusive arts, educational and cultural opportunities for children and adults with disabilities in Maine. Programs include artist residencies in schools, workshops for teachers and artists, mentoring for adult artists with disabilities, exhibitions by artists with disabilities, and partnerships with cultural venues throughout the state to improve accessibility.

VSA arts of Maine is part of the VSA arts international network, dedicated to promoting education and lifelong learning opportunities in the arts for people with disabilities. Founded in 1974 by Ambassador Jean Kennedy Smith, VSA arts is an affiliate of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C. Formerly named Very Special Arts, VSA arts changed its name in 1999, eliminating the use of the word "special" to honor the progress made by members of the disability community since the organization's inception.

Attached is a handout with suggestions for writing about persons with disabilities, **"People First Language for the Press."**