



## **EPIC Long Island Teams with Splashes Of Hope and the Elmezzi Foundation to Brighten the South Shore Child Guidance Center**

*Colorful, Hand-Painted Murals Enrich the Environment and Promote Healing  
for Children with Behavioral Health Challenges*

---

**Freeport, NY, March 31, 2015** — EPIC Long Island, Inc., a nonprofit organization that provides a wide range of clinical, community, rehabilitation, and residential services to those with epilepsy, developmental disabilities and mental health challenges, proudly participated in a “big splash” ceremony on Thursday, March 19 to celebrate the dedication of the colorful murals that now adorn the entrance and waiting room of the South Shore Child Guidance Center in Freeport, Long Island.

The mural project was a collaboration of resources between three Long Island-based charitable organizations, with generous support from the Thomas and Jeanne Elmezzi Private Foundation. It began with a phone call to EPIC LI’s President and CEO Thomas Hopkins from Alfred LaRosa, board member of the Elmezzi Foundation, which has provided funding for EPIC Long Island programs. Recently, the Elmezzi Foundation had approved a new grant for the Community Education and Outreach Program and was interested in pursuing a collaboration with another nonprofit.

Mr. LaRosa mentioned that the Foundation had been working with Splashes of Hope, a nonprofit that creates colorful, hand-painted murals to brighten hospitals, clinics, and other healthcare facilities. As it happened, EPIC had recently formed a strategic alliance with South Shore Child Guidance Center, a Freeport-based comprehensive outpatient behavioral health service for children who live in Nassau County.

“It’s pretty amazing how this all came about from a simple phone call,” says Hopkins. “EPIC Long Island is fortunate enough to have such a great relationship with the Elmezzi Foundation that when Al mentioned Splashes of Hope and the wonderful work they do to brighten up facilities for children, I immediately thought of our new strategic partner, South Shore Guidance Center. At Al’s suggestion, I called Heather

Buggee at Splashes of Hope and within weeks they created these colorful, uplifting murals that truly brighten up the Center's environment."

Heather Buggee, Founder and Executive Director of Splashes of Hope, and painter Jimmy Knapp created a vivid mural for the agency's lobby, depicting local Freeport landmarks in the four seasons—spring, winter, summer and fall. The creative process included a photo shoot in Village of Freeport to gather local references, such as the Nautical Mile and the Recreation Center, and to capture wholesome activities that children would enjoy in each of the four seasons. "The seasonal changes in nature represent the positive change in a young person's life," says Buggee. The murals took about two months to complete.

The staff at South Shore were so overwhelmed by the impact of the Four Seasons mural on the children at the clinic, they raised additional funds for Splashes of Hope to create more artwork. Ms. Buggee's daughter Sarah Baecher, also an artist, painted a hot air balloon mural at the top of the facility's stairs and a tropical rain forest mural in the waiting room, both featuring Splashes of Hope's mascot, Vincent van Monkey.

"Splashes of Hope is honored to have had the opportunity to work with the dedicated staff at South Shore to create a welcoming mural that reflects the high quality of care that the team provides," says Buggee. "We are grateful to the project sponsor, the Thomas and Jeanne Elmezzi Foundation, for their support of our mission through the years and for bringing our organizations together on this EPIC project."

#### **About EPIC Long Island, Inc.**

EPIC began in 1953 with a small group of parents whose mission was to help children with epilepsy lead productive lives. While epilepsy remains at its core, EPIC also offers a spectrum of social and health services for individuals with developmental disabilities and mental health challenges. EPIC provides 17 residences, two clinics, and dozens of programs that serve over 10,000 individuals annually across Long Island. EPIC's mission is to enrich the lives of those they serve through quality care, a broad range of services and an unwavering commitment to excellence. To learn more, visit [www.epicli.org](http://www.epicli.org).

#### **About South Shore Child Guidance Center**

The South Shore Child Guidance Center is a nonprofit agency that provides comprehensive outpatient behavioral health services to Nassau County children from 5 to 18 years of age and their families. The agency believes that navigating life's challenges may be more difficult for some children, with family circumstances often playing a major role in how a child copes with everyday situations. Programs include an outpatient clinic, Children's Addition Resource & Education (C.A.R.E.) Center, home-based

crisis intervention, aftercare program, children's mobile crisis team, and school support. To learn more, visit [www.southshorechildguidance.org](http://www.southshorechildguidance.org).

### **About Splashes of Hope**

Founded in 1996, Splashes of Hope is a nonprofit organization that creates custom-designed murals and other artistic projects to transform spaces, enrich environments, facilitate healing, and bring smiles to the faces of patients, staff and visitors of healthcare facilities worldwide. Splashes of Hope has created murals in 25 states nationwide and internationally in Egypt, France, Italy, Nicaragua, and the Ukraine. To learn more, visit <http://splashesofhope.org>.

### **About the Thomas and Jeanne Elmezzi Foundation**

The Elmezzi Foundation is guided by the philosophy of its founders, Thomas and Jeanne Elmezzi, that anyone, given the right tools and support, can live up to their potential, are entitled to pursue their dreams, and can become a productive and contributory member of society. Established in 1996, the Foundation strives to have a direct and measurable impact on the quality of individual lives, either through sponsorship or innovative program development. To learn more, visit <http://elmezzi.org>.

# # #