

Art Enhances the Healing Environment

Creating a heart-centered experience

by Jonas Gerard

Research shows that being surrounded by art can significantly improve the patient's outcome, as well as the work environment for doctors and medical staff. I had an epiphany one day while submerged in the therapy pool at CarePartners Health Center on Sweeten Creek Road in Asheville.

While working through my own physical rehabilitation, the intense efforts involved as people around me pushed through physical limitations and pain was obvious. The pool therapy was their path toward regaining a normalcy that was taken away, representing attainable goals reachable only with substantial effort. As a gallery owner, I'm used to an environment covered in art and know the positive effects it has on people.

As visitors enter the gallery, they regularly become emotionally connected to the colors and textures of the art, temporarily allowing their busy minds to relax, leaving room for a heart-centered experience.

Numerous studies have shown that artwork in patient rooms offers benefits—promoting healing, relieving patients' pain and stress, and increasing their overall well-being. As the pool therapy helped me regain my strength, I saw firsthand how this place was so important to rebuilding lives. Entering into an agreement with the CarePartners Foundation, I was able to realize this vision of enhancing the healing environment of this essential therapy space.

With a full house on hand to watch the action, a 24-foot abstract mural, later titled "Passionately Alive," was created at the River Arts District Studio Stroll in November 2016. The physical act was a true testament to how far I had come since my own pool therapy only a few months before. The final installation of the mural in February 2017 brings a remarkable shift of inspirational energy to the space.



Jonas Gerard
Photo by Tim Barnwell

According to CarePartners therapist Laura Dylus, patients have commented that the painting energizes the room, has "an upbeat feel" and stirs their emotions. One patient recently saw a bird learning to fly in the beginning of the mural and as it progresses, the bird successfully soars. Other therapists have noticed the mural increases patient participation. They are distracted from their pain and it "promotes optimism."

I feel very honored to be instrumental in helping patients engage in a heart-centered experience, just like in the gallery. 🌟

CarePartners

Aquatic Physical Therapy works specific muscle groups and joints without compressive loading forces and makes movement easier and less painful to help facilitate the following benefits:

- Reduce pain
- Reduce swelling
- Increase joint range of motion
- Increase strength
- Increase relaxation
- Increase flexibility
- Increase balance/coordination
- Improve breathing capacity
- Early mobilization during the healing process

Three convenient locations:

Main CarePartners Campus
68 Sweeten Creek Rd., Asheville

South Clinic
Reuter YMCA, 3 Town Square Blvd., Asheville

West Clinic
Pisgah Valley Retirement Center for Aquatics, 95 Holcombe Cove Rd., Candler

To schedule an appointment, call (828) 274-6100.



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