



COURTESY OF GRACE PLACE

a long history and relationship with The Naples Players (TNP); as we continue to learn that so many veterans struggle with mental illness, UAC partnered with TNP, Home Base, and Women Veteran Warriors. We hosted a night of comedy and coffee to help female veterans verbalize their emotions and let go of what they are holding on to.” Lord is hopeful such partnerships and programs will continue. (naplesplayers.org)

Another program UAC supports is art therapy at the Baker Senior Center Naples. A licensed art therapist offers small group sessions to help participants work on cognitive health and communication skills. (bakerseniorcenter.org)

Earlier this year, UAC partnered with STARability Foundation to offer a creative writing workshop for its participants. The weekly class, taught by Naples-based poet and dramatic writer Kathryn Ekblad, offers exploration of varying forms of self-expression through writing. Madison Nehls, chief program officer at STARability Foundation, says, “The sessions have been invaluable and productive ... we are excited to see this partnership blossom.” (STARability.org)

Even organizations that are not arts-based are finding ways to incorporate the



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arts into their programming. Take for example Grace Place for Children and Families, a nonprofit family literacy center. The center hosted an inaugural young authors festival earlier this spring, providing students in grades three to five a platform to explore their imaginations, hone their writing skills, and share their unique voices. More than 220 students participated, and Grace Place is planning to host the festival again in 2025. (graceplacenaples.org)

As Collier County continues to mature as a community and as basic needs are consistently met, the arts will surely flourish. As long as humans have the ability to create, art, in its various forms, will add dimension and depth to life—weaving humans from all walks of life and ethnicities together with ever-stronger bonds. Communities won’t just survive; they will thrive.



HEIDI SCHUMANN

AN EMOTIONAL CONNECTION

Artist **Amy Moglia Heuerman** (pictured above), founder of Amy Art galleries in Bay Harbor, Michigan, and Naples, is recognized for the versatility of expression in her paintings. She shared a selection of her creations she refers to as “the girls” to illustrate how art provides humans with a creative way to express themselves and connect with others.

Her paintings of whimsical female figures in playful poses emerged out of COVID. “I was seeking the protection and safety of my inner 5-year-old—one who felt innocent, joyful, and taken care of. I wanted to capture those feelings in a painting,” she explains.

Even though Moglia Heuerman purposely leaves the girls faceless—to emphasize the emotional expression of their bodies—the abstracts resonated with viewers and became especially popular.

There is a palpable positive energy in every Moglia Heuerman painting. Working through color, shape, and texture, she says, “I tap into emotional energy in my paintings; it inspires an emotional response in viewers because the heart sees more than the eyes.” (amyart.net)

