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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Art League of Ocean City announces community-wide
outdoor art installation
and invites everyone to participate in “Have a heART -
Give a hug”**

OCEAN CITY, MD — April 7, 2020 — In a symbol of unity on Delmarva, the Art League of Ocean City is initiating a community-wide art project and installation in which everyone can participate, whether or not they are artists. The Art League is calling the project “Have a heART – Give a hug.”

“In this time of social distancing, we are sending out virtual hugs in the form of a piece of art that is a hugging heart,” Rina Thaler, Art League executive director, said. “We are hoping people will display it in their windows, and businesses will put it on their signs and marquees to give people hope and strength to get through this.

“This hugging heart can be Delmarva’s own personal symbol – something like the heart emoji - to show that we’re all in this together. And we’re happy to point out that ‘art’ is the biggest part of ‘heart’.”

The hugging heart is available as both a color image to print directly on home printers, and also as a comic book-style page that can be printed for children and family art projects. The Art League encourages artists to print and paint their own versions using the template. Digital files containing a hugging heart are available for free download on the Art League’s Facebook page, and also on the Art League’s website at <https://artleagueofoceancity.org/hugging-heart/>.

“If everyone will hang a hugging heart in their windows or on their doors or on their signs, we can jointly send hugs to everyone who needs one,” Thaler continued. “Everyone will also be part of a project that’s bigger than themselves. Let’s see how many heart hugs we can put into the world to create positive energy at this time.”

People are encouraged to take photos of their hugging heart art displayed in the windows of their homes and businesses and send them for sharing to the Art League at megan@artleagueofoceancity.org. Or the pictures can be shared in the comment section of Art League’s Facebook post on this project with the hashtag #hugheart.

The Art League of Ocean City is a non-profit organization dedicated to bringing the visual arts to the community through education, exhibits, scholarship, programs and community art projects. Financial support comes primarily through membership dues from individuals and corporate sponsors. Funding for exhibits is also provided by the Community Foundation of the Eastern Shore, the Worcester County Arts Council, Maryland State Arts Council, and the National Endowment for the Arts, organizations dedicated to cultivating a vibrant cultural community where the arts thrive.

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EDITORS: 3 jpeg images attached for "Have a heART - Give a hug" to be distributed as possible.

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