



FLINT INSTITUTE OF ARTS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Students "Reveal the Rainbow" to Color Deficient Museum Visitors

Flint, MI – Because of the hard work and generosity of four high school seniors, color deficient visitors to the Flint Institute of Arts can see the museum's world-class collection without the barriers their condition presents.

As part of the Grand Blanc High School's LEAD class, seniors Alexander Hargraves, Maliah Linn, Katelyn Stuck, and Breeann Zarzycki chose to shape change in their community by addressing the challenges of color deficiency. Sometimes referred to as "color blindness," color deficiency impacts over 300 million people worldwide, with the most prevalent type being red-green color deficiency. Roughly 1 in 12 men and 1 in 200 women are affected by some degree of color deficiency. Those with the condition often have issues describing or naming colors and tend not to see the definition between objects, as they don't see the variance created by shades or highlights. Visual art is a challenge for these individuals.

The students contacted FIA Executive Director John Henry and introduced him to Enchroma glasses, "the only specialty eyewear that alleviates red-green color blindness, enhancing colors without the compromise of color accuracy," which the group purchased with funds raised through donations and crowdfunding. To test the glasses, the students reached out to Grand Blanc Community Schools Superintendent Clarence Garner and Fenton Township Supervisor Bob Krug, both of whom are red-green deficient, and the men met the group at the museum. Both men agreed that the impact of the glasses was stunning. "It changes your whole perspective," said Krug. "I didn't even know what I was missing."

"It's rewarding to see (Garner and Krug) using the glasses, seeing something in a whole new way," said Todd Babiasz, the students' teacher. "This is what this project can do for the students and for their community. I'm so proud of what's been accomplished."

Henry agreed: "What these students have done, each step of the way, is remarkable. We are thankful to have been part of their learning process. Their hard work has already paid off. With the glasses now at the reception desk, visitors are using them with positive results."

Three pairs of Enchroma glasses, two purchased by the students and one purchased by the museum, are available free of charge to FIA visitors. The students presented the museum with a check collected from the additional funds raised, which will be used to both promote the availability of the glasses and to purchase additional pairs. Said Henry, "The marriage of cutting edge technology to our superlative collection of art and objects is a gift we can now share - and, through these glasses, perhaps change lives."

ABOUT THE FLINT INSTITUTE OF ARTS

The Flint Institute of Arts is Michigan's second largest art museum and one of the largest museum art schools in the nation. The FIA's mission is to advance the understanding and appreciation of art for all through collections, exhibitions, and educational programs. The FIA is located at 1120 East Kearsley Street in the Flint Cultural Center. The museum is open Mon–Fri 12 p.m. - 5 p.m.; Sat 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. and Sun 1 p.m. - 5 p.m. Admission to the FIA is free to members and children under 12; Adults are \$7; Senior Citizens and Students with I.D. are \$5. Saturdays are free thanks to Huntington Bank. For more information, please call 810.234.1695 or visit www.flintarts.org.