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TO: News Editor and Community Calendar

FROM: Housatonic Youth Service Bureau

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RE: **For Immediate Release**

Artgarage Founders Honored at Housatonic Youth Service Bureau Dinner

Falls Village—The Housatonic Youth Service Bureau is pleased to announce the 2009 Donald T. Warner Community Service Award will be given to the founders of the Artgarage: Joel Schapira, Diane Schapira, Amy Jenkins, James Meyer, and Sandy Dennis.

The award ceremony will take place during the Bureau's annual dinner, to be held this year at the Canaan Country Club on Friday, October 23, 2009, from 6 to 9 p.m.

"The founders of the Artgarage had a dream to offer a space for students to create art, and to mentor with working artists in the community," explained HYSB board member Jill Gibbons. "These five people have donated countless hours to make the dream into a reality, helping to convert an abandoned building [the old garage behind Housatonic Valley Regional High School] into a working artists studio. They made a personal commitment to make a difference in the lives of many, many young people."

The Artgarage is now in its fifth year of operation, offering students opportunities to work in pottery, painting, drawing, printmaking, clothing and costume design, fiber arts, sculpture, mask-making and other creative mediums. The Artgarage is open after school, from 3 to 5 p.m. It is staffed by Jenkins, Meyer, the Schapiras, and other volunteer artists, who provide encouragement and advice to students, inspire young artists, assist art school applicants with their portfolios, take students on field trips to museums, and link them with mentors and resources. Jim Meyer cheerfully stated, "Whatever they are interested in, we'll look into doing it! I'm happy to start it up!" They recently initiated an Intern Program for art school bound students to work with professional artists on a daily basis. Students who have an interest in careers in the arts as well as those creating visual pieces for class assignments, or for their own enrichment are welcomed at the Artgarage.

Reservations for the ceremony and dinner are available by calling the Youth Service Bureau at 860-824-4720 by no later than Wednesday, October 7th. Tickets are \$30. For additional information please visit www.hysb.org.

Donald T. Warner, a Sharon resident, was a founding member of HYSB and served on its Board of Directors up until his illness and subsequent death in 1995. As an active member of the HYSB, Mr. Warner led by example and motivated others to remain committed to the mission of assisting, advocating and providing support services for all children and families in the six towns of the far Northwest Corner. The Community Service Award was established in his memory and is presented to the recipient in acknowledgment of exemplary service to children and families within the community.

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