

UNICORN · COLONIAL · FITZPATRICK

BERKSHIRE

THEATRE GROUP

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For Immediate Release, Please:

Arts in Recovery for Youth and Berkshire Theatre Group Present Love Yourself

A Community Arts Event at The Colonial Theatre

March 19 through April 18

Opening: March 19, 2-4pm



Art Exhibition

Love Yourself is a community arts event from **March 19 through April 18** at The Colonial Theatre in Pittsfield to promote awareness and prevention of youth suicide. Now in its 3rd year, Love Yourself is an art show of 45 works of art, including acrylic paintings on canvas, drawings and digital art. On **March 19 from 2 to 4pm** at the Colonial, the event also features performing arts with music by Rachael Bentz and Grace Proskin and original poetry by Jack Kelly and Rachael Bentz. Schuyler Durand will speak about his art zine *Neurodiversity and Gender Complexity*. Marney Schorr, Director of the Arts in Recovery for Youth program, will read excerpts from her upcoming book, *When Art Saves Lives: DBT and Art for Youth Suicide Prevention*, with Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Love Yourself is a collaboration between the Arts in Recovery for Youth (AIRY) and Berkshire Theatre Group (BTG). Proceeds from the sale of artworks will benefit youth and suicide prevention, as well as BTG PLAYS!, BTG's year-round education program. The event is put together by 14 teens and young adults from AIRY's Expressive Arts Leadership Group which began in the winter of 2019 as part of the nationally-recognized and award winning, arts and skills based youth suicide prevention program, AIRY. Teens and young adults focus on raising awareness about youth suicide prevention, social justice for the LGBTQIA+ community, and racial and economic justice in the Berkshires. Each year, guest mentors in the arts have worked with the teens and young adults to help them express their voice about what matters to them and the issues they face, as well as to help them organize their ideas for change. This year, they included Poetry Therapist, Marshall Lyles, Songwriter and Guitarist Bobby Sexton, and Music Instructor, Dave Brown.

AIRY serves youth ages 13-24 primarily from low income families throughout 23 towns in Berkshire County and surrounding areas, who face barriers related to social class, race, economic hardship, transportation and lack of access to resources. Many of the families are isolated or alienated from the community. Additional barriers exist as 63% of youth in the program are LGBTQIA+ which increases their risk for suicide five times their heterosexual peers. AIRY has served over 140 youth with incredibly successful rates of reducing and often eliminating suicidal thoughts and urges for teens and young adults. AIRY also provides support to families, does outreach and teaches safe prevention strategies in the community.

AIRY invites the community to attend and enjoy the event on March 19 and the on-going art installation from March 19 through April 18.

For safety protocols please visit BTG's COVID-19 information page:

www.berkshiretheatregroup.org/covid-19-information/. For info about the AIRY program, contact Director Marney Schorr at airyberkshires@gmail.com and visit our website at www.airyedu.com. This event is funded by the New England Grassroots Environment Fund and MCLA's Student Mini Grant.