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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Education and Community Celebrated at Free First Friday Opening Reception on Sept 4

OCEAN CITY, MD — Aug. 25, 2026 — The Art League of Ocean City invites the public to a free First Friday opening reception on Friday, Sept. 4, from 5–7 p.m. at the Ocean City Center for the Arts, 94th Street bayside. Admission is free, and everyone is welcome.

This September's celebration features the Art League's annual Block Party, with a dedicated focus on back-to-school momentum, education, and creative learning. Families can enjoy a hands-on back-to-school craft for kids, live entertainment, and complimentary hors d'oeuvres provided by Little Salisbury neighbors Lombardi's Pizza and Blue Fish Restaurant.

Embodying the Education Department's mantra—*Learn. Connect. Grow.*—children and families can explore upcoming fall classes and register on site. To accommodate flexible schedules, classes are offered during the day for homeschool students, as well as during evenings and weekends. Dr. Mary Anne Cooper, Director of Education for the Art League, will be on hand throughout the evening to assist families in finding the ideal class for every age and skill level.

Adults can also get inspired to step out of their comfort zones and try something new. Participating teaching artists will perform live demonstrations of their upcoming adult classes on site, giving prospective students a sneak peek into each instructor's process, techniques, and final results:

- **Greg Cwalina** – Resin Jewelry
- **Joan Guerriero** – Acrylic Painting
- **Cindy Strouse** – Pour Painting
- **Tom Kennedy** – Photography
- **Katie Cassidy** – Pastels
- **Barbara Buford** – Alcohol Ink
- **Gerilyn Gaskill** – Watercolor

Educational mentorship and community learning continue throughout the gallery exhibits:

- **Studio E:** Features artist and educator Katie Cassidy, whose luminous pastels are displayed alongside artwork created by her students, celebrating the creative growth fostered through art education.
- **Schwab Spotlight:** Highlights paintings by local teacher and artist Jim Rehak, whose lifelong passion for art includes decades of teaching in Ocean City, alongside his work in comic illustration, portraiture, and plein air painting.
- **Thaler Gallery:** Presents *Visual Symphony*, a group exhibition exploring the shared language of art and music by translating rhythm, melody, and harmony into expressive visual compositions.
- **Sisson Galleria:** Showcases paintings created during the Artists Paint OC Festival, featuring award-winning plein air works available for purchase.
- **Felber Artisan Showcase:** Features handcrafted, colorful beaded jewelry by Carol Claasen.

In the Art League's satellite galleries, Kathy Denk exhibits at the Coffee Beanery (94th Street and Coastal Highway), and Mason D'Aleo presents artwork in the lobby of the Princess Royale (9100 Coastal Highway).

Exhibits at the Arts Center and satellite galleries run through Sept. 27. More information is available at OCart.org or by calling 410-524-9433.

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. Funding for this event is in part provided by the Maryland State Arts Council and the National Endowment of the Arts, organizations dedicated to cultivating a vibrant cultural community where the arts thrive.

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