Finding novel ways to increase cancer awareness and provide support to those with cancer is an ongoing challenge. Most healthcare institutions and cancer advocacy organizations continuously strive to find creative ways to accomplish both of these goals. The Mayo Clinic Cancer Center in Rochester, MN, successfully implemented a unique approach to address these goals by hosting an art exhibit and organizing supplementary activities for cancer survivors and others interested in cancer issues.

Art can elicit significant attention and emotional reactions. Throughout history, artists purposefully have used their art to raise awareness, communicate their feelings, and stimulate reactions regarding politics, religion, nature, and other complex topics. Works of art such as Salvador Dali’s Geopoliticus Child Watching the Birth of the New Man, Leonardo da Vinci’s The Last Supper, or Norman Rockwell’s Sunset communicate powerful messages and have the ability to elicit significant emotional responses. Harnessing and directing the emotional potential of art can raise awareness about cancer and its effects and can be powerful communication and therapeutic tools.

This article outlines the use of an art exhibit, created in response to stories from breast cancer survivors, and complementary activities to increase cancer awareness in the general public and provide support to those with cancer. The responses from attendees and staff are described.

### Literature Review

#### The Therapeutic Effect of Creating Art

The use of art as therapy has evolved from a relatively reactionary, arbitrary means of expression to an intentional and planned therapeutic endeavor. As a therapeutic intervention, for example, art has become increasingly popular in healthcare...