QUEEN ANNE'S COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Where Our Future Begins

NEWS RELEASE
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QACHS NAHS STUDENTS SPREAD HOPE AND HEALING THROUGH COURAGEOUS MARKS

CENTREVILLE, MD - For the eighth consecutive year, the Queen Anne's County High School Chapter of the National Art Honor Society (NAHS) has united students, teachers, and the broader community in a meaningful act of compassion and creativity through the *Courageous Marks* project. This year's initiative produced 127 hand-crafted ceramic magnets, each designed to spark hope, promote mental health awareness, and help erase the stigma surrounding mental illness.

Originally started as a ceramics tile project in Stephanie Zeiler's classroom, *Courageous Marks* has evolved into a powerful district-wide art movement. Each magnet features uplifting imagery or words and is accompanied by a tag that encourages the finder to either keep it as a reminder that they are not alone or pass it along to someone in need of support. The reverse side of each tag provides links and contact information for mental health resources.

Since its inception, the project has grown far beyond the walls of QACHS. These small tokens of hope have reached 14 states, as well as communities in Canada, England, and Finland. This year's effort included students from across disciplines—art and non-art alike—including Mrs.

Kim Kehm's ELL classes, faculty, and staff, demonstrating the unifying and inclusive spirit of the project.

"*Courageous Marks* has become a beacon of compassion in our school and beyond," said Stephanie Zeiler, QACHS Art Department Chair and QACPS Lead Visual Arts Teacher. "It started as a simple ceramics lesson and has transformed into a student-led movement that uses creativity to foster connection, resilience, and healing. Our students are not just making art—they're making a difference."

Sophomore NAHS member Ella Hines echoed the sentiment: "Being a part of this project has been so rewarding. These magnets can bring a smile to someone's face or remind them how important they are. Knowing they could make an impact on someone's life makes it all worthwhile."

The project's ripple effect has been felt throughout Queen Anne's County and was recently recognized with the Mid Shore Behavioral Health Caliber Award for its contribution to mental wellness outreach.

QACHS School Psychologist Dr. Becky Perry added, "*Courageous Marks* allows students to explore complex topics with honesty and vulnerability while giving back to others. It promotes connection, meaning, and emotional expression—key pillars of wellbeing."

As one magnet at a time finds its way into someone's hand, *Courageous Marks* continues to be a testament to the power of art to heal, connect, and inspire courageous conversations.

Michael Bell, Supervisor of Visual and Performing Arts for QACPS, shared, "The work our NAHS students are doing through projects like *Courageous Marks* is nothing short of inspiring. It reminds us all of how the arts can create meaningful impact. I'm incredibly proud of Ms. Zeiler and her students, and the incredible work being done at both NAHS chapters across our district."