



**Mood Disorders Association of Ontario**  
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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Young Artist's Suicide Leads to Amazing Art Show**

Hope and inspiration have grown out of tragedy because a young girl's family turned her suicide into an opportunity for other artists with mood disorders.

When Rebecca Burghardt committed suicide in 2005, her family decided not to hide, but to create an art show to celebrate and encourage other artists like Rebecca who suffer from mood disorders. Three years later, the show is a huge success, with a year-round online gallery and a big event each fall. This year's event is being held November 26<sup>th</sup>, 2009 at the Royal Ontario Museum.

Like many who suffer from mood disorders, Rebecca was an incredibly talented artist. In her early twenties, Rebecca was admitted to the prestigious School of the Art Institute of Chicago where she honed her skills and created some incredible works of art in a variety of media. Rebecca suffered from severe bipolar disorder, and she was hospitalized dozens of times because of her illness. The demons that come with the disease eventually became too much for her and sadly Rebecca took her own life.

Devastated but determined to help others with similar struggles and talents, the Burghardt family set up an endowment fund, and courageously set to work with the Mood Disorders Association of Ontario to start the *Touched By Fire* art show and sale.

With all of the proceeds of the sale of the art going directly to the artists, *Touched By Fire* is dedicated to the development and celebration of the artists.

Like Rebecca, many people who suffer from mood disorders are said to be "touched by fire" - touched by incredible artistic talent. Throughout history, famous artists like Van Gogh, Michelangelo and Georgia O'Keefe were "touched by fire" and the fire burns through many talented artists today.

Thousands of volunteer hours are dedicated to gathering, judging, promoting and organizing the art show, which culminates in the show at the ROM.

For their sponsorship of Touched By Fire, financial services company Raymond James won the extraordinarily prestigious Business for the Arts Award for entrepreneurial partnership.

For more information, please go to [www.touchedbyfire.ca](http://www.touchedbyfire.ca).

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