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Jefferson's Ferry Resident Charles Ala Takes "Best in Show"

Honors in Statewide Art Competition

Painting Judged First Among 215 Submissions

S. Setauket, NY - October 29, 2025 - Visual artist and sculpturer Henry Moore once stated, "There's no retirement for an artist, it's your way of living so there's no end to it." While some artists never retire; others find and pursue their art during their retirement years, finding the introspection, creativity, and sense of purpose it engenders to be supportive of their overall wellness. Many artists of all kinds flourish at [Jefferson's Ferry Life Plan Community](#), finding inspiration and instruction through a variety of classes in its art studio or on their own.

One exceptionally talented resident and later in life painter, Charles Ala, recently showed his mettle, winning Best in Show in the 2025 LeadingAge New York Conference Art Exhibit Competition. An architect by profession, Mr. Ala took up painting after retiring. His winning piece, entitled "The Mother," depicts a tender moment between a mother and her child.

Jefferson's Ferry hosted an award ceremony in recognition of Mr. Ala's accomplishment in front of a supportive and proud audience of his family, friends, and neighbors as well as Jefferson's Ferry management and staff. Also in attendance was Thalia Olaya, Suffolk County Regional Representative for **Governor Kathy Hochul**.

For this year's statewide competition, LeadingAge NY received 215 pieces of artwork in a variety of mediums from 46 not-for-profit senior residences from across New York State. From those submissions, a total of 70 works of art were then chosen to be part of a traveling exhibit that will be displayed at CCRCs around the state over the next 12 months. The exhibit had its premiere at Jefferson's Ferry, where it is on display throughout the month of October.

Vice President of Resident Life Linda Kolakowski, who submitted Mr. Ala's painting to the competition, explained the value of art in the Jefferson's Ferry community as well as across senior populations. "Our robust art program continues to evolve with classes that span all mediums. An active resident-led exhibit committee that plans bi-monthly art exhibitions that celebrate the self-expression of the community. Art is a means for any age group, and especially older adults, to express their creativity, build connections, and evoke memories, feelings and experiences. Whether visual art, fine arts or music, our community appreciates and encourages artistic expression."



Jefferson's Ferry Life Plan Community resident Charles Ala (center) recently won Best in Show honors in the statewide 2025 LeadingAge New York Conference Art Exhibit Competition. Pictured here, flanking Mr. Ala at an award ceremony hosted by Jefferson's Ferry is Bob Caulfield, President and CEO of Jefferson's Ferry and Linda Kolakowski, Vice President of Resident Life.

About Jefferson's Ferry www.jeffersonsferry.org

Jefferson's Ferry is a not-for-profit Life Plan Community for active adults aged 62 and above, with Independent Living cottages and apartments, Assisted Living apartments, and a quality health care center all on one site. A multi-million-dollar expansion and renovation project, "The Journey Toward Renewal," has updated the life-enriching environment for residents at every stage of their

life. Residents enjoy six distinct dining venues, an expansive Healthy Living Center and Fitness Center, and created a state-of-the-art Rehabilitation Therapy Center. Also new to Jefferson's Ferry is "The Grove," a Memory Support Neighborhood which provides a high quality of life and care for 20 residents diagnosed and living with Alzheimer's and other dementia-related diseases.

Jefferson's Ferry offers exceptional living and amenities, including indoor pool, computer center, library, creative arts center, game room, walking paths, resident gardens, monarch waystations, recreational areas, and gazebos. A mix of cultural excursions, civic activities, and a community of residents who help shape Jefferson's Ferry's future ensure a spirited and engaged lifestyle.

The Vincent Bove Health Center at Jefferson's Ferry enjoys superlative ratings across the board, including The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and U.S. News & World Report. Additionally, Jefferson's Ferry has repeatedly earned the industrywide Community Choice Award for resident satisfaction and engagement and has been recognized with the Activated Insights Award (formerly known as Pinnacle Quality Insight's Customer Experience Award) for seven years running. FitchRatings has assigned Jefferson's Ferry a stable outlook BBB+ bond rating. Jefferson's Ferry has consistently been voted Best Retirement Community, Best Nursing Home and Best Assisted Living on Long Island by The Long Island Press and has been recognized for Excellence by the Hauppauge Industrial Association's Business Achievement Awards program.