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March 10, 2011

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Truman Medical Center Healing Arts Gallery to Display
Blindness Isn't Black: A VSA Missouri Exhibition
Exhibition runs through April 25

KANSAS CITY, MO – Beginning March 10 and running through April 25, the Truman Medical Center (TMC) Hospital Hill Healing Arts Gallery will host the VSA Missouri exhibition: *Blindness Isn't Black*. The exhibit features the work of 9 Missouri artists with disabilities.

One of the featured artists in the exhibit, David Kontra, is blind and yet is an accomplished visual artist. He started his art career at age nine as a way to cope with the loss of vision. He was diagnosed with retinitis pigmentosa at age 16 and today have less than five percent vision in his left eye and only light perception in his right. In his words, David says it is like looking through a straw and thus he has to rely on his memory in order to create his work.

“As an artist I know how difficult it is to get your work out there. The art world is competitive and fickle...artists with disabilities often face extra challenges to getting their work in front of the public,” said Leslie Holt, Executive Director of the VSA. “The leaders of VSA Missouri are excited to play a part in promoting them at this stage of their careers.”

In 2009 VSA Missouri published *Blindness isn't Black*, an anthology of work by 23 Missouri artists and writers with disabilities. As with the anthology, this exhibit demonstrates that work by artists with disabilities is just as varied and rich as any other diverse group of artists. The exhibit is full of amazing and courageous stories of artists who have struggled not only with their disabilities but with discrimination, rejection but also accomplishment and creative joy.

“This is a wonderful exhibit that TMC is proud to be a part of because it reflects, to a great degree, the mission of our hospital to care for all people, despite their circumstances,” said Caleb Fey, TMC Healing Arts Gallery Curator. “Artists are always struggling for acceptance of their art. Mix in the struggle of overcoming or dealing with physical and mental disabilities and their stories are just that much more amazing and really shines a light on the talent of the artists.”

A “Celebration of Access and the Arts” will include events on April 6-8. On April 6, special group tours of the art exhibit will be conducted with selected artists discussing their work. To schedule a tour please call 888-718-0866. A public reception will be held on Thursday, April 7 from 2:30 to 4 pm at the TMC Health Sciences Building (2220 Holmes Street) presented by VSA Missouri, Arts KC - the arts Council of Metropolitan Kansas City, Alphapointe Association for the Blind and The Whole Person. Also, a special Blues and Bluegrass performance by guitarist Michael “Blind Cat” McIntire will be held on Friday, April 8 from 12 to 1 pm in the TMC Hospital Hill Lobby.

The TMC Hospital Hill Healing Arts Gallery is located at 2301 Holmes Street, Kansas City, Missouri and is free and open to the public.. The gallery is open seven days a week during normal hospital business hours (7am -7 pm). For more information about this or other TMC Healing Arts Gallery exhibits, please contact 816-404-0035.

About TMC

Truman Medical Centers is a not-for-profit two acute-care hospital health system in Kansas City. The TMC Health System includes TMC Hospital Hill, TMC Lakewood, TMC Behavioral Health, the Jackson County Health Department and a number of primary care practices throughout Eastern Jackson County. Recently named one of the nation’s top academic medical centers, TMC is the primary teaching hospital for the University of Missouri-Kansas City Schools of Health Sciences and specializes in asthma, bariatrics, diabetes, women’s health, and trauma services. For more information, please call (816) 404-3785 or visit **www.trumed.org**