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For more information, contact:

Sommer Toffle, SAMA-Ligonier Valley Coordinator
(724) 238-6015

Travis Mearns, Public Relations Coordinator
(724) 238-6015

SAMA-LIGONIER VALLEY AUXILIARY INTRODUCES STUDENT ART AWARDS

Ligonier – In honor of the Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art's annual student art exhibition, *Artists of the 21st Century*, SAMA's Ligonier Valley Auxiliary has announced it will present two student art awards beginning with the close of this year's exhibition.

On April 17, the Auxiliary presented the inaugural *21st Century Artist Award for Outstanding Student Art* to Anastazia Byerly-Bleyer, a grade 12 student from Greensburg Salem High School. The *21st Century Artist Award* is selected by an Auxiliary committee and is presented to a high school senior or junior whose work is on view in the student art exhibition. The winning student receives a \$50 gift certificate for Art Tech in Greensburg. Byerly-Bleyer and her art teacher, Kelley Audia, also were invited to the Museum's Lunch a l'Art program on April 17 for awards presentation.

The Auxiliary also sponsors an *Auxiliary's Choice Award*. Eligible for the award is any student in grades K through 12 whose work is on view in the exhibition. The award is voted on by members of the Auxiliary and is awarded at the close of the exhibition. The winning student is presented with a \$25 gift certificate to Art Tech. The recipient of this year's *Auxiliary's Choice Award* is Megan Delleria, a grade 12 student from Hempfield Area High School.

SAMA has mounted the *Artists of the 21st Century* exhibition for the last sixteen years at its Ligonier Valley and Loretto museums. SAMA-Ligonier Valley hosts works by students in Fayette and Westmoreland counties while SAMA-Loretto's exhibition features students in Bedford, Blair, Cambria and Somerset counties. This year's exhibitions featured more than 250 student-created works by approximately 300 students.

Artists of the 21st Century is held in conjunction with National Youth Art Month and the state's Arts-in-Education Month. The exhibition is open to schools that participate in SAMA's Museum/School Partnership Program. The exhibitions are celebrated with opening receptions and provide an opportunity for aspiring young artists to see their work professionally hung in a gallery setting.

Schools participating in this year's SAMA-Ligonier Valley exhibition include: Baggaley Elementary School, Fort Allen Elementary School, Greater Latrobe Junior High and Senior High schools, Greensburg Salem Middle and High schools, Hempfield Area Senior High School, Latrobe Elementary School, Maxwell Elementary School, Mountain View Elementary School, Stanwood Elementary School, Valley School of Ligonier, and Wendover Middle School. SAMA-Ligonier Valley's 2014 *Artists of the 21st Century* exhibition closed on April 17.

SAMA's Ligonier Valley Auxiliary holds monthly meetings at the Museum, typically on the third Thursday of the month. The Auxiliary is always welcoming new members. If you are interested in joining the Auxiliary, please attend a meeting, visit www.lmaux.org, or call the Museum at (724) 238-6015 for further information.

The Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art at Ligonier Valley is located at One Boucher Lane and Route 711 South in Ligonier. Hours of operation are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Friday and 1 to 5 p.m. weekends. The Museum is a handicapped-accessible facility and is open to the public free of charge. For more information, please call the Museum or visit www.sama-art.org.