

## **Media Advisory – June 18, 2008**

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### **Local artists give face to homelessness**

An art exhibit, on display at the Snohomish County campus beginning June 25, draws awareness of the women who reside at Mary's Place, a Seattle day center for homeless and formerly homeless women.

The 16 portraits by 16 different artists highlight the stories of every-day, middle-aged women of various ethnicities, many of whom currently have no permanent residence.

"I wanted the public to see that homeless women don't look any different from other women," said Tina Marohn, an artist and Mary's Place volunteer who coordinated the project.

"That's a frightening aspect of homelessness – you look around and realize anyone could become homeless," Marohn continued. "Maybe that's why it's so difficult to get help solving the problem. It's too close to the bone for most people to acknowledge."

During Snohomish County's latest Point in Time homeless count, nearly 2,200 individuals were homeless that January night. Under the latest figures, 956 people had no shelter during the count, while 1,198 people were sheltered in emergency and transitional housing or were using hotel vouchers for the night.

"We have a responsibility to find solutions to homelessness, and drawing awareness to the issue is one part of that solution," said County Executive Aaron Reardon. "This new exhibit does exactly that, and in a bold, powerful way."

Marohn first asked 16 Mary's Place clients to give interviews about their lives. She then convinced 16 fellow artists to create portraits of the women.

The result is the "Women of Mary's Place" exhibition, on view June 25-July 25 in the lobby of the Bob Drewel Building on the Snohomish County Campus, 3000 Rockefeller Ave. Admission is free.

A newly published book, available for \$20, also contains a color reproduction of each portrait and a brief biography based on the subject's interview. All funds raised by the book, go directly to Mary's Place.

For more information about the portrait exhibition, book sales or to arrange a slide presentation for a group or organization, visit the project Web site at

[www.womenofmarysplace.org](http://www.womenofmarysplace.org), or contact Wendy Becker, Economic and Cultural Development Officer, at 425-388-3186 or [wendy.becker@co.snohomish.wa.us](mailto:wendy.becker@co.snohomish.wa.us).

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