

The semi-annual newsletter of Venice Family Clinic Spring 2008

# Encounters

Sonia's Story:  
A Little Girl  
Heals through  
Art Therapy



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For two days, Venice  
becomes an  
**Art Museum**

See page 8 for more information

## Sonia's Story:

# A Little Girl Heals through Art Therapy

Two years can seem like an eternity to a child. Yet that's how long eight-year-old Sonia had been struggling with her parents' break-up without professional counseling, and it was taking a toll on her. Since her father left, she had become withdrawn at home. And she wasn't faring any better at school, where her grades had fallen, other kids were picking on her, and she was missing class frequently due to illness.

Eventually, her teacher referred her to Venice Family Clinic. Upon examination, however, the Clinic's medical staff could find nothing physically wrong with Sonia to explain her complaints of frequent headaches and stomach aches, so they set up an appointment for her to talk with a member of the mental health staff.

At Sonia's first counseling session, the Clinic's art therapist, Beth Rosenblatt, MFTI/AT, observed an auspicious sign.

"She wouldn't talk about her own feelings," Beth says. "When I asked her to tell me about her father, instead she told me about how her cat, Luna, feels about him. She described how sad Luna is because he's no longer at home, how cold Luna is at night because he isn't there to keep her warm."

It turns out, despite Sonia's defenses, her case was ideal for art therapy because she immediately spoke metaphorically. It is not uncommon for patients to have trouble expressing their feelings verbally, so art therapy combines traditional talk therapy with creative arts, such as collage, drawing, painting, and sculpture. By giving patients a nonverbal form of expression, art therapy helps patients sublimate their feelings.

Beth first asked Sonia if she wanted to make a clay model of Luna. She then suggested Sonia and her mother make Luna a bed.

"A bed is a very comforting image,"

Beth explains. "It implies she will be cared for."



Eventually, at the suggestion of Venice Family Clinic's staff art therapist, Beth Rosenblatt, Sonia created a bed for Luna; this then became part of "palace" for her and her family. "A bed is a very comforting image," Beth says. "It implies she will be cared for."



Eight-year-old Sonia was well suited for art therapy. At first, she wasn't able to express her own feelings about her relationship with her father, so instead she talked about how her cat, Luna, felt.

Despite Sonia's defenses, her case was ideal for art therapy because she immediately spoke metaphorically.

Sonia had not been very interested in art before she started therapy, but she began spending long stretches of time on modeling and drawing outside of her sessions.

Each milestone in Sonia's therapy coincided with achievements outside of therapy, and by just the fifth session, her symptoms had dissipated.

"I wait for him, but he doesn't come," Sonia said, dropping her gaze to the clay in front of her then changing the subject. "And then Luna comes and asks me to play with her."

For all the abstraction involved in art, Beth says what patients frequently get from art therapy is the capacity to understand and express complicated emotions.

"Once they understand what they are going through and feel understood they can better cope with events and relationships that are outside of their control," she says.

Sonia had not been very interested in art before she started therapy, but she began spending long stretches of time on modeling and drawing outside of her sessions. As Beth describes it, Sonia learned how to "self soothe." On the occasions when her father would show up at the apartment, she would take refuge from her parents' arguments by going to her bedroom to work with clay and draw in her notebook.



Sonia puts the finishing touches on Luna's palace during her fifth art therapy session. By this point, Sonia's symptoms had dissipated and she was thriving at school.



Sonia's mother had been seeking mental health treatment for Sonia for nearly two years – ever since the girl's father left the home. Beth held a separate session with Sonia's mother to discuss how to protect Sonia when the father visits and arguments erupt.

Sonia also found comfort in simply knowing somebody else understood her. At one session, her mother described how disruptive the father's visits can be. Beth asked Sonia how she felt hearing her mother talk about her father and their life at home.

"It feels good," Sonia said. "I want you to know what's going on in my home."

Not surprisingly, each milestone in Sonia's therapy coincided with achievements outside of therapy, and by just the fifth session, her symptoms had dissipated. Her headaches and stomach aches were gone. Her class participation and attendance had improved. She was sticking up for herself among her peers. She was honored as queen of her class for her friendliness.

"Art therapy can't take credit for everything," Beth says. "Sonia's own resilience, the love and support she got from her mother, and the attention she received at school all clearly played huge roles. I see art therapy as being like a catalyst or an enzyme – something that enables those other reactions to take place."

At her sixth and final appointment, Sonia handed Beth a pink thank-you card. The message inside was short, in Sonia's typically soft-spoken tone.

"Thank you, Beth, for helping me...I feel better now than before...with your help, I will be better."

*Venice Family Clinic's art therapy program is funded by a generous grant from the Frederick R. Weisman Philanthropic Foundation.*



Art therapy combines traditional talk therapy with creative arts. Some patients choose to draw or paint, while others prefer collage or sculpture.



While the finished product can be impressive, art therapy emphasizes the creative process as a means of facilitating discussion and analysis. Here, a family used a puppet theater to discuss reunification.



Sometimes, just colors and shapes are enough to facilitate the discussion.

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**Art Museum**

See page 8 for more information

# The Ella Fitzgerald Charitable Foundation Makes Its Largest Gift Ever to Venice Family Clinic: \$100,000 for Medical and Dental Care

The Ella Fitzgerald Charitable Foundation recently pledged \$100,000 to Venice Family Clinic in support of medical and dental care for at-risk and disadvantaged children and their families. It is the Foundation's largest gift ever to the Clinic.

The Foundation had already contributed more than \$260,000 to Venice Family Clinic since 1995, but a recent visit by its Executive Director, Fran E. Morris-Rosman, reaffirmed its commitment.

"I took a tour of the Simms/Mann Health and Wellness Center with my friend and relative Cynthia Garvey Truhan [a Clinic Board member], and we kept saying, 'Oh my gosh, look at that,'" she explains. "Patients were treated so respectfully and the whole facility was so cheerful and clean."

Besides resonating with Ms. Morris-Rosman on an emotional level, the Clinic and its mission also have

great practical appeal to her and her colleagues at the Foundation.

"Venice Family Clinic is a responsive partner and a great asset to the community, which is something every funder values," Ms. Morris-Rosman says. "The Board of Directors and I are very happy to have found an organization that meets not just one but two of our programmatic interests – health care for the uninsured and pediatric literacy."

The Ella Fitzgerald Charitable Foundation was created and funded in 1993 by Ella Fitzgerald, the First Lady of Song, in order to fulfill her desires to use the fruits of her success to help people of all races, cultures and beliefs.

*All royalties from the sale of Ella Fitzgerald's recordings benefit the Foundation. Learn more about its work at [www.ellafitzgeraldfoundation.org](http://www.ellafitzgeraldfoundation.org).*

## Looking for an Easy Way to Support Venice Family Clinic? Include It in Your Will

It's easy to arrange. It can be changed at any time. And it can help ensure the sustainability of Venice Family Clinic's essential services for tens of thousands of low-income and uninsured individuals.

Dozens of donors have taken the simple step of including Venice Family Clinic in their wills, and you can, too. A provision or amendment prepared by your attorney at the time you make or update your will or trust is all that is necessary.

Venice Family Clinic's Legacy Society recognizes those – both living and deceased – who have remembered the Clinic in their wills or other estate plans. For more information about how to include the Clinic in your will or establish a life-income gift, please contact John McKenna, Chief Development Officer, at 310.664.7932 or [jmckenna@mednet.ucla.edu](mailto:jmckenna@mednet.ucla.edu).

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*If you have already named Venice Family Clinic as a beneficiary in your estate plan, please contact us at 310.664.7932 so that we may appropriately recognize your generosity.*

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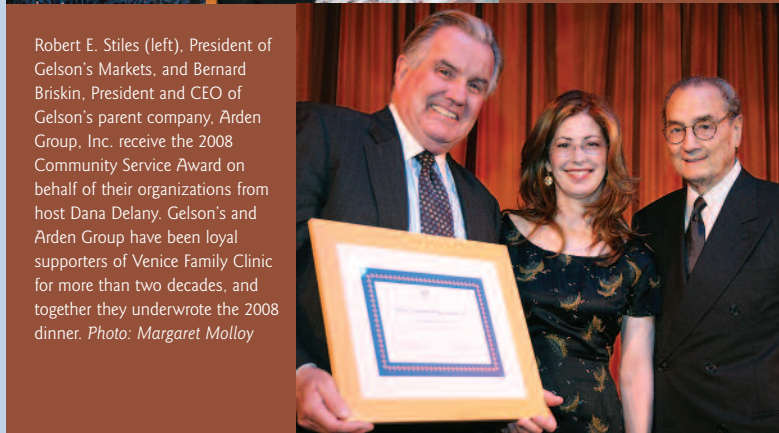
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*Every donor is important to us. If your name is not listed within the appropriate category or is listed improperly, please accept our apologies and notify us at 310.664.7932 so the correction can be made.*

# Silver Circle Raises More than \$1,000,000 for the Second Consecutive Year



Philanthropy Board member Billie Milam Weisman (right) with Clinic CEO Liz Forer at the 2008 Thank You Gala. Ms. Weisman received the 2008 Irma Colen Leadership Award for her support since 1991, which includes her recent funding of the Clinic's art therapy program through the Frederick R. Weisman Philanthropic Foundation. (See page 2 for story.)  
Photo: Margaret Molloy



Robert E. Stiles (left), President of Gelson's Markets, and Bernard Briskin, President and CEO of Gelson's parent company, Arden Group, Inc. receive the 2008 Community Service Award on behalf of their organizations from host Dana Delany, Gelson's and Arden Group have been loyal supporters of Venice Family Clinic for more than two decades, and together they underwrote the 2008 dinner. Photo: Margaret Molloy

Co-Chairs Dorothy Breining, Harley Liker, MD, and Julie Liker are pleased to announce that Silver Circle, Venice Family Clinic's premier annual support group, netted \$1,049,792 in its 2008 campaign, marking the second consecutive year that it has raised more than \$1,000,000 to help provide free, quality health care to people in need.

Created in 1983 by Irma Colen, Silver Circle has become Venice Family Clinic's biggest annual fund raiser. The Clinic hosts its annual Silver Circle Thank You Gala to celebrate the generosity of Silver Circle members, each of whom contributes \$2,000 or more annually, as well as to honor the efforts of outstanding individual supporters and community partners. The 2008 Thank You Gala was held Thursday, February 7, at the Beverly Hills Hotel.

Special thanks to Gelson's Markets and Arden Group, Inc., for underwriting the dinner. Thanks also to Board member Debbie Laub and Peter Lowy of Westfield Shopping Centers for their generous donations of raffle items.

### Silver Circle 2008 Committee

Dorothy Breining,  
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## 20th Anniversary Children's Holiday Movie Raises \$100,000+ for Pediatric Care

Many thanks to the hundreds of Venice Family Clinic donors and volunteers who supported the 2007 Children's Holiday Movie so that thousands of children would have access to free, quality health care in 2008.

The 20th anniversary event, held December 15 at the AMC Loews Marina 6 in Marina del Rey, treated 1,200 low-income and uninsured children from local schools and homeless shelters to a special free screening of *Alvin and the Chipmunks*, as well as holiday carols and wrapped presents from Santa Claus.

Hundreds of individuals and organizations made donations to "sponsor" children to attend. In-kind donors provided nearly everything used at the event, so almost all the funds raised – more than \$100,000 – went directly to the Clinic's pediatric programs, which serve approximately 5,500 children per year.

Special thanks to Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation for donating the screenings and AMC Loews Marina 6 for donating the theaters. Thanks also to Dark Horse Comics, Dole Food Company, Jakk's Pacific, Inc., Mattel, Inc., Target Stores – Culver City, and Warner Bros. Entertainment for their generous donations of treats and toys.



More than 1,200 low-income children from local schools and homeless shelters enjoyed a holiday party at the AMC Loews Marina 6 in Marina del Rey. Photo: Margaret Molloy



# Letter from the CEO

In place of my semi-annual letter – and in the spirit of this art-themed issue of *Encounters* – I would like to share the following cartoon. Special thanks to Ed Stein of the *Rocky Mountain News* for expressing this argument so skillfully and for allowing us to reproduce his work here.

Elizabeth Benson Forer, MSW/MPH  
Chief Executive Officer



## Staff Pediatrician Wendy Slusser, MD, Receives 2008 *Beverlee A. Myers Award for Excellence in Public Health*

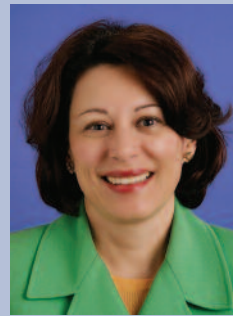


Wendelin Slusser, MD, Attending Physician at Venice Family Clinic's Simms/Mann Health and Wellness Center, recently received the prestigious *Beverlee A. Myers Award for Excellence in Public Health* from the California Department of Health Services, which is presented each year to an individual who has exhibited outstanding leadership and accomplishments in public health in California.

Dr. Slusser is a champion of breastfeeding education, infant and child nutrition, and physical fitness, whose work has garnered widespread media attention and influenced policy makers at the city, state and national levels. She has helped Venice Family Clinic establish systems to improve the prevention, treatment, and management of childhood obesity.

In addition to her position at the Clinic, Dr. Slusser is Assistant Clinical Professor of Pediatrics at UCLA, Founder and Co-Director of the Community Health and Advocacy Pediatric Residency Training (CHAT) Program, and Founder and Medical Director of both the UCLA Breastfeeding Resource Program and the UCLA Fit for Health Program.

## Associate Director Ana Friendly Named *Outstanding Woman by La Opinión*



Venice Family Clinic's Associate Director, Ana Friendly, recently received the *Outstanding Woman (Mujer Destacada) Award* from *La Opinión* for her contributions to the Latino community.

Ms. Friendly has devoted her career to improving the health of Los Angeles County's neediest families, which include many native-born and immigrant Latinos. Prior to joining Venice Family Clinic ten years ago, she served as Administrator of Clinica Oscar Romero and founded the Clinica Para Las Americas in the MacArthur Park neighborhood of Los Angeles.

At Venice Family Clinic, Ms. Friendly oversees the Children First Program; Health Education, Promotion and Community Outreach Program; and Volunteer Services Department, and was the driving force behind the creation of the Health Insurance Outreach and Enrollment Program. Her work has helped improve the quality of life for thousands of Latino patients and their families.

*La Opinión* is the largest Spanish-language newspaper in the United States.

## Director of Mental Health Services Mimi Lind Receives *Making a Difference for Women Award* from Soroptimist International



The Clinic's Director of Mental Health Services, Mimi Lind, LCSW, recently received the *Making a Difference for Women Award* from Soroptimist International West LA-Santa Monica for making an extraordinary difference in the lives of women and girls.

Ms. Lind has spent the majority of her career providing care to victims of domestic violence. Before joining the Clinic 12 years ago, she worked as an emergency room social worker and outpatient psychotherapist specializing in caring for victims of domestic violence, and launched one of the first hospital-based domestic violence programs in the nation at Beth Israel Deaconess Hospital in Boston. She helped Venice Family Clinic create its Safe Families Domestic Violence Intervention program in 1998 and was promoted to Director of Mental Health Services in 2007.

Ms. Lind donated her \$500 award to the Clinic.

# Encounters

Published semi-annually by Venice Family Clinic

## OUR MISSION

To provide free, quality health care to people in need.

## New Clinical Volunteers

Nearly 1,900 people volunteer their time and expertise to Venice Family Clinic each year, and more than 400 of these are physicians. Following are several physicians and medical groups new to the Clinic's volunteer ranks in 2008.



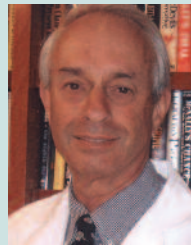
**Jonathan Corren, MD**, an allergist, is providing allergy testing and allergy/asthma consultations once a month.

*"The asthmatic population that visits the Clinic presents unique and difficult challenges, and I look forward to helping these patients manage their chronic conditions," Dr. Corren explains. "Also, I hope to bring allergy fellows from UCLA, as this could be an important part of their training."*



**Wade Foster, MD**, is a dermatologist who volunteers the first Thursday of every month.

*"I'm doing a fellowship with a long-time Clinic volunteer, Dr. Ronald Moy, who has been quite an example for me," Dr. Foster says. "I have forged a special bond with the Clinic's patients, and I thank Dr. Moy for allowing me to come."*



**William Frumovitz, MD**, an obstetrician/gynecologist, performs procedures once a month.

*"The opportunity to serve at Venice Family Clinic is a privilege because of the wonderful support staff and amazingly appreciative patients," Dr. Frumovitz says.*



**Joel Isackson, MD**, an internist, and his medical partners at Westside Internal Medicine are providing two free cardiovascular studies per month.

*"Several of us did rotations at the Clinic during our UCLA internal medicine residencies, so this is a nice way of saying thank you for the great training we received," Dr. Isackson says. "We also know how many of the uninsured are in need of cardiology services and how few are able to access them, and we feel it is important to help fill that gap."*



**KAISER PERMANENTE®**

**Kaiser Permanente of Southern California (KP)** has provided physician residents to Venice Family Clinic since 1980. Recently, KP also began sending two fully trained physical therapists to the Clinic every week.

*"One of the goals for our Residency and Fellowship programs is to assume an active role in addressing a need in the community," explains Jason Tonley, KP's Physical Therapy Residency Coordinator. "This is really just an extension of the mission of Kaiser Permanente, which is to provide affordable, high-quality health care services to improve the health of our members and the communities we serve."*



**Barsam Kasravi, MD** is a family physician and Medical Director for Anthem Blue Cross. He volunteers once a month.

*"My first experience at the Clinic came when I was a UCLA medical student 10 years ago," Dr. Kasravi explains. "It exemplifies why I went into medicine and I still feel that every time I volunteer there. It has served such an important role in improving health care for the community."*



**The LA Free Spine Clinic, led by Ramin Rabbani, MD** (pictured), and **Gil Tepper, MD, FACS**, is a new free referral for patients needing spinal surgery.

*"Imagine needing spinal surgery but not being able to afford it," Dr. Rabbani says. "Just think of what it would do to your life, your livelihood. We get tremendous gratification from being able to help."*



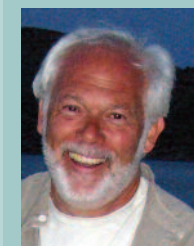
**Roberto Madrid, MD**, is a family practitioner who volunteers two evenings per month.

*"I decided to volunteer my services at Venice Family Clinic because it has been a beacon for providing quality health care to those that need it in underserved communities," Dr. Madrid says. "Without its good work, many people would be left without access to affordable and quality health care."*



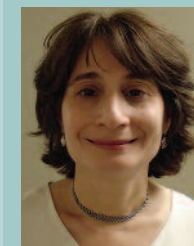
**Eve Newhart, MD**, a nephrologist, sees patients once a month at the Clinic's Simms/Mann Health and Wellness Center.

*Dr. Newhart explains, "I've been taking some time off from medicine to raise my children, but I returned to Venice Family Clinic both because I appreciate the need at the Clinic for a nephrologist, and because I had such positive experiences there as a resident."*



**Phil Schwarzman, MD**, is an emergency medicine physician. He volunteers with the Clinic's street medicine team.

*"I have lived in Venice for 33 years," he says. "I was a volunteer at the Clinic when the facility on Rose Avenue opened. I had always intended to return, it just took a while! It is very gratifying for me to help people who are unable to obtain medical care otherwise."*



**Janet Winikoff, MD**, an endocrinologist, sees Clinic patients the second Friday of every month.

*"When I started out as a medical student, it had been my intention to spend my career working with the medically disenfranchised," Dr. Winikoff says. "I'm delighted to be back volunteering at the Clinic after a hiatus of many years. And it's great for me to be back to my original goals if only on a limited basis."*

## Venice Family Clinic Needs Volunteers

If you are a clinician and wish to volunteer at Venice Family Clinic, please contact Ingrid Trejo, Volunteer Services Manager, at 310.664.7532 or [itrejo@mednet.ucla.edu](mailto:itrejo@mednet.ucla.edu).

# For Two Days, Venice Becomes an Art Museum

Not literally, of course. But no event showcases Venice's maverick arts community better than the Venice Art Walk & Auctions.

Explore artists' studios, bid on original art, tour spectacular homes, sample great food, drink, dance, watch, and enjoy – all proceeds benefit Venice Family Clinic, providing free, quality health care to people in need.

Venice Art Walk  
& Auctions  
May 17-18

By and For  
Venice Family Clinic

## Art & Architecture Tours

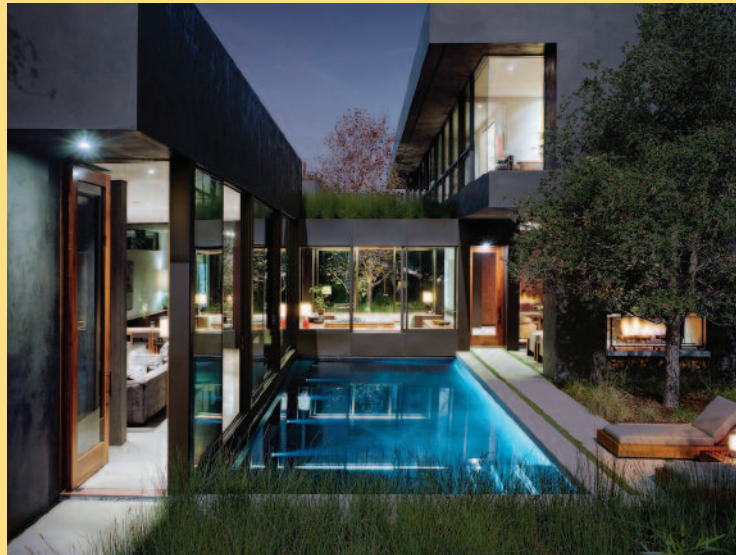
Sponsored by **dwell**

**Saturday, May 17**

Two incredible tours.

**Newly Hatched Homes in Venice:** Meet the architects and developers involved in Venice's freshest new residences.

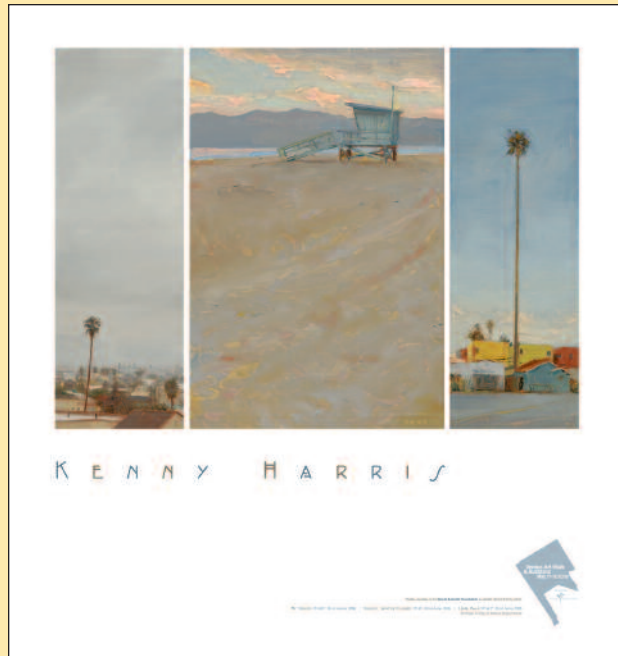
**Private Homes & Art Collections in Malibu:** Join our docents for a rare opportunity to see impressive private art collections and homes along the beaches and in the hills of Malibu. **SOLD OUT**



The Radziner residence on the Newly Hatched Homes in Venice tour. Photo: Joe Fletcher



Bid on art in the 400-piece Silent Art Auction. Photo: Alan Shaffer



The 2008 Venice Art Walk Poster features the work of painter Kenny Harris, whose studio is one of more than 60 stops on the Studio Tours. Posters available for \$25 each at the event or online at [www.veniceartwalk.info](http://www.veniceartwalk.info). Poster courtesy of the David Bohnett Foundation.

**Tickets and more  
information available at  
[www.veniceartwalk.info](http://www.veniceartwalk.info) or  
310.392.WALK (9255).**

## Studio Tours & Silent Art Auction

**Sunday, May 18**

- Tour 60+ artists' studios and special exhibits.
- Bid on more than 400 original works of art, including paintings, sculpture, graphics, photography, ceramics, cartoons and furniture donated by Los Angeles-area and Venice Art Walk artists.
- Plus...Artful Living auction of fun and functional lifestyle items, Food Faire featuring LA's best restaurants, cocktail lounges on the Venice Art Walk trail, live music, and your chance to win a 2008 Toyota Prius or a limited-edition set of art plates.

**FREE Silent Art Auction Preview**

Saturday, May 17, 4 - 6 pm

Westminster School, 1010 Abbot Kinney Blvd., Venice

### Major Sponsors

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THE Super MARKET



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