



## Press Release

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### Local Artist Is “Big” Supporter of Pink Ribbons Project and The Rose

HOUSTON -- If it's been “supersized,” chances are artist Kermit Eisenhut has painted it.

A decade ago, the Cow Parade benefitting Texas Children's Hospital had Houstonians scouring the city for where the latest interpretation of bovine sculpture would appear. Eisenhut's signature was on 14 of them. He completed one of 75 oversized Mickey Mouse sculptures for Disney -- also auctioned for charity. Mustang horses and a 6-ft. fiberglass cowboy boot for the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo as well as a total of 28 display boots for corporations, civic groups, the City of Houston's office of Special Events, and Fort Worth Junior League complete his “larger than life” portfolio.

Now he can add Pink Ribbons to his growing list of philanthropic props. As an advisory board member of Pink Ribbons Project, in motion for breast cancer, he was the natural choice to paint the first of the 7-ft. sculptures which will be part of the inaugural Pink Ribbon Parade this fall. The fundraiser and awareness builder benefits breast cancer nonprofits and the effort-organizer Breast Health Collaborative of Texas which includes more than 200 nonprofit, corporate and individual members.

Eisenhut is “big” on nonprofits. He has contributed auction items to a number of local charities including the March of Dimes, Bering Omega, Special Olympics, Vivo y Positivo, PAWS, SPCA, Houston Grand Opera, Montrose Clinic and SEARCH. He serves on the Honorary Board of SNAP, works with Big Brothers/Big Sisters and for more than 20 years has taught free art classes to people who were HIV positive, living with AIDS and, now, people touched by breast cancer.

“When people do art, they are able to forget their illness for a little while. They experience healing and increased self-esteem,” Eisenhut said. “The world enlarges for them. They are able to get out of themselves, to focus on something else.”

Eisenhut's weekly Pink Paint classes at Pink Ribbons Project in Rice Village paved the way for his latest gift of talent and time. On June 7, he will take part in a jointly-sponsored endeavor to provide clients with appointments at The Rose Galleria, a nonprofit breast cancer organization, the opportunity to “Create While You Wait.” Pink Days at The Rose Galleria will ensure that individuals with appointments on the first Tuesday of each month from June through November have a creative outlet. Eisenhut is

the first of a number of artists who will offer instruction on subjects such as painting, needlework, card- and jewelry-making.

“Kermit’s work is incredible,” said Pink Ribbons Project Survivor Founder Susan Rafte of Eisenhut’s prolific contributions to charity auctions. “I would bid on them and I always got outbid. Now his art decorates the walls as he teaches painting to survivors, friends, family – anyone who has been touched by breast cancer.”

Rafte, a soon-to-be 17-year-survivor of breast cancer, attributes much of her recovery to the arts. Raised in a family that appreciated all forms of art, she and her sister Jane Weiner dance. Pink Ribbons Project first manifestation was as a dancer-organized fundraiser in New York where Weiner was living at the time of Rafte’s diagnosis and treatment. That effort netted FDA approval for the drug Rafte would soon need to help prepare her for a stem cell transplant. Ultimately, Weiner relocated to Houston to be closer to Rafte and to launch the organization in its Texas’ expression

“The ‘aha’ moment for me,” said Rafte, “was when we brought Pink Ribbons Project to Houston and produced the first show. I was one of the dancers. Jane had initially danced to save my life and now I was dancing to save others.”

Noting that the arts encompass many different forms of creativity – dancing, writing, painting, cooking, etc. – Rafte underscores why Pink Ribbons Project continues to provide classes for experienced artists and those who “don’t yet know how to hold a brush.”

“When people understand art they can take it to the next level and see how art can help heal, help them work through things. Art separates us from where we are and allows us to open up and work through some of those really tough issues.”

Eisenhut can relate. His art career began after a back injury and classes at Houston Community College.

“My teacher encouraged me to get involved with the community,” said the now portrait artist, muralist, furniture artist, public art creator, philanthropist, teacher, and community leader. “I urge my students to do the same. Find something you’re passionate about and go for it!”

The Rose provides services at two centers and via mobile units for both the insured and the uninsured. The 25-year-old nonprofit relies on insured clients and fundraising to offset the costs of the screenings and diagnostic services for the uninsured. Pink Ribbons Project is covering the cost of any uninsured individual who visits The Rose Galleria on these Tuesdays. For those patients who must return for diagnostic services, Pink Ribbons Project will cover those costs as well.

For a complete list of Pink Days at The Rose Galleria activities, email [kcampbell@therose.org](mailto:kcampbell@therose.org). To book an appointment during the Pink Days at The Rose Galleria program, call 281.484.4708.

For more information, visit [www.pinkribbons.org](http://www.pinkribbons.org), [www.KermitArt.com](http://www.KermitArt.com), and [www.therose.org](http://www.therose.org).

The Rose Galleria is located at 5420 West Loop South, Suite 3300, Bellaire.

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