

NOMINATION FOR MENSA CANADA DISTINGUISHED EDUCATOR AWARD

Nominees: DAVID HURST (artist) and MAUREEN HYMAN (artist's assistant)

For over six years. David Hurst and Maureen Hyman have donated their own time and personal expertise to providing free art programs to the public. with a special focus on serving people who have mental or emotional disorders, such as bipolar disease, Turrette syndrome, depression, acute shyness, and other conditions that can and do impair social functioning. These programs, sponsored by the Cambridge Galleries Idea Exchange, include:

- * A weekly free art social drop-in
- * A monthly free artist mentored workshop.
- * Creating and encouraging art projects for the Arts & Soul program, where participants actively meet the public in an event celebrating art (a situation which many participants would normally find stressful or impossible to handle).

For many years, these two dedicated people have provided their time and expertise free of charge, in addition to providing many of the necessary art supplies from their own funds. Beyond art instruction, they provide leadership and support to people with social and emotional disorders by encouraging personal creativity and social acceptance, and by demonstrating patience and compassion for all those who attend their an sessions. David encourages participation by removing rules (“rights and wrongs”) and allowing a free flow of creativity to emerge. He and Maureen are both extremely encouraging in this regard.

David and Maureen are unique. Their willingness to give of their time and resources is rare indeed. They both richly deserve recognition for their years of dedication to art, creativity, and selflessly helping others.

Statement from Nominator Terry Moran (Mensa Canada)

My wife, Carole Moran, has been attending the drop-in art group for the past several years. I have seen the extremely positive results of this involvement, both in the quality of her art but, more importantly, in her elevated mood and enthusiasm. She has benefited a great deal from David and Maureen's selfless dedication and sympathetic approach to people with both minor and more serious social or emotional problems.

Statement from Nominator Carole Moran (American Mensa)

David and Maureen have established an artistic haven which is open to anyone. They have dramatically impacted my life by helping me to expand my areas of artistic interest and providing me with enlightened guidance in completing artwork of various kinds. In particular, they have helped me to reduce my stress and anxiety levels, provided me with a viable outlet for my emotions and elevated my mood by the informality and pleasantness of their art sessions. “Go with what is,” says David about the artwork, freeing me from rules and structures that may inhibit me and reduce the effectiveness of my artwork.