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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Contact: Karen Dunbar Scully, UHS Communications & Marketing
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Caring, art come together at University Health Services

AMHERST, MA – One of the campus' newest artworks is being unveiled August 28, but not in a gallery, or on a public lawn. This creation – a handcrafted ceramic tile mural nearly nine feet long – will be found amongst the clinics and caregivers of University Health Services (UHS). The work is a lasting tribute to staff honored through the center's employee recognition program.

The result of collaboration between UHS and the Art, Architecture and Art History department, the mural will be made public for the first time during a 12:30 p.m. ceremony on the health center's lower level. The unveiling is taking place in conjunction with UHS Staff Days, a biannual series of meetings and teambuilding events held prior to the start of the academic semester.

Employees named "Catch of the Month" receive recognition including a photo display and written tribute. But Director of Finance, Human Resources and Planning Maria T. Coach and other health center leaders wanted a more permanent celebration of these outstanding team members – one that echoed the organization's vibrant spirit and unique educational mission. After learning about a tile mural created for the Newman Center Café on campus, UHS contacted Professor Frank Ozereko with an idea for a commissioned work.

Health center representatives met with Ozereko and students Brenda Lilly, Victoria Perez and Caroline Martin to discuss concepts, review designs and approve plans. The artists then began creating individual tiles, using techniques including embossing, bas relief and mosaic. These were glazed, fired and test-assembled in their Monson Annex studio before being brought to UHS for marathon sessions with mastic and grout.

At UHS, a workplace philosophy known as FISH is both an acronym for "First in Student Health" and a belief that work can be fun, serious and fulfilling. Echoing that theme, the mural features colorful aquatic life in a tranquil, azure sea. Swirling throughout the scene are the names of more than 20 staff members, along with key principles of the FISH culture. The mural's prominent location along one of UHS' main entrances welcomes art lovers and patients alike.

Although the creators worked on the mural for the better part of a semester, the work is far from complete. As more UHS employees are honored, their names will become part of new panels created and installed by future student artists.

Following the unveiling, the community is invited to view the mural during regular UHS operating hours; visit the UHS website, www.umass.edu/uhs, for the current schedule.

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MEDIA OPPORTUNITIES:

- Best photo opportunities are during the unveiling ceremony, Aug. 28 at 12:30 p.m. on the lower level of UHS. Interviews with UHS leaders and project artists will be available. To arrange coverage, contact Karen Dunbar Scully, UHS Communications & Marketing.



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About the Artists

Frank Ozereko is on the faculty of UMass Amherst's Art, Architecture and Art History Department. An MFA graduate of the New York School of Ceramics at Alfred University, he has taught extensively in the United States and France, and is the recipient of numerous awards and grants. His works are included in public and private collections nationwide.

Brenda Lilly is an MFA candidate (spring, 2008) at UMass Amherst, and is an elementary art teacher with the Deerfield and Whately Elementary Schools. An art educator for the past 16 years, she has also taught in Holyoke and West Springfield. She resides with her husband and 16-year-old son in Conway, MA.

Caroline Martin is an MFA candidate (spring, 2008) at UMass Amherst, and is an elementary art teacher in Enfield CT. An art educator for the past seven years, she has also taught in the Amherst-Pelham, Sumter, S.C., and Augusta, GA schools. She resides with her husband in their new home in South Hadley, MA.

Victoria Perez is a senior at UMass Amherst, graduating in December, 2007. The Hartford, CT resident is an art major concentrating in sculpture, and an art history minor. Victoria's thesis show is set for Nov. 12 – 16 in the university's Student Union Gallery.

About University Health Services (UHS)

UHS, UMass Amherst's campus health center, serves students, faculty and staff. The center offers comprehensive medical and mental health care, referral and education services, with a special focus on the health needs and concerns of students. For more information, visit www.umass.edu/uhs or call (413) 577-5000.