

**Cristina Enters “The ‘Sweet’ Hearts”
in the
“Art from the Heart” Silent Auction**

Cristina Powell’s expressions of color and joy are appreciated by a growing number of people in the Kalamazoo area as her work becomes increasingly known. The first public showing of Cristina’s art was at the Portage Public Library, November 2004 through January 2005. This show saw an overwhelming response, indicating that people wanted to see more of her work and ultimately to purchase it. The next exposure of Cristina’s work was through “Art from the Heart,” an Expressive Arts and Comfort Care Program of Borgess Visiting Nurse & Hospice. The Art from the Heart program, managed by Gay Walker, offers opportunities for hospice patients and their families to use a variety of expressive art forms as a means of creative self expression, communication, relaxation, stimulation, pain relief, and connection.

In May of 2005, Art from the Heart sponsored a silent auction for Diane’s Way to help honor the memory of Diane Mahanty, who died from breast cancer in 2000. Diane’s Way was founded by her surviving husband “to help ease the end-of-life experience for others through exploration of the expressive arts.”

When Cristina heard about Art from the Heart, she enthusiastically painted “The ‘Sweet’ Hearts” (blue) with the objective of entering it in the Art from the Heart Silent Auction. This painting

was not only accepted for the auction, but with the comment that the painting and its accompanying story were perfect for the cause. Cristina was very excited, especially given that she was the youngest artist in the show. Her painting received praise and was purchased...Cristina was thrilled when she learned that Karen Horneffer-Ginter, Ph.D., WMU Director, Holistic Health Care Program was the person who bought her work. Karen shared her thoughts about the painting:

I love this painting. When I first saw it at ‘Art from the Heart’ it grabbed my attention—literally. It was as though it leaped forward from the wall with a joy and radiance and aliveness that were irresistible. After purchasing it and placing it in my office, I found out that Cristina was the artist who created it. This has made it even more special. I’ve always appreciated how art can open our hearts and connect us to the richness of our spirits. This particular piece does exactly that for me.

Along with “The ‘Sweet’ Hearts” water color, Cristina put words to the painting making the hearts come alive. The story that goes with the painting is as vibrant and joyful as the art itself. That story is included here today.