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Winthrop Galleries Exhibits Focus on Homelessness

Winthrop University

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04/08/2009

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Winthrop Galleries Exhibits Focus on Homelessness

Quick Facts

- Winthrop student-artists and faculty have worked with area agencies to raise awareness about this silent population.
- Several exhibitions at the Winthrop Galleries and around Rock Hill focus on the homeless.



Losing the Human Race, mixed media



Dustin Shores, mixed media

ROCK HILL, S.C. – Opening this month at **Winthrop University Galleries** and in the Rock Hill community are several art exhibitions and events that put a human face on homelessness.

The idea for this project emerged from a conversation between a Winthrop faculty member and United Way's Debbie Hayworth. "With the introduction and implementation of Pathways to Housing, York County's comprehensive response and plan to homelessness, we accepted the challenge to put a human face on homelessness," said Tom Stanley, chair of the Department of Fine Arts.

Throughout the past year, Winthrop student-artists and faculty have worked with area agencies such as the United Way, Pilgrims Inn, A Place for Hope and the Salvation Army to raise awareness about this silent population through art and design. The program has the support of the **Artists and Civic Engagement (ACE) Projects**, which is an effort to encourage community art in downtown Rock Hill,

Clinton Junior College and Winthrop.

Photography students, **Dustin Shores** and **Jake Francek**, have been active participants in this project. Francek believes the **Voices of Homelessness project** has given him confidence to deviate from the standard practice of creating art for himself and use his photography to promote a cause. He states, "It has made me realize the potential Winthrop students have to make a difference. We don't have to travel to big cities to make an impact with our art; we can create outstanding bodies of work at home, just by getting involved."

Working with children from the Blackmon Road community at a Place for Hope, Dustin Shores feels this project has been "the greatest and most rewarding he has had the privilege to work on". He hopes to continue working with A Place for Hope after graduation this spring. Shore feels, "art has the ability to change situations and attitudes, and it is my responsibility as an artist to do so."

At **Winthrop University Galleries** several exhibitions are opening on Friday April 17, from 6:30 – 8 p.m. focusing on the theme of homelessness. The **21st Annual Undergraduate Juried Exhibition** is titled **Voices of Homelessness** and will showcase the undergraduate worked based on this theme. Jurors for the exhibition are **Lora Holliday**, project director for the United Way of York County, and **Allie Farlowe**, assistant curator from the Mint Museum of Craft + Design in Charlotte, N.C. The exhibition continues through June 18 in the Rutledge Gallery.

Another homeless-themed exhibition, **Losing the Human Race: The Humanity of Homelessness** by the **God City Artists** of Charlotte, N.C., will open April 17 in the Elizabeth Dunlap Patrick Gallery. This artist's collective has produced an exhibition that explores a view into the two worlds that exist in our society: one of the homeless and the other who choose to forget the homeless. God City will present a lecture on April 16 at 8 p.m. in Rutledge Auditorium.

Gifts from Gene: Artwork by Gene Merritt runs March 30 to April 30 in Rutledge Windows with a View. A former resident of Pilgrims' Inn, Gene Merritt is a local self-taught artist who produces drawings that he calls "Paperwork." His drawings illustrate his interest in people including those he has met locally and celebrities he has seen in magazines and on television.

The exhibitions at Winthrop are only one portion of the Voices of Homelessness project. In addition to the exhibitions at Winthrop there will be several student exhibitions throughout downtown Rock Hill. They include:

- Students of Phil Moody's documentary photography class will exhibit **Home is Where the Heart is: Stories of Struggle and Survival** beginning on April 16. Student work in the Art Center's Lewandowski Gallery during the month of April includes that of Stephanie Glick (working at Pilgrim's Inn, making a photo-emulsion quilt); Dustin Shores (working at A Place for Hope on Blackmon Road, making photographs with children at the community center); Jake Francek (working at The Salvation Army, making pictures of the facility, clients and their belongings); and Cameron Bunce (working at Interfaith Hospitality, making pictures of clients and their families). For more information, contact Phil Moody at moodyp@winthrop.edu or 803/323-2667.
- An Urban Ministries project entitled **Inside/Outside: Homelessness Perspectives, 2009**, created by art education students under the guidance of Associate Professor Seymour Simmons will be featured at the Space at 125, Caldwell St., on May 21 from 5 to 8 p.m. For more information, contact Simmons at simmons@winthrop.edu or 803-323-2670.
- In partnership with the United Way of York County, S.C., Winthrop University Galleries and ACE Projects, the **Voices of Homelessness** and **Losing the Human Race** exhibitions will be presented at the by-invitation **Fifth Annual Palmetto Crescent Soiree** on April 24. The exhibition will provide the United Way donors an opportunity to experience a glimpse into the world of artists and their perception of homelessness.

The exhibitions, presentations and the opening reception at **Winthrop University Galleries** are open and free to the public. **Winthrop University Galleries** are located in Rutledge Building and McLaurin Hall on the campus of Winthrop University in Rock Hill, S.C. Gallery hours are Monday – Friday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and will be closed for summer holidays June 19 to August 14. For more information, call Karen Derksen at 803/323-2493 or visit <http://www.winthrop.edu/galleries>.

[\[Back to Previous Page\]](#)

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Arts	Directory	Family Programs	Majors & More	Residence Life	Wingspan