

## New Conversation About Mental Illness Prompted through Art

*Issaquah leaders join artists to address the impact of mental illness on youth and community.*

### Calendar of Events

Fri. 4- 22-16, 6-8 p Blakely:  
Soft Opening

**Fri. 4-29-16, 6-9 p**  
**Senior Center & artEAST**  
**Grand Opening w/ Mayor, Ellen**  
**Forney, & ISF Robin Callahan**

Wed. 5-4-16, 7-8:30 p artEAST.  
Holly Ballard Martz & Jenna  
Genzale co-lead tour, anxiety

Fri. 5-6-16, 7-8:30 p Blakely.  
June Sekiguchi, Quin Breelead,  
and Katie Jo Glaves co-lead  
tour, schizophrenia and drugs

Thur. 5-12-16 6-7:30 p. Blakely  
Ann Teplick poetry reading

Wed. 5-17-16, X-3 Teen Center  
Sammamish, Influence the  
Choice Student Video Awards

**Thur. 5-19-16, 6-8 p Swedish**  
**Panel Discussion w/Lauren**  
**Davis, Sandi Ando, Ketema**  
**Ross, Theresa Winther, Megan**  
**Chiarelli mental illness stigma**

Fri, 5-20-16, 7-8:30 p artEAST  
Valaree Cox and Karen Fuller  
co-lead tour, caretaker care

Sat. 5-21-16 12-1:30p  
"Talking with Teens"  
healthyyouthinitiative.org

Thur. 5-26-16, 6:30-8 p.artEAST  
"Mother for you I made this"  
Film screening & q&a with Ezra  
Dickinson on schizophrenia

**Thu. 6-2-16 6-8 p. Blakely,**  
**Cinda Johnson, author *Perfect***  
***Chaos, A Daughter's Struggle***  
***to Survive Bipolar and a***  
***Mother's Journey to Save Her***

**Tu. 6-7-16 5-7 p. Black Box,**  
**Issaquah High School Student**  
**art & social change exhibit.**  
**Michelle de la Vega, Ann**  
**Teplick, live music.**

Thur. 6-9-16, 6-7:30 p artEAST  
Lynn Schirmer and Brian Moss  
exhibit tour. Dissociative  
Identity Disorder

Fri. 6-10-16, 6-8 p artEAST  
ekphrastic poetry workshop  
with Ann Teplick

Wed. 6-15-16, 6:30-7:30p  
artEAST Michelle de la Vega  
presents outcomes of social  
change art, made possible by  
the Artist Trust Fellowship  
Grant.

[ISSAQUAH, WA] The nationally acclaimed exhibit, *The Incredible Intensity of Just Being Human*, arrives in Issaquah Friday, April 22, and celebrates with an opening reception on Friday, April 29, thanks to generous sponsorship and encouragement from Issaquah Schools Foundation and artEAST. Art will be on display in three Issaquah locations including artEAST Art Center, Issaquah Highlands Blakely Hall Community Center, and Swedish Medical Center Issaquah with the goal of beginning new conversations about mental illness stigma.

"We believe it is past time for our community to open our hearts to the crisis that is facing our youth, to talk openly about mental illness, and begin to understand it," says Issaquah Schools Foundation Director Robin Callahan. "When students experience mental illness—and it is happening at all ages in unprecedented numbers — many families wall themselves off, for fear of stigmatizing their child."

In fact, one in four people suffer from some form of mental illness. Up to 70-percent of adolescents who suffer with mental illness do not receive care. And, suicide, often related to mental illness, is the second leading cause of death among youth in Washington State.

"We believe the *Incredible Intensity of Just Being Human Project* gives our community an invaluable opportunity to learn from those who experience mental illness—both personally and from a parent's point of view," says artEAST Director, Carla Villar. "Our goal is to prompt a very important conversation, with the goal to provide a sense of community and hope to people who are affected by mental illness."

*The Incredible Intensity of Just Being Human* is a provocative art exhibit designed to explore the stigma of mental illness. The artwork itself is displayed slightly off kilter — a little too high, a little too low and not quite level — to convey the idea that people living with mental illness inhabit the world differently from those better able to observe socially constructed norms.

*The Incredible Intensity of Just Being Human* was conceptualized and curated by three award-winning artists living in the Pacific Northwest. In the exhibit, twenty-six Pacific Northwest artists mix media to express how mental illness affects their loved ones, or themselves. In addition to the visual displays, *The Incredible Intensity of Just Being Human*, includes an on-going series of talks and performances about mental illness and its effects.

"By talking about mental illness, we reduce the shame surrounding it, and create a space where the prejudices and the fears we all have can give way to the compassion and the humanity we all



have,” said Kate Vrijmoet, *The Incredible Intensity of Just Being Human* Curator and Contributing Artist. The stigma surrounding mental illness is powerful and pervasive. Shame and silence often hinders people from getting help and sharing their struggle with friends and family. Yet, people with mental health problems can get better and many recover completely.

**An opening reception will be held Friday April 29, 2016 in the Issaquah Senior Center followed by a reception at artEAST Art Center.** Speakers: Ellen Forney, author of *Marbles*; Issaquah’s Mayor Butler; Robin Callahan, Director of Issaquah School Foundation, and Kate Vrijmoet, exhibit curator. Ellen will be signing copies of her best-selling book at the reception following at artEAST Art Center, food and drinks. Live music by Issaquah School District Evergreen Orchestra String Quartet includes a selection from composers with known mental illness.

For additional information please visit: [www.arteast.org](http://www.arteast.org) or [www.theincredibleintensity.com](http://www.theincredibleintensity.com)

