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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

What is it like to visit an art museum or gallery if you cannot see? A group of member artists from JSDD's WAE (Wellness, Arts, Enrichment) Center are in the process of learning what that is like through a class that has been dubbed "Seeing Beyond Our Limitations."

On a recent visit to the Montclair Art Museum, four sighted members paired off into teams of two, and each took a turn being blindfolded as the other described the artwork in a way that would allow his or her partner to visualize it, using three criteria:

- What do you see?
- What do you feel?
- What is the story behind this piece of art?

On Feb. 6, they will take that experience to the next level as they visit "Art Connections9" at Montclair State University's George Segal Gallery. This time sighted participants will be giving a descriptive narrative of the exhibit to the WAE Center's blind members as they tour the exhibit.

Seeing Beyond Our Limitations, the first segment in a WAE Center series that focuses on one of the senses each month, has been a valuable lesson for its participants. "Now I know a little of what it feels like for my friend who is blind," said Mark L. Another member, Kristen Z., agreed, saying "This experience has helped me think about what it is to 'see' art, literally, and how we interpret what we see and express it to others."

"What is extra exciting about this particular exhibit for us," said WAE Center Art Studio Manager Harry Klein, "is that one of our own, Bobby D., has a painting in this highly selective show." Klein added that his tweets about the visit to MAM last week have been continually re-tweeted, and that he has received numerous messages from people and organizations around the country who did not previously know of the WAE Center.

"The George Segal Gallery is proud to have one of the WAE Center's members included in the prestigious Art Connections exhibit, now in it's ninth year," said Caitlin Popp, Education Coordinator for the George Segal Gallery. "Our gallery is deeply committed to community education and we can not think of a better way to support organizations such as the WAE than by having them tour our exhibition."

The WAE Center is an alternative learning center in West Orange for adults with disabilities which operates as a program of Jewish Service for the Developmentally Disabled of MetroWest, Inc. (JSDD), a partner agency of Jewish Federation of Greater MetroWest NJ. The WAE Center offers artistic, wellness and enrichment opportunities to people of varying abilities in an atmosphere that supports and inspires creativity and fosters unconditional acceptance and respect between participants and facilitators. Humanistic principles are used to guide members in building a greater capacity for a full and rich life, regardless of starting point.