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Date: March 25, 2009



East House joins local mental health agencies to present
'Reel Mind Film Series;'
"My Mother's Garden" to be first film shown

Can you imagine it? Piles of mail, food cartons, clothing, newspapers and other trash accumulating in your home, to such a point that you can't walk room to room, sit on your furniture, or even sleep in your bed? You may have heard the stories. How does this happen? Is there hope for someone with this "hoarding disorder?"

Film Director Cynthia Lester explores these questions in a moving documentary titled "My Mother's Garden." Lester's mother, Eugenia, has the disorder, and her house has become so full that Eugenia, literally, sleeps outdoors. This touching 2007 film is first in a series of four films that explore mental illness and make up Rochester's "Reel Mind Film Series."

The Reel Mind Film Series is a new, collaborative effort among the National Alliance on Mental Illness, the Mental Health Association, the Rochester High Falls International Film Festival, Compeer, East House, and the University of Rochester Cluster on Human Values. The films will be shown in May and June at the Little Theatre and The Cinema.

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“My Mother’s Garden,” will be shown at the Little Theatre on Sunday, May 17th, at 6:45 p.m. This first film is part of the High Falls Film Festival. Second in the series, “Out of the Shadow,” directed by Susan Smiley, tells the story of a family’s secret struggle to deal with their mother’s schizophrenia within the confines of the public health system. This will be shown June 2nd at 7:00 p.m., at the Cinema on South Clinton Avenue. “Autism, the Musical,” directed by Tricia Regan, will be shown on June 16th, at 7:00 p.m. also at the Cinema. This musical is an inspirational foray into the lives of five children, and explores the creative process that provides a key to unlocking their inner worlds. The last of the series, “The Devil and Daniel Johnston,” directed by Jeff Feuerzeig, will be shown on June 30th, at 7:00 p.m. at the Cinema. This features Danil Johnston, a manic-depressive genius singer/songwriter, revealed in this portrait of madness, creativity and love. Each film will be followed by a discussion with filmmakers, consumers and local mental health care professionals.

“We look forward to joining in this collaborative effort, which will build awareness of mental illness in the local community,” said Gregory Soehner, President of East House. “Film is a powerful medium and we aim to increase understanding of mental illness, along with providing a message of hope and recovery.”

Ticket costs are as follows: a four-movie pass to all of these films is \$28, and is available by visiting or calling the Mental Health Association at (585) 325-3145. Individual tickets to “My Mother’s Garden are \$12,” available through the Rochester International High Falls Film Festival website at www.rochestersmoviefest.com. Tickets to the latter three movies are \$8 each. Group tickets to any one movie are also available at discounted rates. For more information, call Anne McKenna (585) 256-3800, ext. 213.

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