

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:

Cher Murphy

cher@chermurphypr.com

press@alcatrazeast.org

571-263-2128



Alcatraz East Crime Museum to Display Alcatraz Island-Themed Prison Artwork

Alcatraz East Crime Museum, located in Pigeon Forge, is opening a new exhibit that features prison art with an Alcatraz theme

PIGEON FORGE, Tennessee (July 30, 2019) –Each year, tourists visiting San Francisco make the journey across the water to the must-see Alcatraz Island. Since it's closing in 1963, the former federal penitentiary continues to intrigue people of all ages, and likewise, there is a huge fascination with the artwork of prison artists. This summer, the two subjects are being brought together at Alcatraz East Crime Museum. The new temporary exhibit, called "[Alcatraz Art Escape](#)," will feature artwork inspired by Alcatraz Island and created by incarcerated artists. The exhibit opens to the public on August 23, 2019 and will run through the spring of 2020.

"Our visitors are always interested in learning more about Alcatraz, so this will be a unique way to combine that with giving them a glimpse of the beautiful artwork created by prisoners from around the country," explains Rachael Penman, director of artifacts and exhibits at Alcatraz East Crime Museum. "We're excited to share the work of these artists who have discovered amazing talents they didn't know they had and are doing what they can to give back to the community. Both crime history enthusiasts and art lovers will want to be sure to see this exhibit."

Alcatraz East Crime Museum has teamed up with the California-based P.A.T.H. (Prison Arts Touching Hearts) to make these artworks available to the public. The organization focuses on providing a platform and voice for incarcerated artists. Their efforts help to support prison art rehabilitation programs and provide opportunities for artists to sell their work to support community causes. The exhibit will also include some never displayed Alcatraz artifacts from the museum's collection. These objects include handcuffs from Alcatraz, a guard's ID and prisoner roster pamphlet with handwritten notes, Al Capone's rosary, and rare artwork made by an inmate while incarcerated at Alcatraz.

There will be a media day held on August 22. Members of the media are invited to visit the museum and experience the new exhibit before it opens to the public the following day. Artwork from this exhibit was first displayed in the Band Practice Room at Alcatraz Federal Penitentiary, run today by the National Park Service, in 2017. Each piece

focuses on a theme surrounding Alcatraz Island's history and its past as federal penitentiary.

"I'm thrilled to be able to bring the artwork of these incarcerated artists to Tennessee and share their work with a different audience far from California," says Leslie Lakes, director of P.A.T.H. "Alcatraz was such an inspiration to these artists, so it seemed very appropriate to bring this exhibit to Alcatraz East Crime Museum."

Alcatraz Island, often referred to as "The Rock," was known as U.S. Penitentiary Alcatraz from 1934-1963. During the time it was a federal prison, Alcatraz housed notorious criminals such as Al Capone, James "Whitey" Bulger, "Machine Gun" Kelly, and Robert Stroud, the "Birdman of Alcatraz." The former prison opened to the public in 1973 and in 1986 was designated a National Historic Landmark. Each year, over 1 million visitors tour the prison.

Other new displays this summer include one of the Arthur Ashe Courage Award trophies awarded to the survivors of former USA Gymnastics doctor Larry Nassar. Alexis Alvarado was among 140 survivors who appeared onstage to receive the honor at the 2018 ESPY Awards for their bravery in speaking out against Nassar's years of sexual abuse. The ESPY will only be on view through Labor Day.

There are additional new artifacts that have recently been added to the museum, including:

- A collection of pieces from sketch artist Michael W. Streed, known as SketchCop. Throughout his career, Streed has used his skills to both catch criminals, as well as identify remains.
- Items have been added to the museum's section on mass shootings, including those at the Las Vegas Route 91 Harvest Festival, Columbine High School, and Aurora Theater. New items include a backpack and school planner of a survivor of Columbine, as well as items preserved from the memorials for Las Vegas victims.

The museum is always adding to its collection and has a star-studded panel of experts who make up the Advisory Board, including those in law enforcement, collectors, a medical examiner, crime scene investigators, and others. The board includes Jim Willett, a retired prison warden, Anthony Rivera, a combat veteran and Navy SEAL chief, and Judge Belvin Perry, Jr., who is best known for the Casey Anthony trial. For more information and to purchase tickets, visit: www.alcatrazeast.com.

About Alcatraz East

Alcatraz East is the most arresting crime museum in the United States. Guests of all ages can encounter a unique journey into the history of American crime, crime solving, and our justice system. Through interactive exhibits and original artifacts, Alcatraz East is an entertaining and educational experience for all ages - so much fun it's a crime! This family attraction is located at the entrance of The Island, located at 2757 Parkway,

Pigeon Forge, TN. General admission tickets are \$14.95 for children, \$24.95 for adults. Group ticket sales are available. The museum is open daily from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m., with the last ticket sold 60 minutes before closing. For more information and to purchase tickets, visit: www.alcatrazeast.com.

About P.A.T.H.

P.A.T.H. (Prison Arts Touching Hearts) is designed to provide a platform for a much needed voice and validation to incarcerated artists – those in the shadows and largely hidden to the public eye, while providing them with a vehicle to give back to the community in a meaningful and powerful way – through their art! P.A.T.H. is a MarinLink fiscally sponsored 501 (c) 3 Non-Profit Project. For more information visit: <http://www.prisonartstouchinghearts.org/>.

#