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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PRESS RELEASE

Albany Public Library Exhibit Features Murals by Iraqi Refugee Children Public Reception Set for March 23

Paintings created by youngsters who immigrated to the Capital Region from Iraq are on display until March 27 at the Albany Public Library (APL) on the second floor of the Main Library at 161 Washington Avenue. The public is invited to a reception honoring the artists on March 23 from 5 to 6 p.m. on the second floor of the Main Library.

The murals were created last fall at a workshop with American artist Claudia Lefko and Iraqi artist Thamir Dawood at the Sanctuary for Independent Media in Troy. The children and teenagers created 36" x 50" murals on canvas depicting their thoughts and feelings about having to leave their beloved home country in a time of war and upheaval. The young Iraqi artists are part of a community of about 75 refugees who have resettled in the Capital Region during the past two years. Most of these refugees arrived from Jordan, Syria, and Turkey, where they lived after fleeing the violence and turmoil of the war in Iraq.

The reception gives the Iraqi refugees and American participants a chance to prepare for a two-day painting workshop, which is the next stage of the art project. The final murals created here in the Capital Region will be displayed in Egypt next year as part of United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization "Decade of Peace and Nonviolence Among Children" international exhibit.

The reception is co-sponsored by the Albany Public Library, Media Alliance, Iraqi Children's Art Exchange, U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, and Iraqi Refugee Project, which is a coalition of Women Against War, Bethlehem Neighbors for Peace, and Women's Association for Family Affairs.

For more information about the exhibit, call the event's organizers at 272-2390 or 441-0229. For questions about the Albany Public Library, call 427-4344.

The Albany Public Library (APL) operates six locations serving the residents of Albany. Each month, more than 55,000 people use the libraries to borrow materials, attend programs, access computers, and research information. More than 90,000 books, DVDs, and other materials are circulated each month. APL is creating five new branches to better serve customers. Visit APL online at www.albanypubliclibrary.org.

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