

# The Sophie Fund

Newsletter 1/2024



*“Supporting mental health initiatives aiding young people in the greater Ithaca, New York community”*

## Community Town Hall On Zero Suicide Model



*Healthcare leaders discuss suicide prevention*

Community members on September 28 attended “How Healthcare Helps Prevent Suicides,” a town hall on implementation of the Zero Suicide Model in Tompkins County.

Panel discussions and Q&A took place with 11 healthcare leaders from Cayuga Health System, Cayuga Medical Associates, Guthrie Cortland, Tompkins County Whole Health, Suicide Prevention & Crisis Service, Alcohol & Drug Council, Cayuga Addiction Recovery Services, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Ithaca City School District, Cornell Health, and Smile through the Storms.

Zero Suicide is a commitment to suicide prevention in health and behavioral health systems using best practices for systematically identifying and providing care to those at risk for suicide.

“At Tompkins County Whole Health, we believe that every suicide is preventable,” said Frank Kruppa, Tompkins County Public Health Director and Mental Health Commissioner. “We need to say that out loud and more often, and figure out how to make that a reality.”



*Frank Kruppa*

The event at the Greater Ithaca Activities Center was sponsored by the Tompkins County Suicide Prevention Coalition and supported by a grant from The Sophie Fund.

**Donate to The Sophie Fund**

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## Ithaca's Passionate Pastry Chef

Megan Martinez was awarded 1st Place for her “Berry Passionate Cupcakes” in the 8th Annual Ithaca Cupcake Baking Contest organized by The Sophie Fund on October 14.



*Megan Martinez and her passion fruit cupcakes*

To receive the top honor for the second year in a row, Martinez presented vanilla cupcakes filled with passion fruit curd and decorated with white chocolate Swiss meringue buttercream frosting, homemade raspberry jam, and white chocolate leaves.

“Passion fruit is my favorite flavor,” said Martinez, explaining her entry. “I find every excuse to put this flavor into my baking because I think it is a beautiful flavor like no other, and shines in everything.”

The judges awarded Alecia Sundsmo 2nd Place for her “Inclusivity = Prevention Cupcakes”: orange cakes with rainbow layers and chocolate icing made in the pattern of the inclusivity rainbow. Lucy Jiang captured the 3rd Place award with her “Happy Capybara Cupcakes”: chocolate orange flavored cakes depicting the cuddly rodents swimming in hot springs with bobbing oranges.

Josie Bower received the Youth Award for her “14-Carrot Cupcakes”: carrot cakes topped with pineapple cream cheese frosting and delicate sugar swirls.

Twenty-three bakers entered the contest, with themes including clowns, afternoon tea, fruit orchards, Little Shop of Horrors, Halloween, bumble bees, forest creatures, family traditions, and Greek Gods.

Culinary artists Yuko Jingu, Ashley Case, Racquel Riccardi, Melissa Kenny, and Via Carpenter served as judges. Musicians Rachel Beverly, SingTrece & Kenneth McLaurin, and Joe Gibson & Dan Collins performed live on stage.

Student volunteers from Cornell University supported the contest: Cornell Circle K, Alpha Phi Omega, Phi Sigma Pi, and PATCH (Pre-Professional Association Toward Careers in Health). Nine Tompkins County mental health organizations also participated.



**Mental Health Association  
in Tompkins County**

*providing advocacy, education, & support since 1953*

# How I See Myself



Twenty-nine young artists explored inner feelings of identity in “How I See Myself,” an art exhibition organized by the Mental Health Association in Tompkins County. The exhibition, supported by The Sophie Fund, was part of the United in Kindness series of community events for Bullying Prevention Month in 2023.

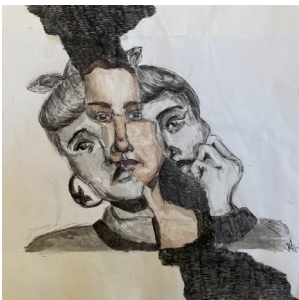
“Some pieces expressed the difficult feelings that can result from bullying, others shared messages of hope and recognition that we are more than how other people see us,” said Melanie Little, director of Peer Programming at the Mental Health Association.

She added that many of the 90 guests who attended a First Friday Gallery Night Ithaca reception on November 3 “remarked on the talent, depth and vulnerability demonstrated in the powerful works of these local young artists.”

The exhibition was curated by Ithaca artist Michael Sampson, a member of the Artist Alley studios and curator at The Gallery at South Hill.

“I see with the artists’ self-portraits an extremely individual body of work in the show,” Sampson said. “That individuality empowers the artists to continue with their artwork and use it as a tool to combat any struggles.”

“The theme gave the artists almost an assignment to face difficult things by using visual language to express what would otherwise be kept inside. Some artists in their statements gave advice, which was sweet and showed their compassion for others.”



**Freyja H.**

*The Color Within*



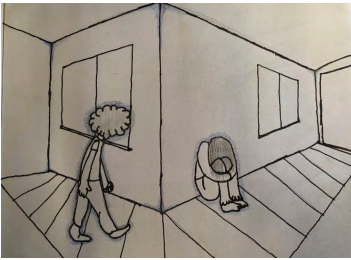
**Autumn S.**

*Through My Looking Glass*

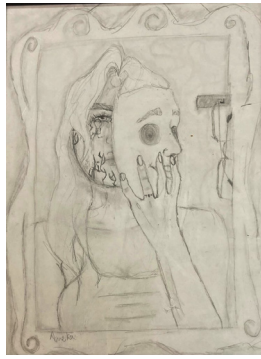


**Sabena S.**

*Untitled*



**Aaliyah M.**  
*Thoughts*



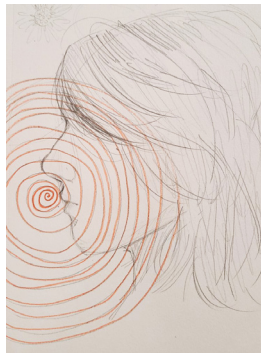
**Amelia D.**  
*The Mask*



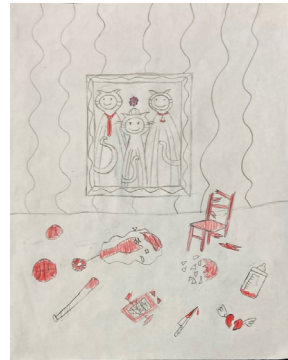
**Anisa P.**  
*Still Standing*



**Charlotte T.**  
*The Side You Never See*



**Chloe V.**  
*Lost in the Line*



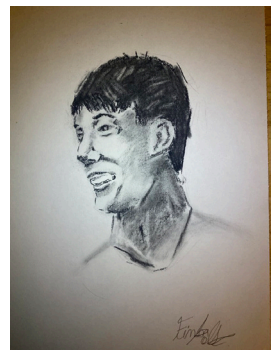
**Dakota W.**  
*Family Portrait*



**Elise. S.**  
*Internal Conflicts*



**Ella H.**  
*Mirror of Insecurities*



**Finn K.**  
*Small*





**Hannah A.**  
*Càlida*



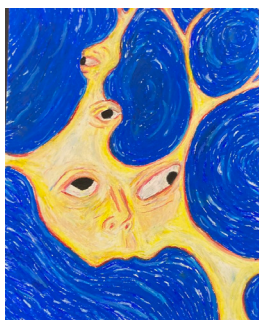
**Jennifer C.**  
*Past Paranoid*



**Katie H.**  
*Fingers in the Face*



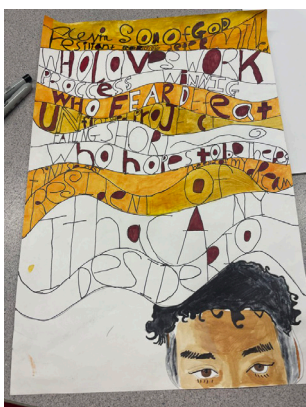
**Juliet C.**  
*Juju*



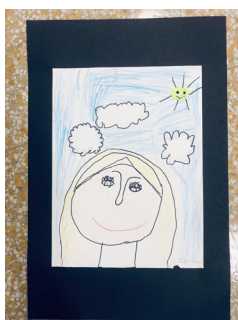
**Katie H. and Hannah A.**  
*Aramilla*



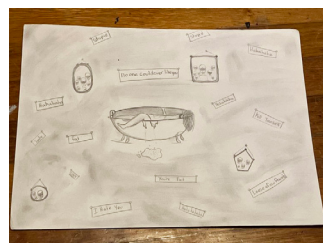
**Louisa H.**  
*Pink Lion*



**Kevin D.**  
*About Me Poem*



**Julia S.**  
*Sunny Day*



**Laura W.**  
*What If*



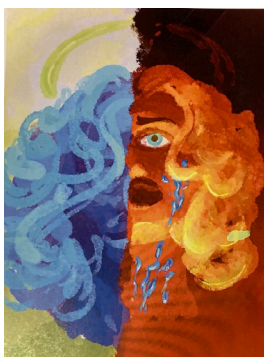
**Luke S.**  
*Half the Story*



**Lyla C.**  
*Blank Space*



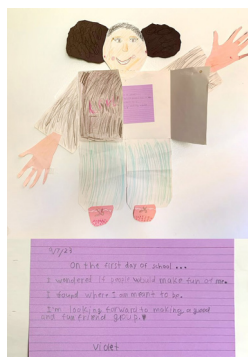
**Sadie V.**  
*Modicum of True Self*



**Sky F.**  
*Mask*



**Skylar W.**  
*Zoning Out*



**Violet W.**  
*Meant to Be*



**Vivian B.**  
*The Fire Inside*



**Zairan C.**  
*Untitled*



**Zoe K.**  
*Spaced Out*



# Cupcake Joy 2023

If it's mid-October in the Commons, it's time for the Ithaca Cupcake Baking Contest organized by The Sophie Fund each year to promote mental health awareness. The event brings together amateur bakers of all ages, professional judges, local musicians, student volunteers, and mental health organizations.



## The Sophie Fund in the news...



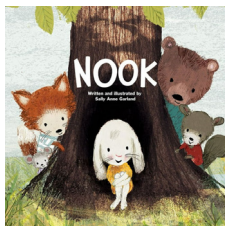
*The Sophie Fund sponsored two presentations on implementing the Zero Suicide Model in healthcare systems by Brian Ahmedani, director of the Center for Health Policy & Health Services Research at the Henry Ford Health System. The presentations were given to the Cayuga Health System and to the Tompkins County Zero Suicide Steering Committee, a group of the area's healthcare and behavioral health leaders.*

*The Sophie Fund received the 2023 Friend of the Mental Health Association Award from the Mental Health Association in New York State. The honor was presented at the organization's annual awards dinner in Albany on October 23. Josephine Gibson, executive director of the Mental Health Association in Tompkins County, nominated The Sophie Fund for its "unwavering commitment to our community's mental health and supporting the mission of the Mental Health Association." She said The Sophie Fund "has made a major impact on our reach and ability to provide quality mental health education and support services to community members."*



*Co-Founder Scott MacLeod was a keynote speaker at the 11th Annual Greater Ithaca Out of the Darkness Walk on September 9 organized by the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention's Greater Central New York Chapter. The walk, which took place in Meyers Park and drew 200 people who raised over \$30,000, is among 400 held across the country every year designed to raise awareness and collect funds for research, training, and programming.*

*The New York State Office of Mental Health in 2023 appointed The Sophie Fund to serve on the New York State Suicide Prevention Council. The council was established in 2016 to assist OMH "to raise awareness, reduce suicide attempts and deaths, and promote wellness among New Yorkers." (Pictured: Scott MacLeod and Jay Carruthers, director of the Suicide Prevention Center of New York)*



*The Sophie Fund provided a grant to support the Family Reading Partnership's Lansing Story Walk in October during United in Kindness month. The funds enabled the purchase of giveaway copies of Nook, a children's book by Sally Anne Garland about kindness and inclusion. Nook tells the story of a shy girl who feels lost and afraid until she discovers she has friends looking out for her in ways she never imagined.*