

# Shout Out: Hillary Laff-Meyers, abstract artist



Hillary Laff Meyers is pictured with her painted lighthouse, which will be on display on Michigan Avenue in Chicago. (Hillary Laff Meyers)

By **Steve Sadin**

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**H**illary Laff-Meyers, a Deerfield resident and abstract artist, has a story in mind with everything she creates. She is one of 51 artists from across the country chosen to paint a lighthouse that will be on display along Michigan Avenue in Chicago between June 19 and Aug. 11. Her lighthouse will be on the southwest corner of Michigan Avenue and Oak Street. Sponsored in part by the social service organization Chicago Lighthouse, the creations are designed to raise awareness of the need to increase access and inclusion for people with disabilities.

## **Q. What does abstract painting mean to you?**

A. Abstract painting, in my opinion, is an art form that offers me the freedom to be creative without boundaries. It allows me to take risks and follow my passion beyond the confines of rules. When creating an abstract, color is my first priority because they evoke emotions and lead the way to my designs. Often, the colors will begin to reveal themselves as I paint, revealing the next stroke that needs to be

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**Q. How were you selected for the Lighthouse project and what did you design?**

A. I'm so grateful to have been selected for this project and I have a dear friend to thank for initially suggesting that I apply. In addition, there was a "Call for Artists" on Facebook and other social media channels from The Chicago Lighthouse. Through that application process, artists were asked to submit an essay, examples of artwork and a sketch of our proposed lighthouse. Once the great news arrived that I was one of the 51 artists, I excitedly awaited the delivery of my 6-foot tall, 36-inch wide blank lighthouse to begin designing.

**Q. What is the story behind your Lighthouse project?**

A. The title of my lighthouse is "My Layers Run Deep." It is designed to tell a story of how we all have layers. Some of us have choices about what the world sees on our outer layer and others don't. Unfortunately, some people judge others on their outer layer. They judge their abilities, their likes and dislikes and even if they can work or not. If we peel back layers and take the time to realize that people's inside don't always match their outsides we will start to accept people for who they are.

**Q. Is there a special piece of art you designed that has a significant story you can share?**

A. A few years back, I was honored to create a piece of art for Am Shalom in Glencoe commemorating a historical event that was taking place in our community. We were celebrating a Torah that was being made for us in its entirety by women. The art is painted on a huge piece of acrylic, so the technique was interesting, in that I needed to paint backwards. It is an abstract landscape, signifying all five books of the Torah. Finally, a prefabricated metal tree in a wood circle was affixed to the acrylic, symbolizing our deep roots, the circle of life and tree of life.

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